



## California Hydrogen Car Owners Association (CHCOA) Proton Monthly – July 2023

July 31, 2023

### Despair And Optimism



July has been a tough month for hydrogen car owners in California. Largely because of the hot temperatures this month, lines were long, patience was short, and many of us despaired for the future of these cars. Bobbie and I were no different. We live in the foothills east of Sacramento, and for the most part, our Mirai has stayed in the garage these past weeks. In fact, it was our overnight experience last December at a Sacramento fueling station that started the Association. After that terrible

experience Bobbie and I, along with other hydrogen car drivers, started CHCOA.

“Going negative” is not a responsible option for our newsletter, but we would be remiss if we did not bring up the two other elephants in the room:

- According to the Hydrogen Fuel Cell Partnership, as of July 12 there are currently 59 available H<sub>2</sub> stations in CA, there were 52 stations when we purchased our Mirai in 2021 with a goal of 100 stations by the end of 2023<sup>1</sup>. To everyone’s consternation (including state regulators) we are not meeting the goals for station development.
- The average cost of fuel at California H<sub>2</sub> stations is slightly greater than \$29/kg, an 84% increase since 2021.

Still, there are many bright spots in the future outlook for H<sub>2</sub> cars. Here is a recent sampling:

- Bobbie and I had a great conversation last week with Elsa Wright of the Governor’s GO-Biz office. Ms. Wright described that with the passing of Senate Bill 1291 last September, we should see construction timelines for new stations decrease significantly. See the discussion summary on Page 2.
- The CA Energy Commission approved the *California Light-Duty Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle Survey* last Wednesday (<https://www.energy.ca.gov/filebrowser/download/5604>). If we, as H<sub>2</sub> drivers, do our part this survey could act as the catalyst that finally puts these vehicles on their well-deserved path into California’s green energy future. See Page 3 for more about this.

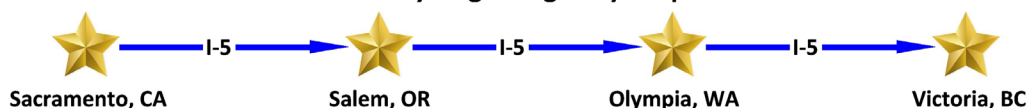
Our work for CHCOA has been nothing if not humbling. Each day that we learn more, we realize how much that we don’t know. To go a small way toward rectifying this, we will be taking a “Discovery Road Trip” in the Mirai in mid-August. We will be visiting staff at the City of Lancaster (First Hydrogen City), Heliogen’s Proxima Project (Tentative), Toyota’s R&D – Fuel Cell Development Center in Gardena, Sen. Josh Newman’s District Office in Fullerton, and more. We should have lots to report when we get back.

- Greg and Bobbie Cane  
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<sup>1</sup> 2021 Annual Evaluation of Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle Deployment and Hydrogen Fuel Station Network Development

Join us on the Hydrogen Highway - September 2025





Elsa Wright, ZEV Infrastructure Permitting and Development Specialist

July 26, 2023

### A Conversation with GO-Biz

This afternoon, Bobbie and I had a great chat with Elsa Wright, ZEV Infrastructure Permitting and Development Specialist for the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (aka, GO-Biz). The conversation mainly centered around Senate Bill 1291, signed into law in September of last year. SB1291, (“Hydrogen-fueling stations: administrative approval”) was developed to streamline the permitting of hydrogen-fueling stations. According to Senator Archuleta, the bill’s author:

*"California is a world leader when it comes to zero-emission vehicle deployment. However, California has focused primarily on plug in [EVs]. Hydrogen fuel cell vehicles are complimentary zero emission vehicles and California needs to do more to support their adoption. This bill does that by requiring local governments to expand their existing administrative approval process for the permitting of zero emission vehicle infrastructure to include hydrogen-fueling infrastructure."*

Those of us that drive hydrogen cars know that our greatest current frustration is offline fueling stations, but a close second is our puzzlement as to why it is taking so long to permit and construct new stations. SB1291 can go a long way toward fixing that.

As noted above, California has placed a greater emphasis on BEVs. Assembly Bill 1236, around which SB1291 was fashioned, required local jurisdictions to streamline the permitting of

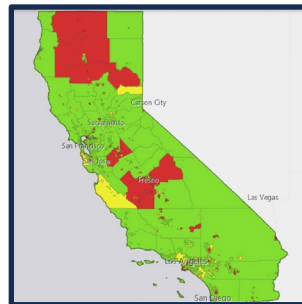
electric charging stations. It is encouraging to see the great success that GO-Biz has had in the implementation of AB1236. As reflected by the green areas in their Charging Station Streamlining Map (below), since the bill’s adoption in 2015, the large majority of jurisdictions have now complied with the streamlining requirements. In large part because of this GO-Biz work, CA now has over 12,000 electric charging stations. If they have a modicum of the same success with the H<sub>2</sub> stations, we should see permitting timelines decrease significantly. Historically, permitting has been the longest and most complicated portion of station development. GO-Biz has updated their Hydrogen Readiness website to include SB1291 resources and added a streamlining map to document progress on permitting in each city/county throughout the State. You can locate this website at:

<https://business.ca.gov/industries/zero-emission-vehicles/hydrogen-readiness/>

#### What can we, as H<sub>2</sub> drivers, do to help? Ms.

Wright emphasized that by far the greatest need at this time is

education. The lack of H<sub>2</sub> knowledge in the general public, as well as elected representatives, is a large challenge that needs to be addressed. **Call, or meet with, your State Assembly-person or Senator**



BEV Charging Station Streamlining Map

to let them know of the vital role that hydrogen cars can play in California’s green energy future.

For more information, contact me at [greg@h2tonps.org](mailto:greg@h2tonps.org), or Ms. Wright at [elsa.wright@gobiz.ca.gov](mailto:elsa.wright@gobiz.ca.gov).

- Greg Cane,  
President, CHCOA



## Legislative Corner

The California State Legislature recessed for the summer break on Friday, July 14, and will reconvene on Monday, August 14.

The status of the pertinent bills that we are tracking are, as follows:

As of July 11, **SB425** (expand rebates for FCEV pickup trucks) is currently in the “inbox” of the Assembly Appropriations Committee (APPR). The Assembly Natural Resources Committee recommended passing it to APPR in its [current format](#).

**SB84** was ordered to the Inactive File on June 1 by the bill’s author, Senator Gonzalez. As of this date, it remains there.

**AB241** has not passed the Assembly.

**AB126** was listed as being included in the Governor’s [compromise budget agreement](#). Salient changes from the existing law are, as follows:

### Existing law:

*The commission shall allocate twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000) annually to fund the number of stations identified pursuant to subdivision (d), not to exceed 20 percent of the moneys appropriated by the Legislature from the Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Fund, established pursuant to Section 44273, until there are at least 100 publicly available hydrogen-fueling stations in operation in California.*

### As adopted:

*The commission shall allocate ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) annually, until July 1, 2030, under the Clean Transportation Program to fund hydrogen-fueling stations to support hydrogen vehicles, not to exceed 10 percent of the moneys appropriated by the Legislature from the Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Fund, established pursuant to Section 44273, until there is a sufficient network of hydrogen-fueling stations in operation in California to support existing and expected hydrogen vehicles, as determined by the commission, and in consultation with the state board.*



## Light-Duty Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle Survey

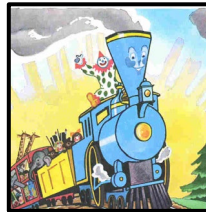
The Survey, funded by the California Energy Commission (CEC), will be completed by the UC Davis Institute of Transportation Studies (ITS). The goal of the survey, “*is to gain a better understanding of customer experiences with light-duty hydrogen refueling and hydrogen refueling market potential and to extend those results, for CEC’s review, to guide continued policy support for hydrogen fueling infrastructure.*”

The survey will contact 500 Light-Duty FCEV drivers in CA as well as setting up focus groups partly to determine driver experiences with FCEVs and hydrogen refueling.

This is an opportunity for hydrogen car drivers that should not be squandered. If contacted by ITS, please participate to your fullest ability.

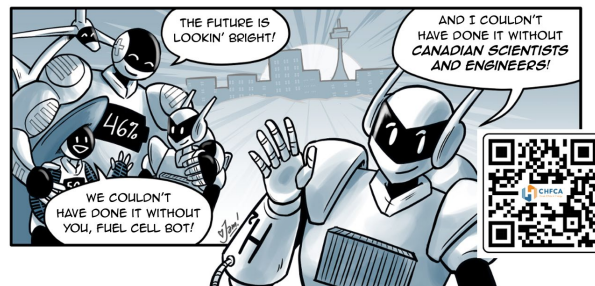
CHCOA will follow survey progress and will work with other stakeholders to bring the study results to the attention of Senate and Assembly representatives.

## The Little Station(s) That Could



This has been a tough month for station uptime. Still, a CHCOA member nominated the Bay Area True Zero stations for a good uptime record.

## Funny Pages



See the entire comic book at the Canadian Hydrogen and Fuel Cell website: <https://www.chfca.ca/hydrogen-fuel-cell-comic-book/>