

Car sales: Introduce energy efficiency labelling

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THE Malaysian Automotive Association announced that the sales of passenger vehicles in 2009 was the highest in five years and that it would continue to grow.

The Department of Environment's 2009 report states that the country has 8,940,230 motorcycles, 8,506,080 passenger cars, 936,222 goods vehicles, 79,149 taxis and 66,581 buses.

The report states that there was an increase of 539,555 passenger cars between 2008 and 2009.

With the increasing number of vehicles, it is not surprising that the energy resource allocation for the transportation sector is high.

Until Malaysia has a full-fledged public transportation system, cars will continue to play an important role in transportation. This means that the demand for energy resources in the transportation sector will grow higher.

We must ask whether these vehicles are energy-efficient?

The European Union has energy-efficiency labelling for vehicles.

The European labelling system uses A to G as an indicator, where A is the most efficient and G, not efficient.

Such labels can help the public when they buy vehicles.

Malaysia needs such labelling to be more environmentally-friendly and to save fuel costs.

To ensure that such a labelling can take place, the Energy Commission, and Sirim, which conducts industrial research, must first develop a common testing mechanism to certify vehicles.

Eventually, laboratories need to be equipped to test such vehicles as well. The commission developed a star-rating system to cover some electrical products.

This system can be improved to cater for vehicles and to help public identify energy-efficient vehicles.

In addition, the claims of makers of hybrid cars regarding energy efficiency must also be monitored. Their impact on the environment needs to be studied. It is wise, therefore, to have energy-efficiency labelling.

Only through transparent and independent certification can Malaysians enjoy energy-efficient cars. This will allow them to save on fuel costs and reduce carbon emissions.

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