

Considerations of Alternative Energy Sources in LCA of Passenger Cars

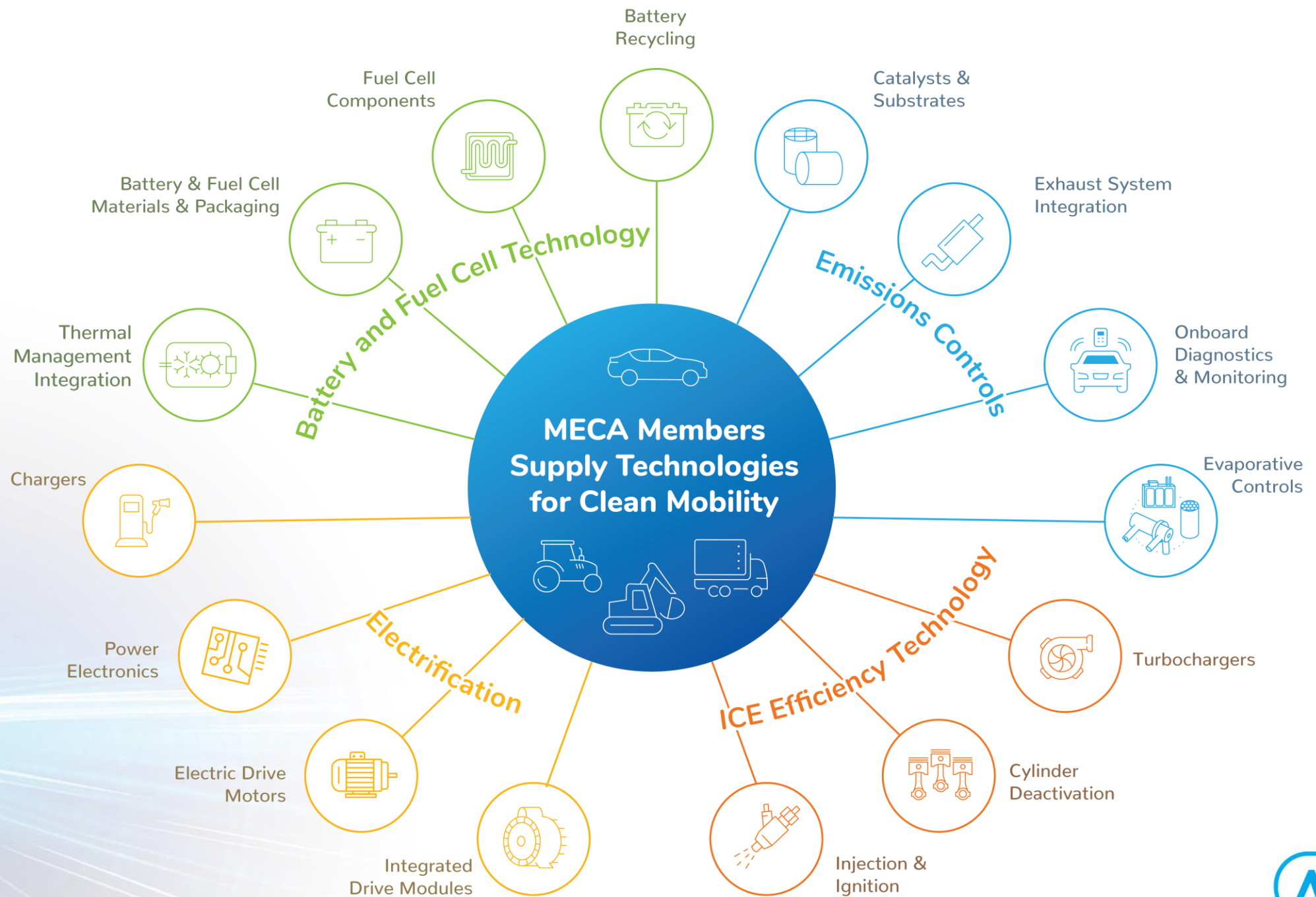
Dr. Rasto Brezny

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New Delhi, India

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The End of the ICE Age has Been Forecasted for over a Decade

Is the problem the powertrain, or the fuel? Life Cycle Analysis holds the key

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Electric cars

The death of the internal combustion engine

It had a good run. But the end is in sight for the machine that changed the world

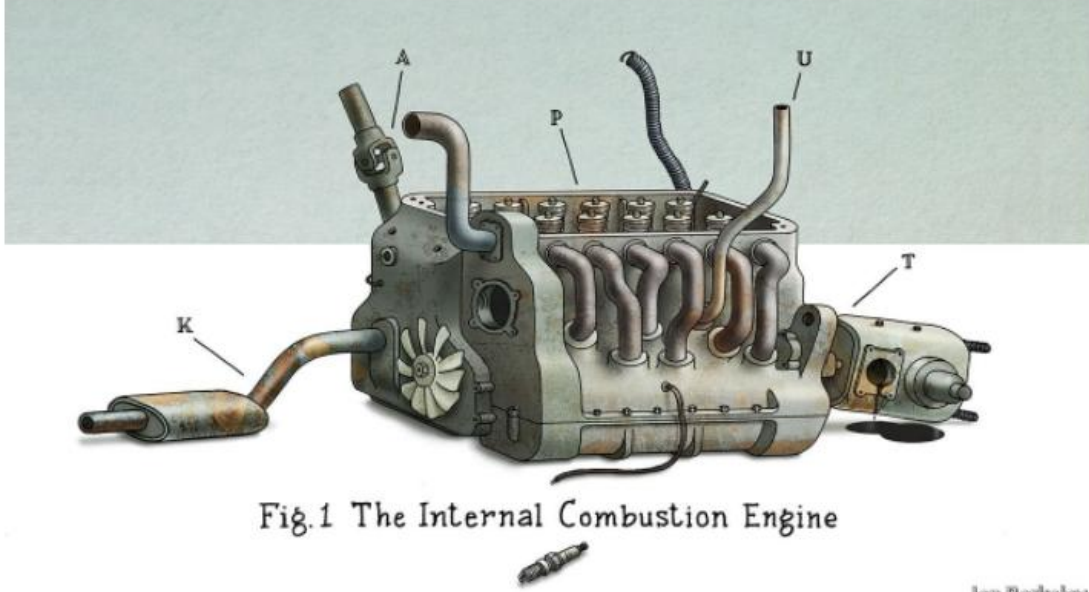


Fig.1 The Internal Combustion Engine

Jon Berkeley

Outline

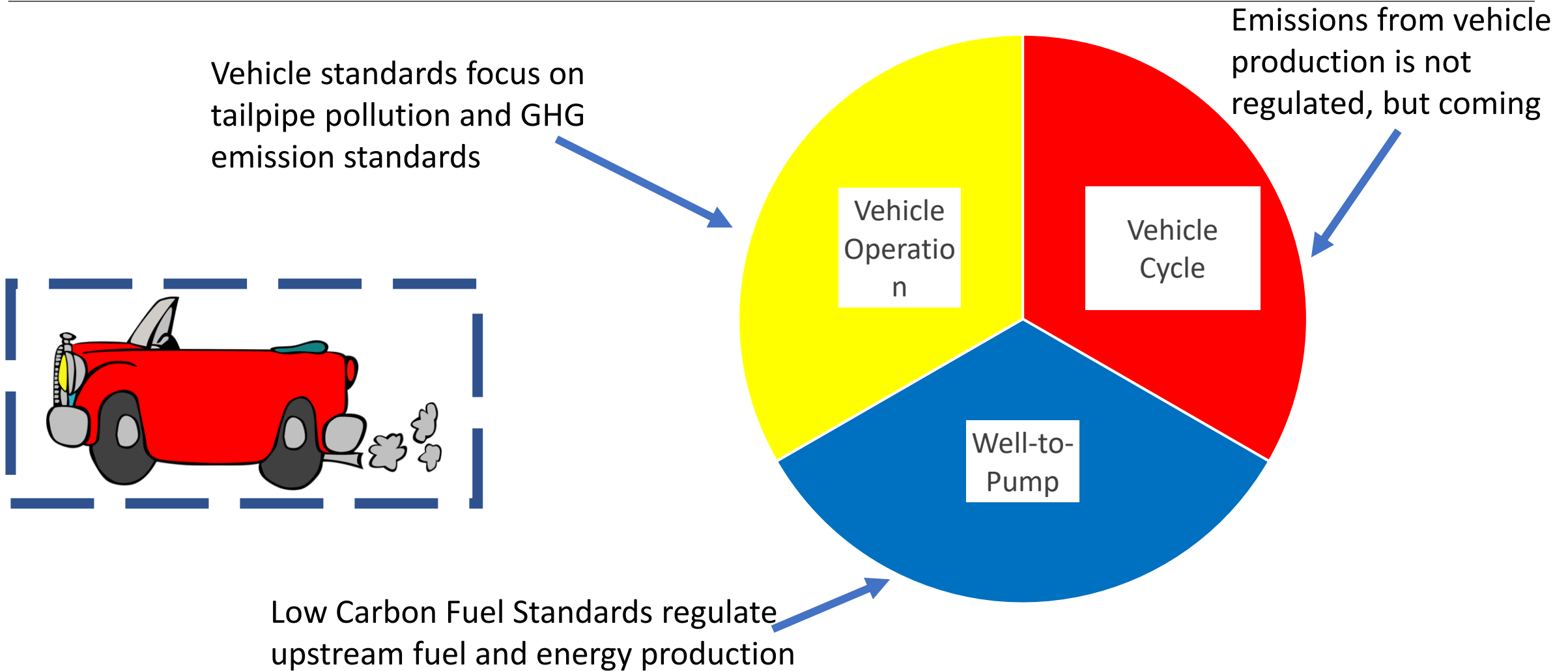
- Introduction to Life Cycle Analysis
- The impact of the energy source that powers vehicles
- MECA's LCA tool
- A case study at alternate solutions to our climate goals

What is Life Cycle Analysis?

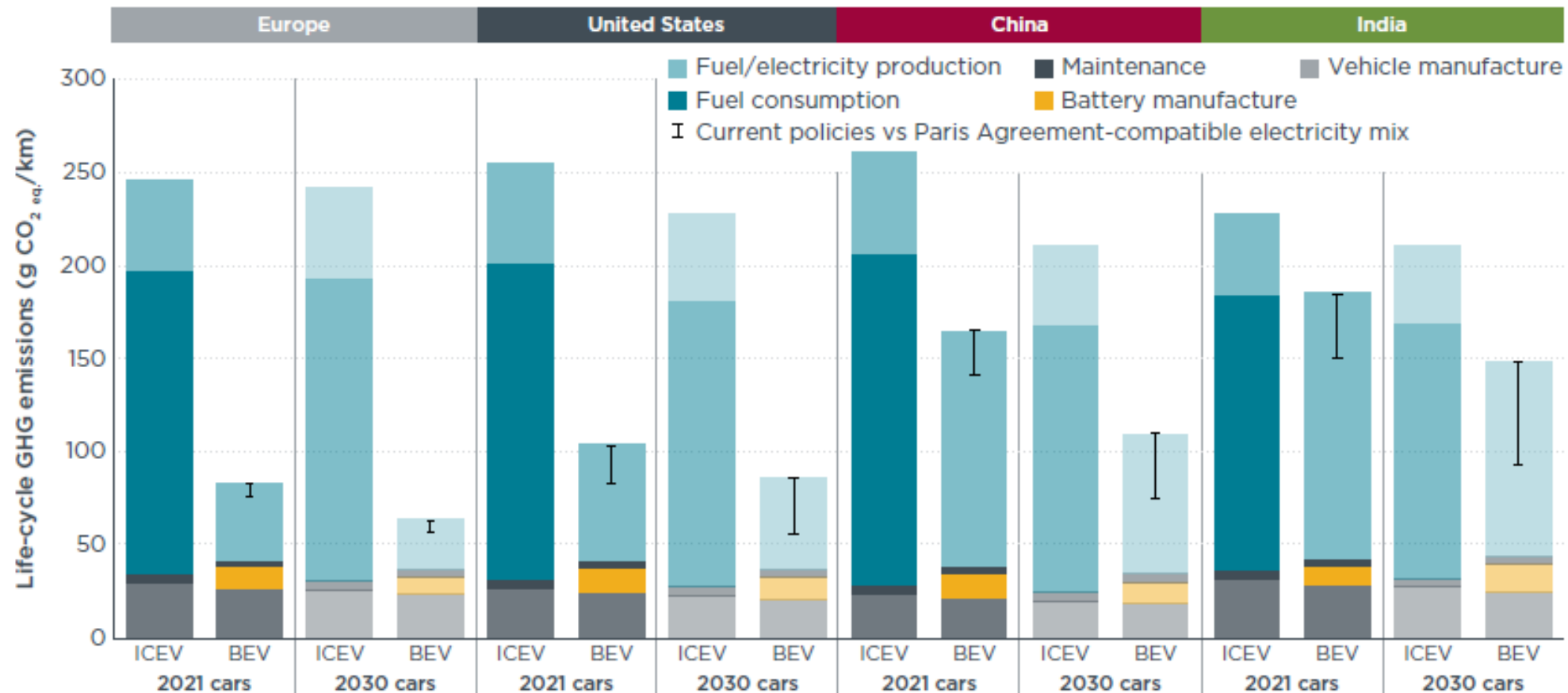
LCA is a method used to evaluate the environmental impact of a product through its life cycle encompassing raw material extraction and processing, manufacturing, distribution, use, recycling, and final disposal.

Source: Ilgin and Gupta, “Environmentally conscious manufacturing and product recovery (ECMPRO): A review of the state of the art,” Journal of Environmental Management, January 2010

The Challenge: Vehicle Regulations Focus on the Tailpipe, LCA adds Upstream



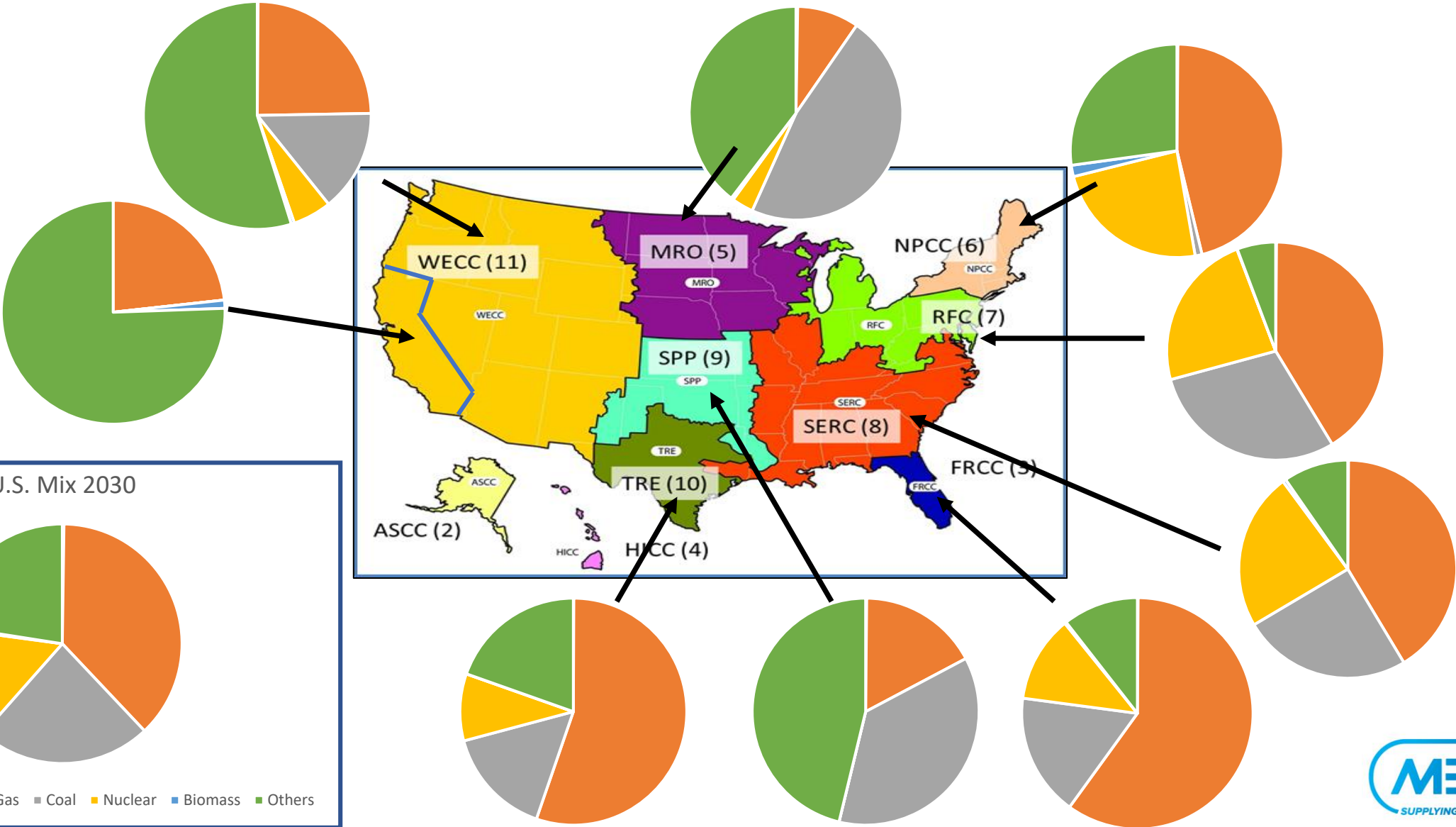
LCA Studies: ICCT



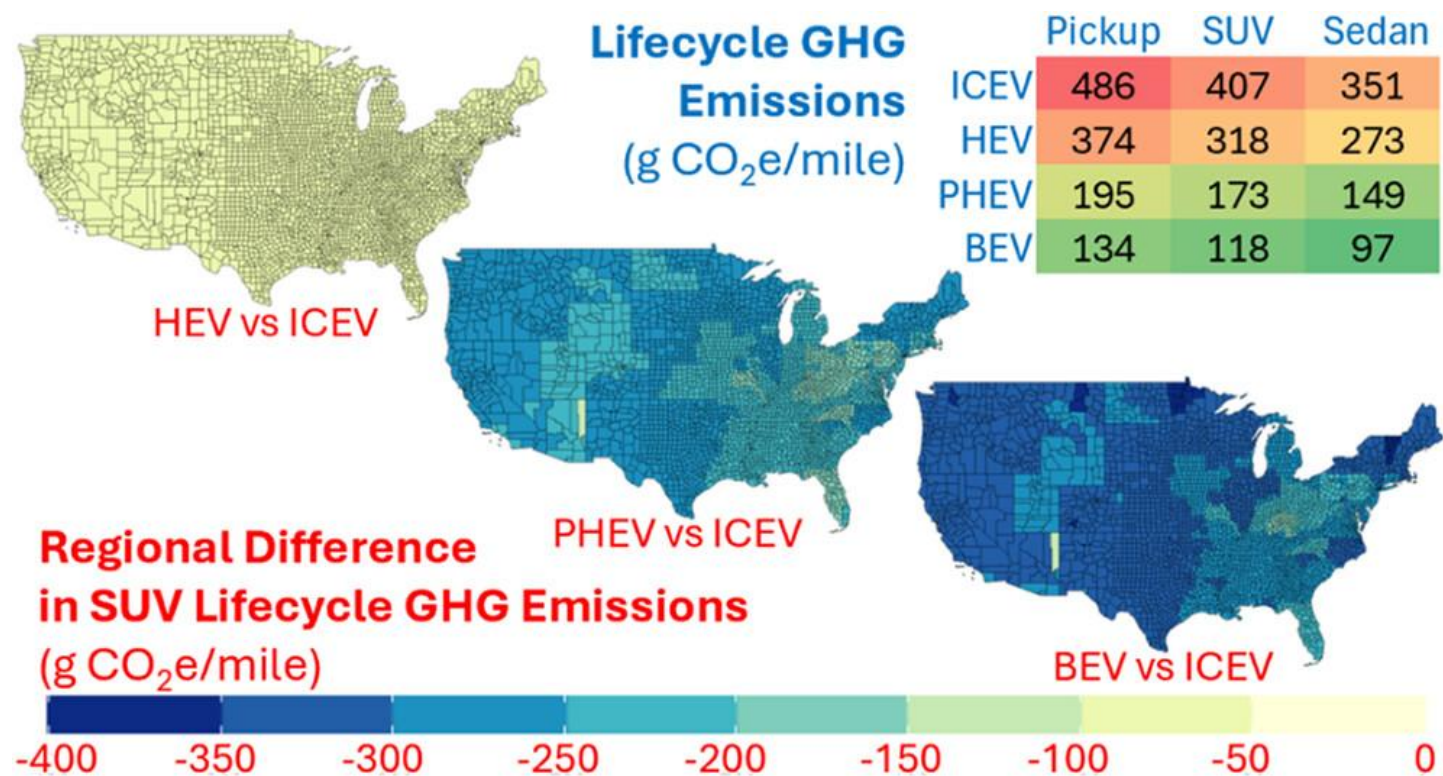
Source: “A Global Comparison of the Life-Cycle Greenhouse Gas Emissions of Combustion Engine and Electric Passenger Cars,” Georg Bieker, July 2021.

U.S. Electricity Mixes Included in GREET for 2030

■ Residual Oil ■ Natural Gas ■ Coal ■ Nuclear ■ Biomass ■ Others



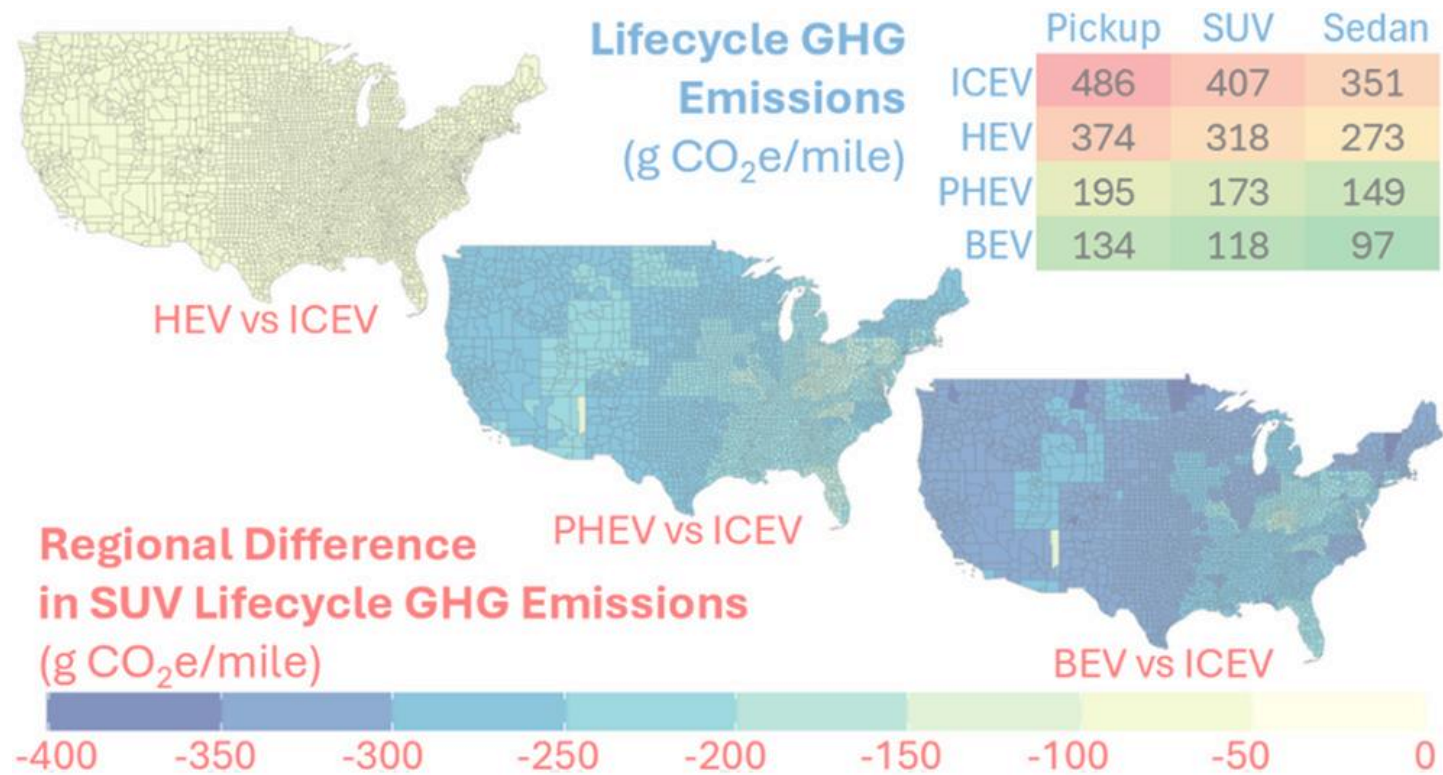
Recent LCA Studies: University of Michigan



Cradle to grave GHG emissions of BEVs (300 mile) have 30% lower emissions than PHEVs, 60% lower emissions than HEVs and 70% lower emissions than ICE across the US electricity system

Source: Smith et al., “Greenhouse Gas Reductions Driven by Vehicle Electrification across Powertrain, Classes, Locations and Use Patterns,” Science & Technology, August 2025.

Recent LCA Studies: University of Michigan



“Unlike the carbon intensity of gasoline, which remains constant throughout the vehicle’s lifetime, the grid emissions factor is updated throughout the vehicle lifetime.”

Assumptions for MECA's LCA Results in this Presentation

Lifecycle emissions modeled with vehicle and fuel pathways in GREET 2020

Year of analysis - 2030

Vehicle class: Family sport utility vehicle (SUV)

Vehicle miles traveled (VMT): Any combination with full useful life of 150,000 miles

BEV assumptions

- Original battery lasts life of vehicle
- Battery recycling not included
- Charging efficiency of 85%
- Battery range 300 miles

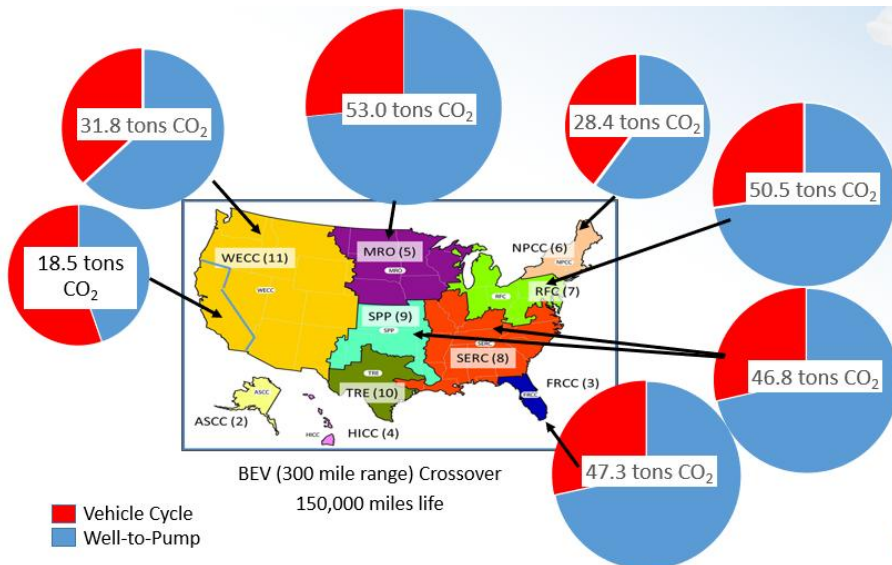
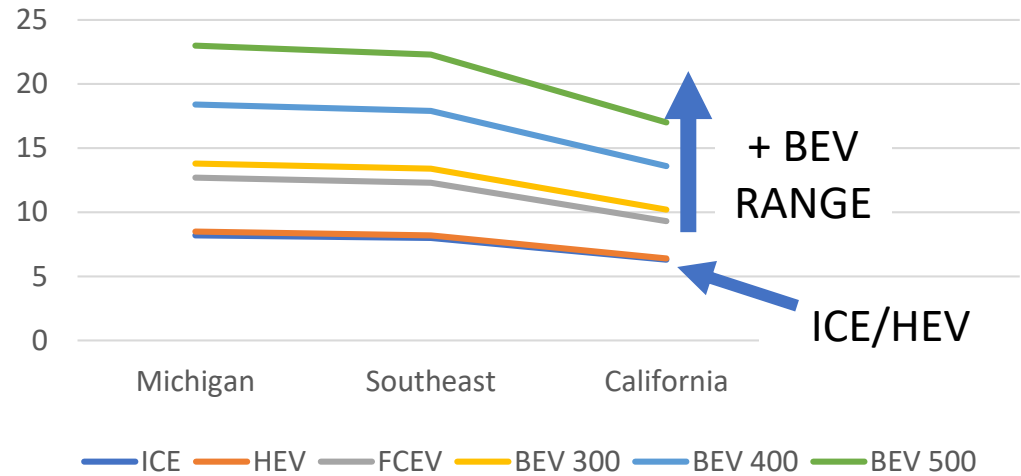
E-Fuel assumptions

- Renewable energy used for production, including H₂ gas generation via electrolysis at local plant (no transport) and no liquefaction of H₂
- E-gasoline “credit” equal to 75% of tank-to-wheels CO₂ (Based on Mobil methanol process efficiency)
- E-diesel “credit” equal to 90% of tank-to-wheels CO₂ (Based on Fischer-Tropsch process efficiency)

LCA Sensitivities: How the Assumptions Affect Results



Vehicle Production Cycle GHGs (tons)

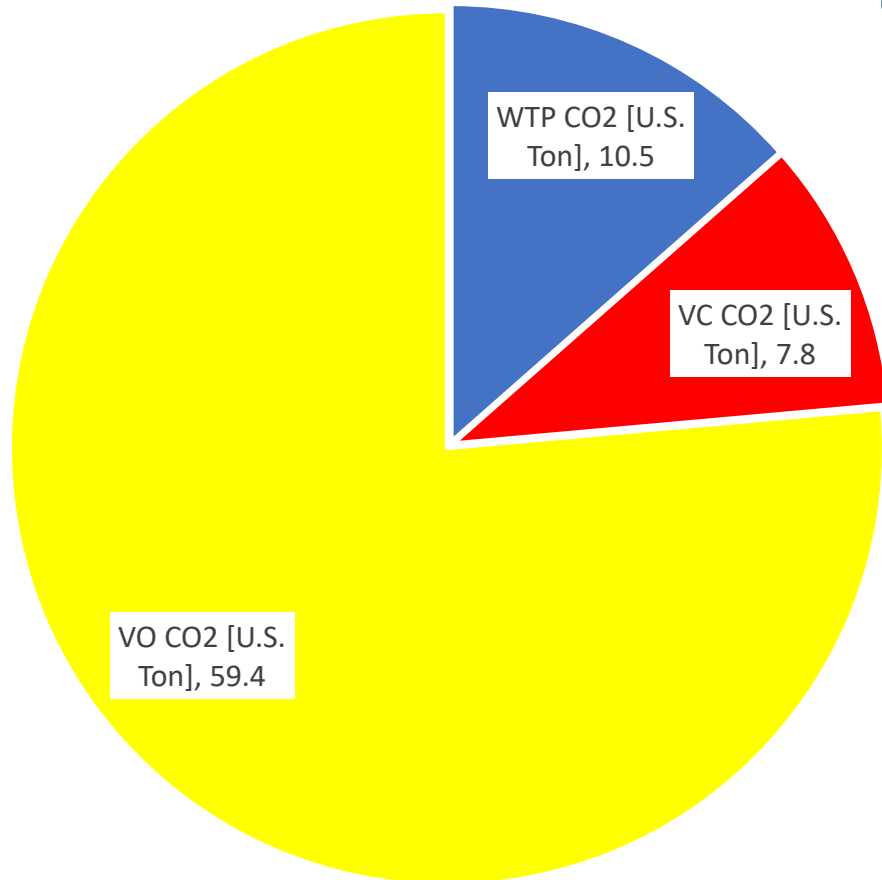


Vehicle-Fuel Combinations: Common LCA Comparison

ICE SUV Running on E10

77.7 tons CO₂

470 g/mi



*Battery Electric Vehicles,
especially when charging from a
renewable grid, are excellent
technology choices for
decarbonizing transportation.*

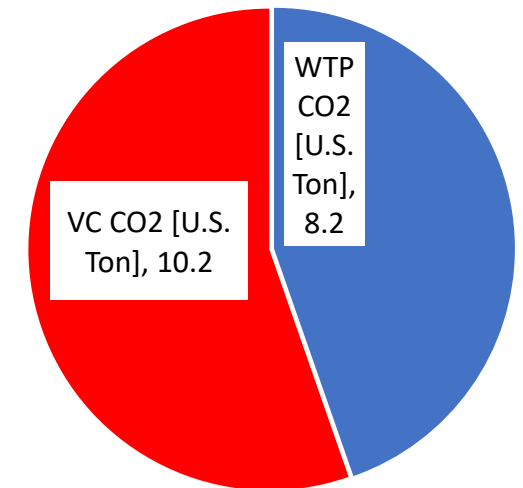
Transportation Transition



BEV (300 mile range) SUV
Running on California Grid

18.5 tons CO₂

112 g/mi

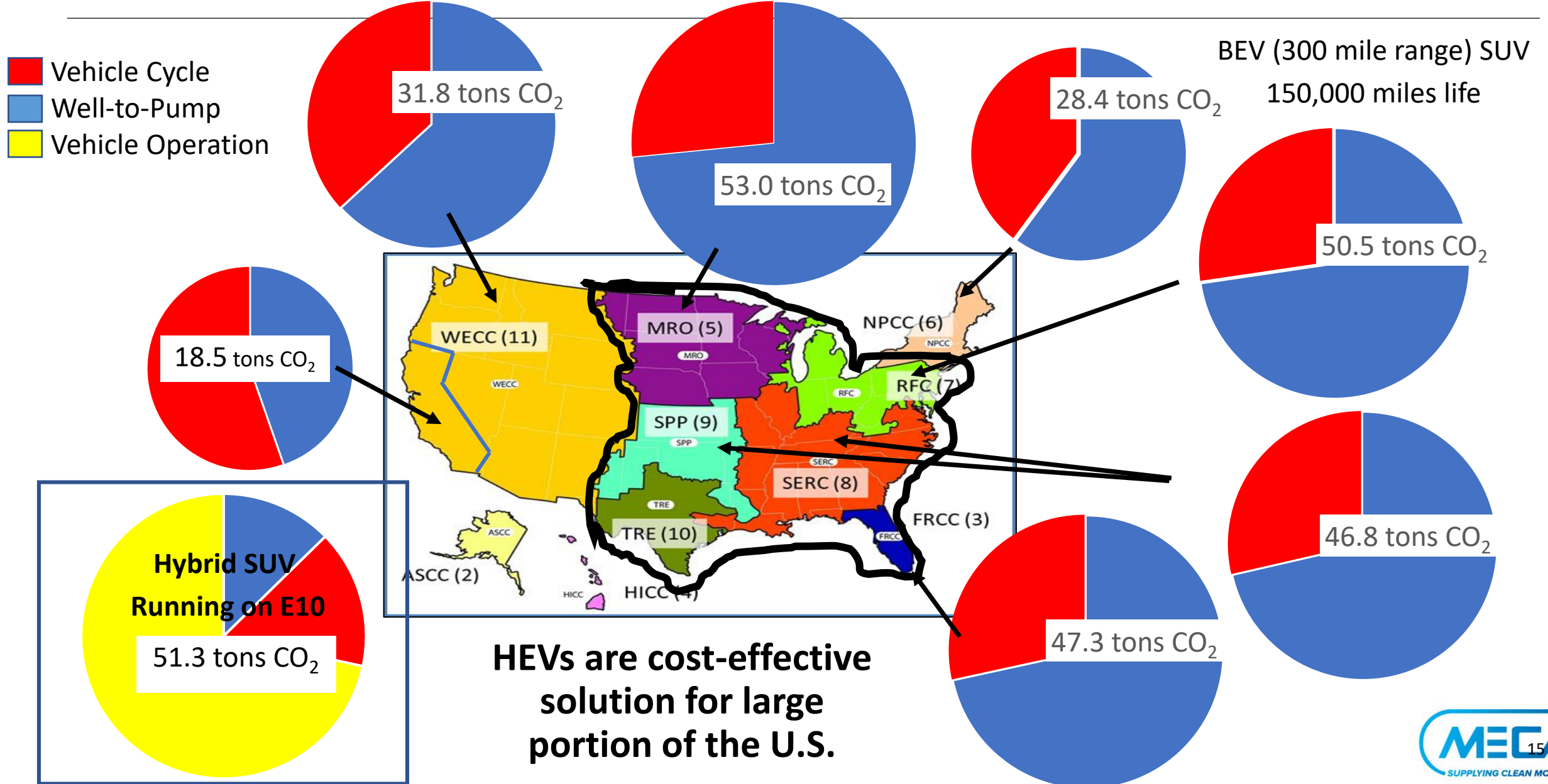


VO: Vehicle Operation

VC: Vehicle Cycle (manufacturing)

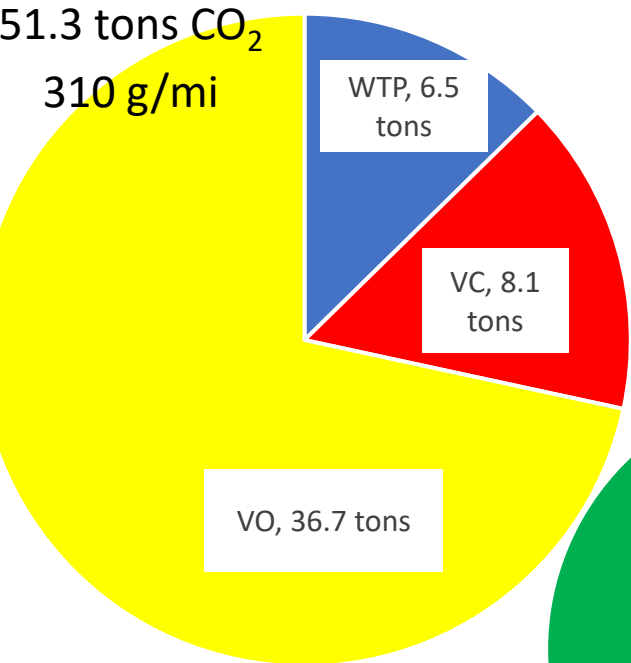
WTP: Well to Pump (fuel cycle)

Hybrids and BEVs Provide Similar GHG Benefits in 2030 in a Large Part of the U.S.

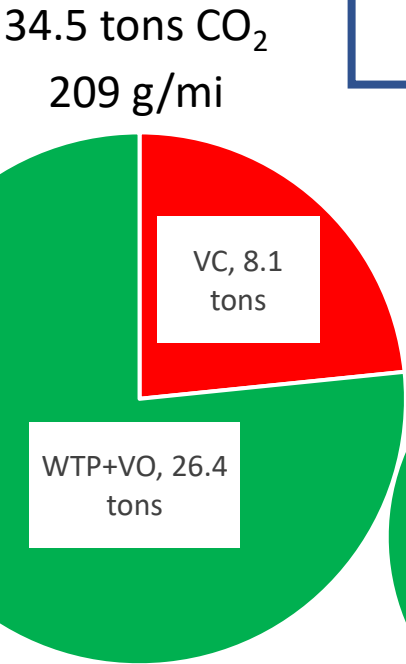


Alternative Fuels Offer ICE Pathway to Reduce GHGs

Hybrid, E10

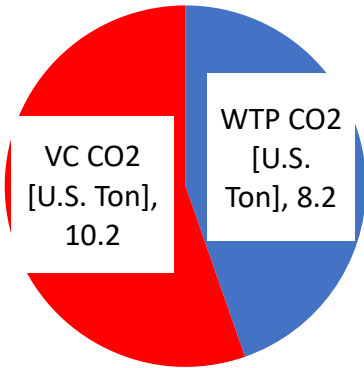


Hybrid, E85



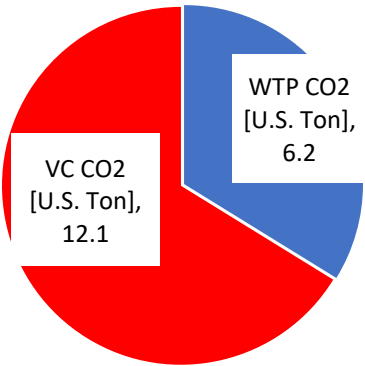
BEV SUV

300 mile range
California Grid
18.5 tons CO₂
112 g/mi



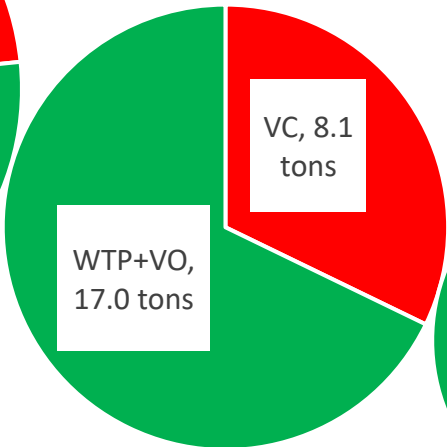
FCEV SUV

Renewable H2
18.2 tons CO₂
110 g/mi



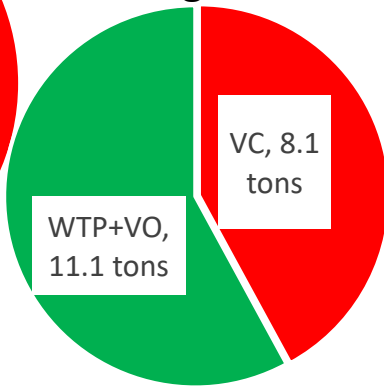
Hybrid, E-gasoline

25.1 tons CO₂
152 g/mi



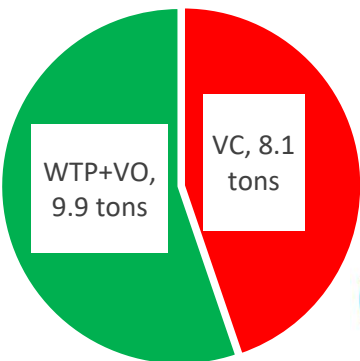
Hybrid, Renewable gasoline

19.2 tons CO₂
116 g/mi



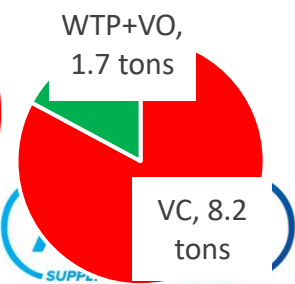
Hybrid, E-diesel

18.0 tons CO₂
109 g/mi



ICE, RNG
(Northeastern Midwest)

9.9 tons CO₂
60 g/mile

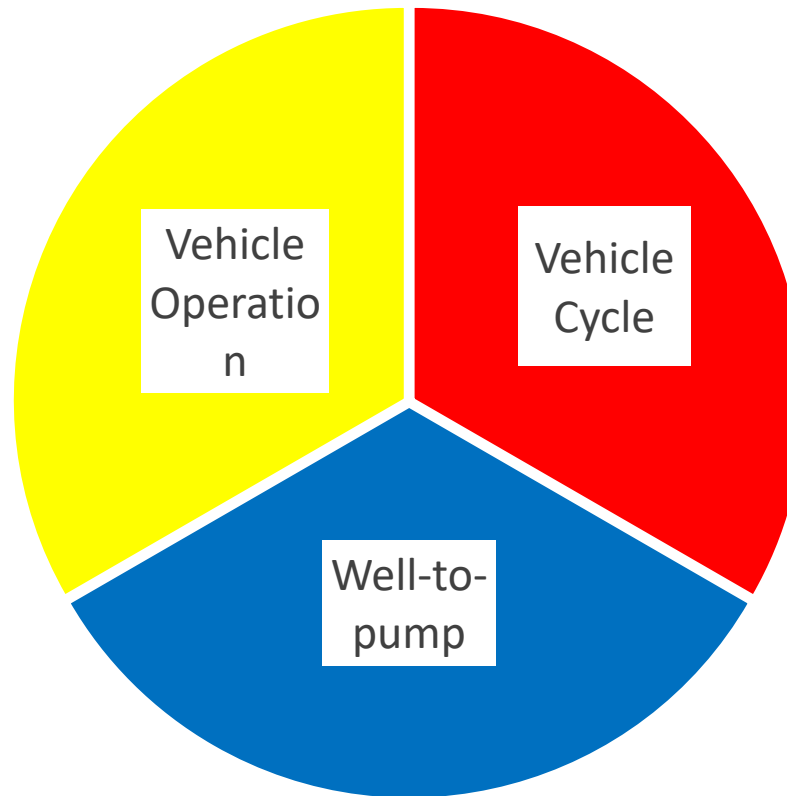


LCA Offers Balanced Approach to Reducing Transportation GHGs

ICEs: Downsized turbocharged engines, EGR, advanced fuel systems, variable valve actuation, advanced transmissions, hybridization

BEVs: High efficiency motors, thermal management

Fuels*: Low carbon fuels (bio, renewable, electro)



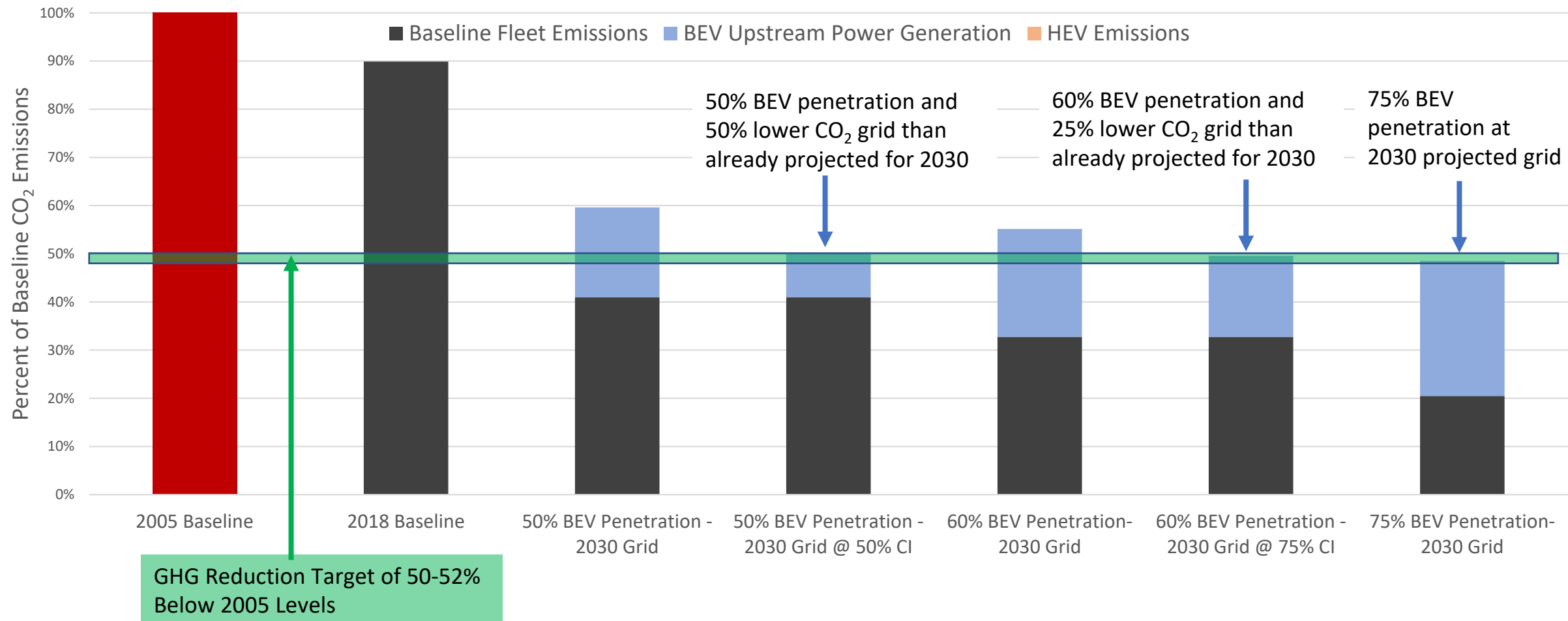
Sustainable manufacturing, recycled materials, battery chemistry, battery durability

Increased renewable electricity for both vehicle charging and for fuel production and refining

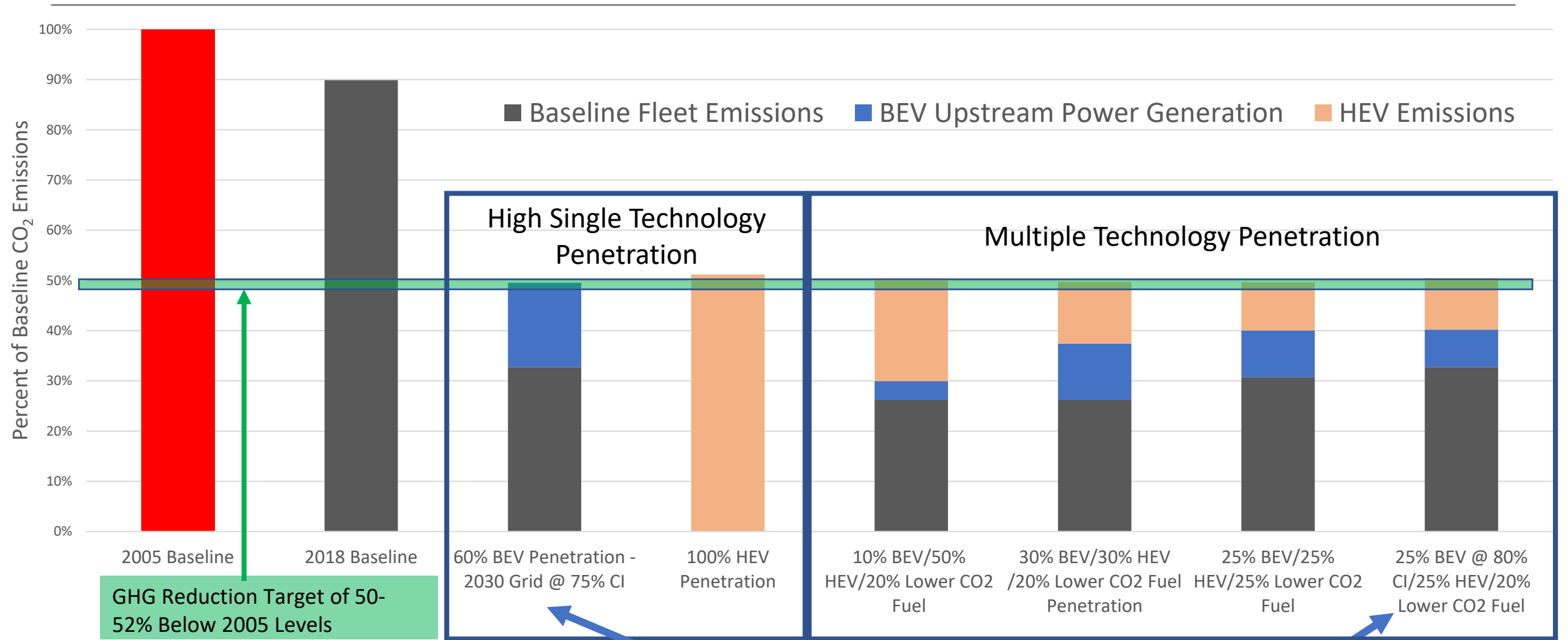
**Fuel carbon may be discounted upstream (in well-to-pump) rather than during vehicle operation*

Meeting Climate Targets with only BEVs

Passenger Car GHG Reduction Scenarios in 2030



Meeting Climate Targets with Multiple Solutions in 2030



Summary and Conclusions

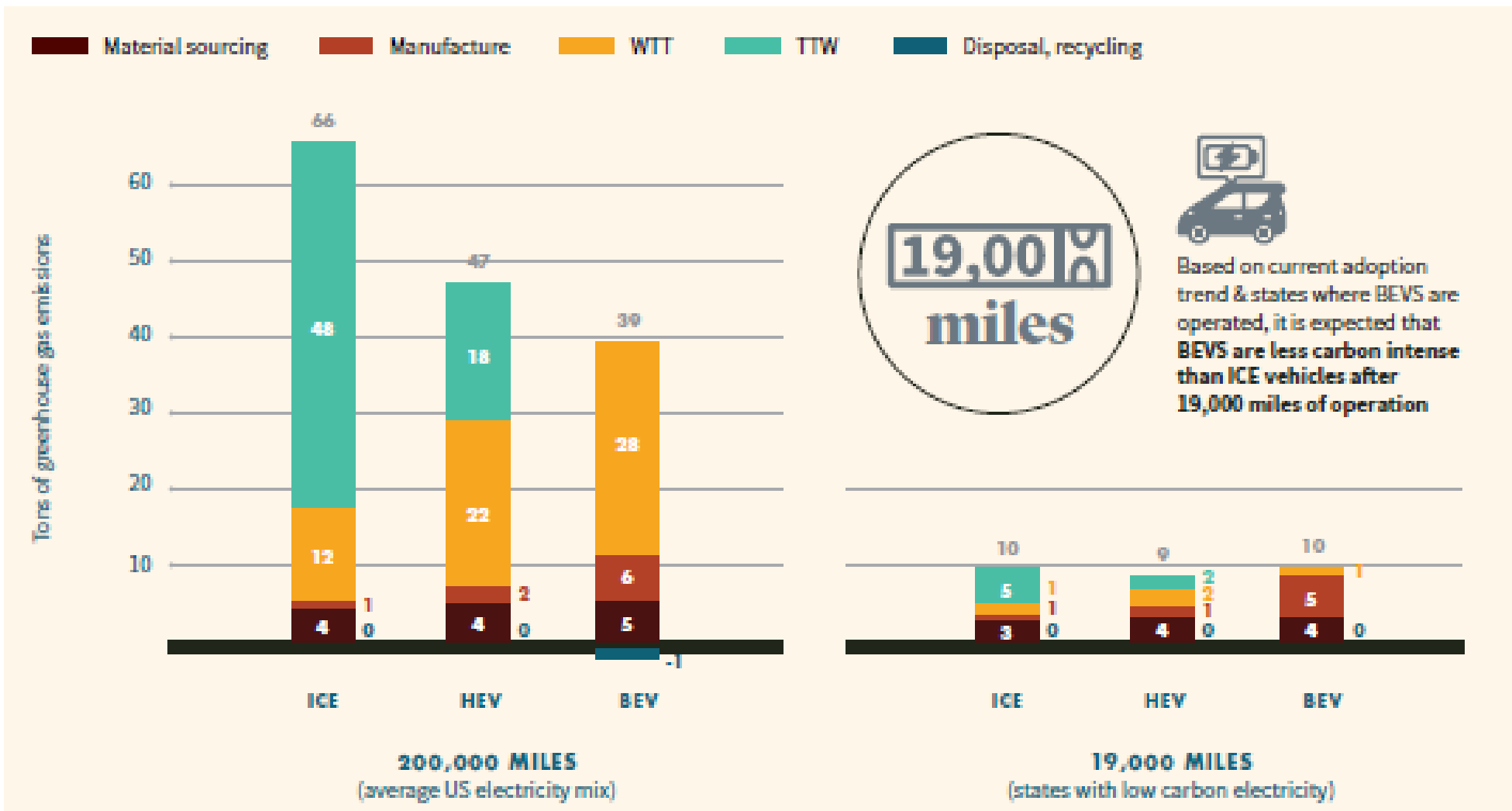
- **LCA is a tool to help technology suppliers understand future powertrain markets and inform regulators when developing GHG reduction strategies**
- **LCA outputs are sensitive to the baseline assumptions and future projections**
- **Policies that incentivize the efficiency of all powertrains, ICE and electric, will lead to maximum GHG benefits.**
- **Policies that decarbonize the grid and incentivize alternate fuel for in-use and new ICE vehicles will yield the greatest and fastest GHG benefits.**

Thank You!

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LCA Studies: Fuels Institute



Source: “Life Cycle Analysis Comparison,” Fuels Institute, January 2022.