
Ford offers U.K. drivers cash to scrap dirty diesel engines

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Ford Motor Co. became the latest automaker to offer cash to U.K. drivers if they scrap the most polluting vehicles on the roads, targeting **about 15 million cars and vans** across the country.

From Sept. 1 to Dec. 31, Ford will offer to pay drivers as much as **4,000 pounds (\$5,200) for cars and 7,000 pounds for vans** if they replace vehicles at least eight years old with newer models, according to a press release by the Detroit-based automaker on Tuesday.

Ford and its peers already give German drivers financial incentives to replace the dirtiest cars. It's seeking to tackle an pollution problem caused by a loophole in European vehicle standards, which meant harmful nitrogen dioxide levels in the air rose as carbon dioxide emissions fell.

The **U.K. has the largest fleet of diesel vehicles in Europe** after drivers were encouraged to switch from gasoline, which emits more carbon dioxide for each mile driven. Mercedes-Benz AG and BMW AG, which also makes the Mini, have started similar scrappage programs in the U.K., according to the Society of Motor Manufacturers & Traders.

The U.K. government last month joined France in saying it would seek to end the sale of new diesel and gasoline fueled cars by 2040 as part of a wider plan to tackle the country's toxic air pollution levels that have exceeded legal limits for the last seven years. London Mayor Sadiq Khan said a diesel scrappage program in the capital could cost as much as 515 million pounds.

"It's a good time for the industry to respond," said Andy Barratt, chairman and managing director of Ford Britain, in a phone interview. "There are around 15 million older vehicles we're targeting on the roads and updating these would have a positive and immediate effect on air quality."

(By Jess Shankleman, Bloomberg)