



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

### - Welcome to the June Newsletter -

June 30, 2023

We are a bit late in getting this June newsletter out. Partly because we are visiting family in Washington State, but also because we wanted to include important information gleaned from our attendance at the California Hydrogen Leadership Summit. The program featured a wide variety of subjects related to hydrogen in California, ranging from light-duty FCEV's (that's us) to trucks, railroads, and airplanes. There was a wealth of information provided for all sectors, but we found these to be the take-aways related to hydrogen cars and refueling:



This was the 2nd annual summit. The 3rd summit is scheduled for the same time next year.

- Permitting: The speakers universally agreed that reform was needed. Long project review times are significantly slowing the development of new infrastructure and products.
- As some of you may be aware, BMW has developed a fuel cell pilot, which they showcased at the conference. The car is undergoing testing and market review prior to full-scale production. The company rep sees the price of these cars, the price of fuel, and lack of infrastructure as possible impediments.
- Chevron has partnered with Iwatani to construct 30 new H<sub>2</sub> refueling stations for light-duty FCEVs in CA by 2026.
- Planning for FCEV truck refueling stations is definitely underway. Coordination is needed to ensure that these stations are dual-use for light-duty FCEVs.
- Some bills in support of hydrogen cars in the CA State Legislature have succeeded, but for the most part significant legislation is struggling.



Bobbie with iX5, BMW's prototype hydrogen FCEV

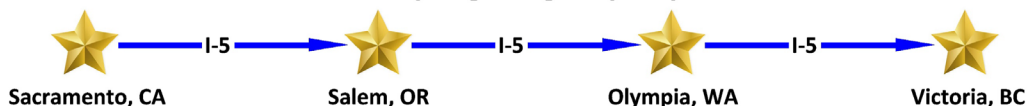
In this issue:

- Glenn Rambach, long-time active pioneer and researcher in H<sub>2</sub>, is highlighted as the *Intrepid Protoner of the Month*.
- Legislative Update: Lots going on here, please read and act.

CHCOA's Mission: With your help, to *diligently and courteously* advocate for hydrogen cars and hydrogen car drivers in California.

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Join us on the Hydrogen Highway - September 2025



## **Intrepid Protoner of the Month**



Glenn Rambach with FUELCEL, the first Mirai sold in the U.S.

How many of us can claim to owning the first Mirai sold in the U.S., the first Prius sold in the U.S. and having a (short) face-to-face war of words with Elon Musk in 2007 on the merits of BEVs versus FCEVs? Glenn Rambach can.

Rambach's interest in hydrogen and fuel cells was sparked by the 1973 oil embargo and the resulting national "Project Independence". As some of us oldsters may recall, Project Independence had the goal of the U.S. becoming independent of foreign sources of energy by 1980. In 1990, after 16 years of energy R&D, Rambach reasoned, what better way to become energy independent than to create hydrogen here on our own shores, and eventually doing it from completely renewable resources?

In 2015, when Rambach heard that Toyota would be selling their first FCEV in the U.S., he called Roseville Toyota (the dealer in the Sacramento area selected to sell these cars) to congratulate them and to ask when the Mirais would be available. To his amusement, they weren't aware that this revolutionary new type of vehicle was on the way. This was the beginning of a close working relationship with the dealer and soon resulted in his becoming a volunteer hydrogen and fuel cell tutor for the company. Rambach's career had prepared him well for this role. He has authored, or co-authored, 21 publications, worked at Sandia National Laboratories and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, presented at numerous professional conferences, including an invited talk on renewable hydrogen utility applications at the Russian Academy of Sciences. Additionally, he has assisted in the design of three H<sub>2</sub> refueling stations.

After incentives, Rambach paid \$32,000 for his Mirai and received a fuel card worth \$15,000. To his surprise, several months after his purchase he received a \$5,000 rebate from Toyota. He remains more than pleased with his Mirai, saying (as we hear so often), "Love the car, hate the refueling

## **Intrepid Protoner (cont.)**

experience." Since purchasing it 8 years ago, he's only had to change the tires and the ion filter.

Rambach has retired from his long, illustrious, career and now lives in Cameron Park, CA. However, he continues to be active in the hydrogen and fuel cell world, most recently as a [fuel cell tutor](#) to docents at the California Automobile Museum.

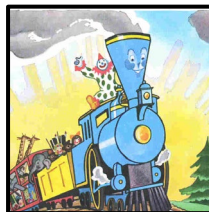
He summarized his thoughts on the benefits of hydrogen fuel cell cars, as follows: *"They refuel quickly, have a good driving range, and will play a vital role in the Nation's green energy future."*

*"When I started this, I thought, 'What will my future be like?', over time it became, 'What will my children's future be like?', and now, with the increasingly frightening evidence of climate change, I worry about what the future will look like for my grandchildren."*



Rambach, wife Lynn and Roseville Toyota Manager Judy Cunningham on the delivery day for his Mirai in November 2015.

## **The Little Station That Could**



Thank you, True Zero for your Harris Ranch station (<https://m.h2fcp.org/content/harris-ranch>). It provides an essential central-California link for hydrogen car drivers.



## Legislative Corner

- On June 4, CHCOA wrote a letter of support for the effort to modify AB 241 and SB 84 such that the reauthorization of the Clean Transportation Program be amended to direct that 30% of program funding be used for the construction of H<sub>2</sub> stations.

We received a recent email from a representative of the California Hydrogen Coalition (CHC) indicating that negotiations at this time are going well, but remain at a critical juncture.

- The next hurdle is to avoid the passage of [AB 126](#) in the Senate next Wednesday (July 5), as it is currently written. AB 126 would, among other provisions, reduce the annual allocation set aside to fund new H<sub>2</sub> fueling stations. **It is essential that we support the CHC in this ongoing work.**
- Senate Bill 425, which will expand consumer rebates for light and medium-duty hydrogen fuel cell pickup trucks has passed the Senate and is currently in the Assembly Transportation Committee.
- Sadly, the critically important Senate Bill 501, which would have required the California Energy Commission to develop a plan to improve reliability, service quality, and operational uptime of hydrogen fueling stations, appears to have died in the CA Senate Appropriations Committee. Our reading of the [Committee analysis](#) of this bill is that funding, which would have come from the Energy Resources Program Account, was insufficient to cover anticipated costs.

For updated information about these and other bills, check out our [Facebook page](#).

## What Can You Do?



### Now:

- We need to avoid the passage of [AB 126](#) in the Senate next Wednesday (July 5), *as it is currently written*. AB 126 would, among other provisions, reduce the annual allocation set aside to fund new H<sub>2</sub> fueling stations. **Please [email the Governor's office](#) and your state senator and assemblyperson today** to ask that funding for H<sub>2</sub> fueling stations not be reduced.

### Always:

- Contact your State Senate and Assembly Representatives and Governor Newsom to express your support for reliable H<sub>2</sub> refueling infrastructure.
- Contribute articles or ideas for future Proton Monthly newsletters including nominations for the next "Little Station That Could."
- Most of all, stay active!

## Funny Pages



*"Those hydrogen cars are really coming along."*