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## Electric Hummer gets 100 mpg — more or less

### Capitol Hill event raises its profile; critic says 33 mpg is closer to reality



Hatch.senate.gov

Sen. Orrin Hatch test drives the Electric Hummer H3 Wednesday around Capitol Hill.

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#### 100 mpg Hummer?

May 1: Kraig Higginson of Raser Technologies explains how his company has managed to help the Hummer SUV perform at a rate of 100 miles per gallon.

CNBC

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A Hummer that gets the equivalent of 100 miles per gallon or more? That's something even President Barack Obama could live with — not to mention California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, the unquestioned celebrity champion for Hummers.

A company that says it's done just that — running the full-size SUV on batteries — is showing off its Electric Hummer H3 on Capitol Hill on Wednesday. But whether it really gets 100 mpg depends on just how far and hard it's driven.

The four-wheel drive vehicle with a top speed of 100 mph has been put together by Raser Technologies, a Utah company that until recently had focused on developing geothermal energy sources. It's timing is impeccable, just a day after Obama [unveiled a program to raise vehicle fuel efficiency](#), and cut greenhouse gas emissions, by 30 percent.

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Raser Chairman Kraig Higginson has said he expects the Electric Hummer to be available in showrooms in 2011, and has no qualms offering it as a silver bullet for the country and consumers.

"We believe this vehicle may hold the key to solving the most important challenges facing the nation by reducing our dependency on foreign oil, addressing climate change, and reinvigorating American manufacturing with American technology," he said in a statement announcing the Capitol Hill event.

As for consumers, Higginson was just as ambitious. "Americans value the versatility of trucks and SUVs, the number one selling vehicles in America, but we also want to do what's right for the environment," he said. "This vehicle demonstrates that through innovation, we can do both."

Raser has worked with General Motors and its Hummer division on the vehicle, and Wednesday's ride-and-drive included the patronage of a senior Republican senator from Utah, Orrin Hatch, who introduced the model.

"As you can see, with American ingenuity, we do stand ready to lead the world in the electrification of the transportation sector," Hatch said. "There is no shorter path to adding diversity to our transportation fuels than by shifting the transportation sector to the electric grid."

Raser says its prototype can go 40 miles in all-electric mode before requiring a boost. At that point, a driver can either stop and plug it in, or allow a small gasoline engine to kick in to recharge the lithium-ion batteries.

As for price, Raser spokesman Richard Stern said it should be around \$55,000 when mass produced, or about 20 to 30 percent more than a gasoline H3. And the technology is not limited to Hummers, Stern added, noting that any SUV or pickup truck line could be easily converted.

### Is 33 mpg more realistic?

But will the Electric Hummer really get the equivalent of 100 mpg? The figure is based on a driver running the car in electric mode and then with gasoline for 25 miles, Raser says.

In his own statement challenging Raser, Doug Schiller, who runs the Web site [alternativeenergy.com](http://alternativeenergy.com), said that's not a fair comparison, and that a more realistic number is 33 mpg — for two reasons.

First, 33 mpg is what a driver would get on an extended trip where the entire gas tank is used before plugging in for a recharge, he said.

Second, electric vehicles should take into account the energy — usually coal or natural gas — used to produce the electricity in the first place,

Schiller contended.

"If you fill up an H3 tank with gas and electricity," he said, "you can go 100 miles per gallon, but they're only factoring in the gas it takes to run the Hummer. They're discounting the whole issue of all the energy that is in that electricity used to power the SUV. If you include that energy, and convert it into the equivalent of gasoline, the H3 would get 33 mpg. That is the formula they should be using. The industry is working toward that definition but what Raser has done is use the most misleading way of reporting the H3's miles per gallon by ignoring the electricity."

Schiller acknowledged that the Electric Hummer "represents a significant improvement over the current traditional Hummer models," which get about 15 mpg. But, he insisted, "it is very misleading to say the H3 gets 100 mpg."

#### Schwarzenegger a potential buyer

Gary Rogers, president of FEV, Inc., a company that helped develop the Electric Hummer, disagreed, arguing that most trips would be short commutes. "Because most Americans drive less than 40 miles a day," he said, "this powertrain technology could have an enormous impact on reducing the amount of gasoline consumed every day."



Raser Technologies

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger got a personal tour of the Electric Hummer H3 at a Detroit auto technology show last April.

A big test will be how well the lithium-ion battery pack, which weighs 600 pounds, will hold up over time.

One likely buyer is Schwarzenegger, who got a close look at the Electric Hummer at an auto technology show last month in Detroit.

He's already got a Hummer that runs on

clean-burning but still-expensive hydrogen, and Stern said the governor's set up a Sacramento press conference next week to talk up the Electric Hummer.

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