Central Coast Celebrates Its First Hydrogen Fueling Station

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — The Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District and Community Environmental Council — along with dozens of supporters and 10 hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles of different makes and models — celebrated the opening of True Zero’s Santa Barbara hydrogen fueling station on Friday, May 13. Supporters include True Zero, California Air Resources Board, California Energy Commission, California Fuel Cell Partnership, Central Coast Clean Cities Coalition, California Governor’s Office, Toyota, Honda, Hyundai, Mercedes-Benz, and Conserv Fuel.

This is the first retail hydrogen fueling station in Santa Barbara County and on the Central Coast, and among 17 in California. The station strengthens the state’s growing hydrogen station network and increases the range of travel for all drivers of hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs), which produce zero tailpipe emissions. As more FCEVs replace traditional cars on California’s roads, air quality will improve and greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants from transportation will decline.

“It’s an exciting day. The opening of this hydrogen station here in Santa Barbara definitely puts Santa Barbara County and the Central Coast on the hydrogen map,” said Aeron Arlin Genet, Director of the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District. “We have a lot of individuals here on the Central Coast who are interested in promoting and driving clean vehicle technologies.”

Tyson Ecklerle, Deputy Director of Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure in the Governor’s Office of Business & Economic Development, remarked on additional benefits of the clean-air cars. “You can pull up to the station and within 3-to-5 minutes, you’re on your way with 300 miles of range. It opens up a whole new market.”

Tim Brown, Founder and Chief Operating Officer of True Zero, remarked on the station’s role on the growing hydrogen map. “It’s a big step to broaden the network in California and to allowing these vehicles to stretch their legs and realize their full potential. It’s a big step for this area.”

“We look forward to making this city not just a destination but a true market for these vehicles. People can make this part of their everyday life — driving hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles,” said Stephen Ellis, Manager of Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles Marketing for Honda. Added David Raney, Corporate Manager of Regulatory Affairs and Powertrain Planning for Toyota, “I encourage all of you to continually watch hydrogen in the news. It is here to stay. It’s going to grow.”

“The Energy Commission helps to fund hydrogen refueling infrastructure like the station opening today in Santa Barbara,” stated California Energy Commissioner Janea A. Scott, who could not attend the ribbon-cutting but sent a representative in her place. “Transitioning California’s transportation sector to zero emission vehicles — vehicles with no tailpipe pollution — is a key component to achieving federal clean air standards and the state’s ambitious climate targets. This Santa Barbara hydrogen refueling station will enable fuel cell drivers to travel north and south along California’s coast.”

Speaking on behalf of the City of Santa Barbara, City Fire Chief Pat McElroy remarked, “This is the future. We’re really proud to be a part of the future here today in Santa Barbara.”
Said County Supervisor and Air Pollution Control District Board Chair Peter Adam of FCEVs, “They are fantastic to drive. As you all know, the beauty of the fuel cell car is that it takes just the same amount of time to refuel as do regular gasoline-powered cars.” Of the technology, Salud Carbajal, County Supervisor and Air Pollution Control District Boardmember said, “It’s good for our economy, good for our public health, and good for the environment. Thank you to everybody who’s played a role in this public-private partnership.”

Concluding the ceremony, Community Environmental Council Executive Director Sigrid Wright spoke about the Tri-Counties Hydrogen Readiness Plan, a project partnering the Community Environmental Council, the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District, neighboring air districts, and others with the goal of expanding hydrogen infrastructure in the region. “The planning that we’re doing is really important. Planning is just the first step. Today is an amazing opportunity to celebrate implementation.”

For a map of current and planned hydrogen stations, visit [www.cafcp.org/stationmap](http://www.cafcp.org/stationmap).
For more information on the Air Pollution Control District, visit [www.OurAir.org](http://www.OurAir.org).
For more information on the Community Environmental Council, visit [www.cecab.org](http://www.cecab.org).