

Confusion, conflict stall spread of alternative fuel vehicles

By **ANDREW BRIDGES AP Science Writer**

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Bakersfield Californian

WEST SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) - In the parking lot of a building squeezed between Interstate 80 and the Sacramento River, Kota Manabe did something at once as elemental as it was revolutionary: he topped off the tank of a sport utility vehicle.

The only suggestions that anything was out of the ordinary were the flame-retardant suit the Toyota engineer wore and the fuel he pumped into the Highlander: pure hydrogen.

"Basically, it's just like refueling at a normal station," fellow engineer Kyo Hattori said.

Almost.

While hydrogen is the most abundant element in the universe, as an automotive fuel it's about as commonplace as moon travel. There are only two hydrogen filling stations in the entire state.

The futuristic SUV being tested at the California Fuel Cell Partnership is part of an international push to create cars and trucks that run more cleanly and efficiently than any in history. Fuel cells combine hydrogen and oxygen to produce electricity and emit only water vapor and heat.

But the hydrogen-powered Highlander also exemplifies a critical problem faced by such alternative vehicles: They may be extremely friendly to the environment but they're mostly a mystery to consumers.

That disconnect is the result of several factors, including consumer uncertainty about performance and resistance to change by major automakers. As a result, the spread of alternative fuel vehicles has been slow.

"The Big Three have often used future vehicles as an excuse not to produce current innovations - it's the Wimpy approach, the 'I will gladly pay you Tuesday, but don't make us do anything today to increase fuel efficiency and in 10 to 20 years we will produce a much more efficient car,'" said Daniel Becker, director of the Sierra Club's global warming and energy program.

For decades, California has been at the forefront of the clean vehicle movement aimed at fighting smog and global warming while cutting dependence on imported oil. The innovations have been driven by California's Air Resources Board, which can set air quality standards independent of the federal government.

"The push for hydrogen fuel cells, hybrid cars and gasoline cars that have lower emissions than automakers ever claimed would be possible are all the result of air board regulations," said agency spokesman Richard Varenchik.

Today, the state is teeming with enterprises like the California Fuel Cell Partnership aimed at helping meet the state's zero emission mandate. The rule requires that an increasing percentage of new cars and trucks emit no pollution from their tailpipes.

The mandate was to have taken effect next year, but auto manufacturers won a preliminary injunction in June that delays implementation for two years and requires the Air Resources Board to review the rule in 2003.

Vehicles powered by alternative fuels are a big part of meeting that mandate, but thus far the movement has failed to gain much speed. As of 2001, there were about 456,000 alternative-fuel powered vehicles licensed in the United States, including those that run on batteries, natural gas and ethanol, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

Another 40,000 are hybrids, in which a gasoline engine is paired with an electric motor to boost fuel efficiency and reduce tailpipe emissions. Together, the numbers are dwarfed by the 210 million gasoline and diesel cars and trucks on the nation's roads.

Automakers argue that consumers won't buy cars simply because they are environmentally friendly.

"There can be no sacrifices. This vehicle has to be a better car," said Anthony Eggert, an engineer with Ford's Think Technologies, which is developing a hydrogen fuel-cell car.

Nor will anyone buy the newfangled technology unless it's appealing, said Leonard Stobar, a professor at Art Center College of Design, the Pasadena school that turns out roughly half of the world's car designers.

"You got to make them desirable. You got to make them attractive. You can make any vehicle that is good to the environment, but if I don't want to be seen in it, you won't sell it," said Stobar, who is helping develop a three-wheeled vehicle capable of driving coast-to-coast on a single tank of gas.

Automakers say hydrogen fuel cell vehicles come closest to fitting the bill because their power sources can be packaged in a way that allows more radical body designs. They can also pack a punch, as Eggert demonstrated on a recent test drive by gunning a Ford prototype.

They're also the cleanest thing going, since they spew only warm water vapor clean enough to inhale. Honda and Toyota plan to introduce the first hydrogen-powered vehicles in very limited numbers by year's end but claim they need another decade to perfect the technology.

For the time being, that leaves battery-powered vehicles as the only pure zero emission offerings. But their cost, limited range and the time they take to recharge have hampered their popularity.

A number of models have come and gone in recent years. The latest are Ford's Think electric vehicles, which the automaker intends to stop selling in the United States because of lack of demand.

One way to lower emissions is to boost fuel economy. But nationally, the Bush administration has been loath to boost efficiency requirements and has instead thrown its support behind hydrogen research.

Less than 6 percent of the 2002 models of U.S. cars and trucks get better than 30 miles per gallon, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In 2001, the weighted average of all new passenger cars and trucks was 20.4 mpg - a 21-year low.

Auto manufacturers say they would offer more fuel-efficient vehicles - if consumers wanted them.

"The fuel economy of our cars will be decided by consumers. They will choose the vehicles that suit them best," said Charles Territo, spokesman for the Alliance of Auto Manufacturers, an industry group.

Surveys suggest that 60 percent of new car and truck buyers are interested in fuel economy but are unwilling to compromise on design and performance, said Thad Malesh, an economist and auto analyst with J.D. Power and Associates.

"What they are saying is, 'I still want my truck, I just want better mileage,'" Malesh said. "They don't want to give up what they need."
Despite all the challenges, cars and trucks have quietly become cleaner and more efficient than ever before, even if they still run on fuels as prosaic as gasoline.

Recently introduced versions of the Honda Accord, Nissan Sentra and Toyota Prius hybrid are included in the growing fleet of "super low-emissions vehicles" in California, since they are 90 percent cleaner than the average 2002 model year car. About 50,000 super low-emissions vehicles have been sold or leased in California.

Some observers find that encouraging and predict that as alternative technologies are perfected, it's unlikely that any one fuel will be dominant, even if the overall number of available vehicles remains small.

"There is going to be an explosion of choice for consumers," predicted John Boesel, president of Calstart, a Pasadena consortium seeking to develop advanced transportation technologies. "My neighbor will come over and say, 'John, I got a new car' and the natural question will be 'What fuel?'"

Letters to the Editor
Bakersfield Californian

Farm Bureau plan a 'sham'

Sept. 15, 2002

They have got to be kidding!

Talk about nerve. The Farm Bureau is turning the principle of the "polluter pays" on its head. The Farm Bureau wants us, the people of Kern County, to subsidize the polluter.

What will be next? Will the Farm Bureau want a pollution credit for every tree in the national forest?

The Board of Supervisors should know that the public will not be hoodwinked by this Enronesque sham.

The Farm Bureau's proposal is simply illegal. The Board of Supervisors and the Farm Bureau should face facts. It's time to clean up the valley's air -- the worst in the nation. It's time for them to stop evading their responsibility.

Air pollution has to be stopped at the source. Farm equipment is the number one source of nitrogen oxide in the valley. Ag is the second, fourth and fifth largest sources of ozone-producing chemicals in the valley. Who do they think they are fooling?

The Board of Supervisors should stop this farce in its tracks. We need farmers who care about clean air, not schemers. You can put lipstick on a gorilla, but it's still a gorilla.

Our kids deserve better. We deserve better.

PAUL GIPE, Bakersfield

Kings County Dairy Plan Goes Unchallenged
Valley Voice Newspaper, Sept. 9, 2002

Kings County - Kings County's long term dairy plan - passed by the Board of Supervisors July 30th has survived a 30 day waiting period without a legal

challenge. The plan that allows development of new dairies in the county without filing an impact report is considered a breakthrough since no new dairy permits have been approved in the county or the south valley for more than three years due to environmental and legal challenges.

"I was waiting until 5 p.m. Thursday and then Friday and nothing happened," says chair of the Board of Supervisors Tony Borba. "I was just astounded" that no suit was filed.

The group most active in challenging the adequacy of the environmental reviews for new dairies has been the Center for Race, Poverty and the Environment (CRPE) who originally battled Kings County over the Boswell dairies in 1998. CRPE went on to file challenges to dairies up and down the valley including here in Tulare County and in Kern. An approval on the first dairy permit in Tulare County is to be heard by the Board of Supervisors September 17.

CRPE attorney Caroline Farrell told the Voice that "our clients didn't want up to pursue" any more challenges to the Kings County plan.

They passed the new dairy element of the Kings County General Plan in order to allow the dairy industry in the county to grow as well as to set standards to guide that growth and protect the public, says member of the board Tony Oliveira, himself a dairyman. "There's only about 137 dairymen out there but 137,000 people in Kings County," says Oliveira. "I'm not surprised that CRPE decided against another lawsuit given that this is the best dairy element produced in the United States."

It allows dairymen to come into areas approved for dairies and sets guidelines where dairies must keep out." Instead of reviewing each dairy's impact on the environment, the dairymen can simply apply for a construction permit provided he meets the dairy element requirements.

Mr. Borba says it's his understanding there are a couple of new dairies in the pipeline that will apply for permits but that "the price of milk has drastically reduced interest in expansion right now."

Among other things the new dairy element caps the number of milking cows that can be accommodated in the county at 381,980 milking and 870,191 animal units total. The county has some 126,000 milking cows right now. Kings recently landed one of the biggest mozzarella cheese plants in the US with construction of the new Leprino cheese plant near Lemoore dependent on the continued growth of the dairy industry here.

The dairy element was challenged in testimony by CRPE at the public hearing with the environmental group suggesting that not enough had been done in the plan to safeguard groundwater and air quality. But the element lays out what dairymen can do to mitigate any problems but suggests there are some impacts are unavoidable - particularly air quality problems. The EIR suggest there are significant impacts that are recognized by the plan that there is no reasonable

alternative to address. An example would be ammonia emissions that neither the EPA, CARB or the Valley Air Pollution Control District has jurisdiction over. CRPE has argued that dairymen could reduce animal emissions by pasturing them. But the county's response is that collection of disposal measure is more difficult in a pasture setting.

Efforts by some to promote methane digesters to reduce air pollution problems were rejected by the county after a number of experts suggested technology wasn't yet proven to mandate that approach. Tony Oliveira says that methane digesters or something akin to reduce emissions as well as the smell will be proven in the near future and that the dairy industry will be asked to adopt it once it gets to that stage.

Oliveira says the plan does include a water monitoring system to insure that salt loading and nitrogen leaching doesn't cause problems below dairies. The plan points to the high clay nature of much of the soil under dairies in Kings County providing a non porous layer to protect ground water.

Opponents have pointed to the fact that the valley is in a severe non attainment area for PM10 but that dairies are not included in the plan. The EPA has suggested they want dairies and other farm operations to be included in the Clean Air Acts jurisdiction. But in the meantime counties like Kings can say they've done all they can do by law without asking dairymen to go out of business.

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Smog raises babies' cancer risk

Valley youngsters inhale a lifetime's worth of toxins in first 21 days of life, study finds.

By Barbara Anderson

The Fresno Bee

(Published Monday, September 16, 2002, 7:16 AM)

Before their second month of life, babies in the San Joaquin Valley breathe enough toxic pollutants to exceed their lifetime acceptable risk for cancer, according to a report issued today by a national environmental organization.

A Fresno-area doctor, however, says the study may exaggerate the cancer risk.

"It is probably safe to say children are at greater risk from pollutants ... but this study doesn't do anything to help us measure what our risk is," says Dr. Stephen Stephenson, a pediatric oncologist and medical director at Children's Hospital Central California in Madera County.

According to the report, infants in the San Joaquin Valley reach their exposure limit by their 21st day.

The National Environmental Trust study is not making claims about how many cancer cases will result from breathing toxic pollutants, says Andy Igrejas, NET's environmental health director. "It's very hard to link those things directly, but what we are saying is everyone acknowledges that air pollution adds to the cancer risk."

The study says the risk from exposure to 10 toxic air pollutants accumulates more quickly in children because they inhale more air for their size than adults.

By age 1, the report says, Valley children have amassed 17 times the limit for the EPA's acceptable exposure level. The EPA goal for air pollutants is that the risk will be no more than one case of cancer for every 1 million people during a 70-year life span.

Stephenson, however, says the report is misleading. "This greatly exaggerates the risk to children and it presents it in a way that they wanted to make an extreme point."

In addition to covering the San Joaquin Valley, the report also lists the estimated cancer risk for children in the Sacramento Valley, San Diego and San Francisco Bay Area.

Children in Sacramento exceed the lifetime limit for cancer exposure by the 23rd day. Children in San Francisco and San Diego reach that point by the 19th day.

The report updates a study done of the cancer risk for children living in the Los Angeles area. That report, issued in February, says Los Angeles children pass the lifetime limit after 12 days.

The study says the majority of toxic exposure is from diesel particulates and four chemicals -- 1,3-butadiene, benzene, carbon tetrachloride and formaldehyde. All of these chemicals, except for carbon tetrachloride, are from cars, trucks, and farm and construction equipment, the report says. Carbon tetrachloride is found in refrigerants, though this use has been declining steadily.

In the Valley, 68% of the diesel emissions are from off-road sources, such as farm equipment and construction equipment and generators; about 24% are from on-road vehicles and the remainder from other stationary equipment, Igrejas says.

Diesel particles appear to have the greatest effect, Igrejas says. "It dwarfs the other chemicals."

Statewide, diesel represents 70% of the airborne toxic pollutants that Californians are exposed to, says Jerry Martin, a California Air Resources Board spokesman.

California has identified diesel as a toxic air contaminant and the state currently has the most aggressive diesel cleanup program in the country, Martin says.

Earlier this month, the EPA, which regulates diesel emissions under the Clean Air Act, reported that evidence suggests that diesel emissions are a cancer risk to humans.

Nationwide, tougher EPA regulations on diesel trucks and cleaner diesel fuels should be in force by 2007 and are expected to reduce emissions.

The goal of the NET report, says Igrejas, is to "underscore the urgency and the need to move as aggressively as possible to clean up this pollution."

The reporter can be reached at banderson@fresnobee.com or 441-6310.

Clearer picture on air

There is growing awareness of the seriousness of pollution problems.

Fresno Bee (Published Sunday, September 15, 2002, 5:10 AM)

There is palpable evidence that Valley residents are taking that crucial first step in the thousand-mile journey toward cleaner air -- an awareness is plainly growing that we cannot continue, that we must do something, and that steps once regarded as radical may soon be seen as necessary.

For one thing, people seem to talk about the air quality more, and the sort of passive acceptance that characterized many people in the past appears to be giving way to a more aggressive attitude. People still talk about being able to look to the east and see the Sierra Nevada outlined clearly just about every day in years gone by, but now it's said with a harsher tone than the wistful acceptance.

Perhaps that's because the evidence of the problem has become so overwhelming. One weather forecast after another talks of "unhealthful air tomorrow." Unhealthful -- as in, "It is doing damage to you." Leave a car outside and see the patina of dust coat it faster than was once the case.

The greatest evidence of all, and the most chilling: Fresno has the highest incidence of childhood asthma in the nation. The air we breathe is killing some of our children, and doing damage to the rest. That's intolerable.

But it does seem that we're are getting it, or at least beginning to do so. An example: Fresno Mayor Alan Autry recently visited The Bee's editorial board to talk about a plan he has for helping to clear the air. Like much of what Autry brings to the public arena, it is visionary. Like most visions, it will probably need a good deal of fleshing out before it can be put into operation.

But what Autry proposes is, well, breathtaking in a way. He speaks of convening city and county leaders from across the region, in much the same

way he gathered local mayors a while back, to forge a regional approach to air quality improvement.

He ticks off the list of areas where incremental gains -- which add up to a substantial whole -- can be made against pollution: more and better mass transit, carpooling, flexible schedules, better farming practices -- just simply walking to more places.

He acknowledges the progress recently made in getting Bay Area residents to help with the fraction of our problem that blows in from the north. Autry speaks of such ideas as monorail trains, and takes pains to assert that such notions are not pie-in-the-sky, as they have been called in the past.

Can we imagine an earlier mayor of Fresno saying that? That's no knock against Autry or any of his predecessors. It's simply a measure -- an encouraging measure -- of how this debate has shifted.

We may not actually build monorails; some other solution or set of solutions may emerge as better choices. But our willingness to think big is a healthy sign. We've got a big problem to fix, and it will take big ideas and even bigger efforts to fix it.

Valley smog blows whistle on games

Afternoon events are halted with air advisory.

By Jim Davis

The Fresno Bee

(Published Saturday, September 14, 2002, 5:59 AM)

High school football is played in the central San Joaquin Valley in rain, mud and sometimes even fog.

But not in bad air.

Athletic directors in Fresno, Clovis and some surrounding communities canceled junior varsity games and other outdoor events Friday, reacting to an air quality health advisory.

"What can you do?" asked William Acuna, Roosevelt High School athletic director. "Healthwise, it's better for the kids that we do this -- we don't want anyone collapsing or hurting themselves out there."

Even so, students complained about missing their games. Diego Galindo, a Parlier High sophomore, was set to play right guard in his school's first home junior varsity game.

"We were really pumped up to play," Galindo said. "I think it's really dumb -- who really cares about the air?"

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District issued the advisory early Friday based on its forecast. It called for schools in Fresno, Clovis and

southeast Fresno County, including Selma, Reedley, Sanger and Parlier, to quit outdoor activity from 3 to 7:30 p.m.

But the air quality never got as bad as predicted.

Evan Shipp, the air district's supervising meteorologist, said that if the district had waited too late to call the advisory, it would have been impossible to get the word out.

"We were trying to err on the side of good public health," Shipp said.

The advisory did not extend into Madera, Kings, Tulare or western Fresno counties.

When a health advisory is called, state law requires kindergarten-through-grade 12 schools to curtail outdoor activities like athletics. Varsity football wasn't affected because games weren't scheduled to start before 7:30 p.m.

The advisory is called when the amount of pollutants reaches 145 parts per billion air particles.

Thursday evening, the district's station at Parlier recorded a high of 148 parts per billion. Shipp said a warm air system trapped polluted air around the Fresno area.

Friday's high recording in Parlier was 130, and Shipp said air quality should continue to improve.

While football games have been canceled in Southern California because of air quality, local officials said they could not remember canceling football games in Fresno County.

David Wright, Selma High's athletic director, said his school has canceled practices, but "it didn't happen on Friday night football."

The advisory caused athletic directors to scramble. Some schools rescheduled games; others canceled them altogether.

Some varsity football games were pushed back to 8 p.m. so players could warm up and stretch outside; other schools started games at 7:30 p.m., but the players stretched inside gyms.

A 32-team boys water polo tournament started Friday at the two outdoor swimming pools at Clovis West High School. Clovis West Athletic Director Karen Sowby said tournament officials juggled the schedule so teams played before and after the advisory hours, and rescheduled some games for early today.

"It's been a real Friday the 13th around here," Sowby said.

Her school also rescheduled its junior varsity football game with Central for 10 a.m. today.

But Parlier wasn't rescheduling its game with Sierra as of early Friday afternoon.

"Me and my friends were all talking about it," said Galindo, the sophomore. "I mean, football is football. Everyone wants to see it played. Who cares about the weather?"

Parlier freshman Andrew Escalela was going to play his first game in front of his parents. He had to call to tell them the game was canceled.

"I don't think anything is going to happen to us, dude," Escalela said. "No one's dying or anything. Just let us play."

But bad air can cause medical problems. Dr. A.M. Aminian, a Fresno allergist, warned that the combination of air pollution, high amounts of pollen and high temperatures can be harmful.

He said that a person exercising breathes three times as much as a person at rest and the pollutants can irritate the lungs and bronchial tubes. The doctor said it can be especially dangerous for people with respiratory problems like asthma.

"These people can get irritated lungs, they can't breathe very well, and they're at risk for having major respiratory problems," Aminian said.

Clovis West's Sowby said, "It constantly surprises me how many children are affected by asthma and respiratory disease that you used to not see. I think they're being cautious, and that's fine with us."

The reporter can be reached at jmdavis@fresnobee.com or 441-6171.

BAD AIR DAY

Fresno area school districts canceled outdoor events after an air quality health advisory was issued Friday. The canceled events included these high school junior varsity football games:

Centennial at Edison

Exeter at Reedley

Yosemite at Roosevelt

Redwood at Buchanan

Bullard at Clovis

Clovis West at Central

Hoover at Sanger

Greenfield at Selma

Sierra at Parlier

HEALTH ADVISORIES

The number of health advisories called in the past five years by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District:

2002	7
2001	3
2000	5
1999	2
1998	16

New gas engines rated nearly pollution-free

Thu Sep 5, 8:56 AM ET

James R. Healey USA TODAY

Gasoline engines now in production can be nearly pollution-free, a California university engineering laboratory reports after three years of study.

The finding suggests Americans can enjoy much cleaner air without the high price of electric cars.

“You won’t get to zero (emissions), but you will get pretty close,” says Joseph Norbeck, director of the facility that performed the challenging tests at the University of California-Riverside.

For now, the promising technology is limited to California because to work right, the engines require low-sulfur gasoline that is widely available only there.

It probably will take a federal mandate for the clean fuel to become available across the USA, opening the door to cleaner-burning engines everywhere.

Environmentalists saluted the report, though it paints the gasoline internal-combustion engine as less a villain than they prefer.

“You have to be practical. The internal-combustion engine is going to be around 20 or 30 years, so you need to address air quality

problems,” says David Friedman, engineer and senior analyst at the Union of Concerned Scientists, which favors hydrogen power. “It’s a significant finding.”

“It’s good news and shows that the auto industry, when it uses advanced technology, can do better than the law requires,” says Dan Becker, spokesman for the Sierra Club (news - web sites), an environmental group.

UC tested the two cars with four-cylinder engines that meet

California’s strictest anti-pollution standards for gasoline engines:

Nissan Sentra and Honda Accord.

The engines have been sold in small numbers, but starting with 2003 models, the Honda engine is standard in California-market Accord

sedans with automatic transmissions, and the Nissan engine is standard in California Sentras.

Honda and ChevronTexaco helped pay for the UC research. Other money came from state and federal agencies.

“If auto companies and oil companies are commissioning a report that shows they can use technology to improve things, I’m not troubled at all,” Becker says.

Farm: Dairy plan successfully implemented

By Eiji Yamashita

Sentinel Reporter

HANFORD -- Kings County's new dairy guidelines adopted in late July have been implemented without a legal challenge -- to county government leaders' relief, officials said recently.

At the time the Dairy Element of the Kings County General Plan was adopted on July 31, the officials feared that a watchdog group might sue the county to challenge the environmental findings and passage of the policy.

But the 30-day deadline, specified by state law, has passed without such a lawsuit, said Planning Agency Director Bill Zumwalt. The statute of limitations expired on Aug. 29.

Officials are in agreement that their hard work has paid off, Zumwalt said.

"We thought we did the job that met the requirement of law and we believe everyone agrees," Zumwalt said. "We worked very very hard and spent a lot of time to ensure that we did it right."

Previously, it was feared that a Delano-based watchdog group -- the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation Center on Race, Poverty and Environment -- would challenge the Dairy Element's adoption in court.

The group had once sued the county in 1998, after decision-makers approved agri-business giant J.G. Boswell's project to reconstruct 7,000-acre Chamberlain Ranch for sale to a dairy. The case was settled in 2000, as Boswell withdrew the project.

The lawsuit was filed when concerns peaked over the influx of large dairies into the Central Valley from Southern California. In response, Kings County quickly set out to develop comprehensive policies that could guide development in the dairy industry, the county's economic lifeline, while protecting the public health and environment.

Staff attorney for the group, Brent Newell, acknowledged on Monday that the group did not sue the county over the Dairy Element but declined to discuss the reason behind its inaction.

Newell had once expressed disagreement with the legality of the plan's adoption when the Board of Supervisors passed the Dairy Element, arguing the document reflects only a status quo in the level of environmental protection.

The group has not changed its position, he said.

Calling it an "inadequate piece of county policy," Newell said the Dairy Element fails to require enough mitigations to protect the environment, as well as the public health of Kings County.

Newell's group spoke on behalf of the Association of Irrigated Residents, a grassroots organization representing environmentally sensitive citizens in the region.

The implementation of the Dairy Element will kick into full gear later this month when the county's related zoning ordinance change takes effect. Starting Sept. 23, the planning agency can issue permits for new and expanding dairies under the new streamlined administrative approval process, Zumwalt said.

The environmental impact report completed for the Dairy Element takes away the need for new applicants to conduct their own EIR before starting construction. The projects, however, must comply with the Dairy Element's requirements to receive a site plan review permit.

If not, the applicants must go through the traditional conditional use permit process -- a costly, lengthy process involving an environmental impact report and public hearings.

Ford pulls plug on electric car

Stockton Record, September 15, 2002 Posted: 05:30:14 AM PDT

Another blow has been dealt to the environmentalists as the Ford Motor Co. has halted production of its electric vehicle "Think" due to virtually no sales of the car. Nationwide, Ford has sold barely more than 1,000 of them and has determined that the market is just not there for alternative energy vehicles. Ford has lost more than \$100 million on this project and is going to write it off as a lesson learned.

I'd like to ask Ford leaders why they would manufacture a car that nobody would want. Is it not clear that the public just doesn't want these types of vehicles? How nice it was to learn that stock prices in the Ford Motor Co. rose substantially upon learning of this development.

SCOTT ROSENQUIST

Hughson