

BOARD MEETING DATE: November 6, 2015

AGENDA NO. 38

PROPOSAL: Request to City of Diamond Bar to Provide Alternative Fuel Signage on City Streets 

SYNOPSIS: At the direction of the Board, staff initiated discussions with Gateway Corporation, the City of Diamond Bar (City) and Caltrans to place signs along the freeways and arterial roads surrounding SCAQMD Headquarters to direct drivers and fleet operators to the SCAQMD's CNG, hydrogen and electric charging stations. The City has an ordinance for off-site billboard signage that does not allow the typical signage for alternative fuel stations as used by Caltrans or other municipalities. The City staff requested that SCAQMD make a formal request to the City to consider alternatives under the existing ordinance or to amend its current sign ordinance, given the benefits of alternative fuel vehicles to the environment and the residents of the City. This action is to approve a letter from the Chairman to the City requesting the City's consideration of SCAQMD's proposal to install directional signage for the SCAQMD alternative fuel stations.

COMMITTEE: No Committee Review

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Authorize the Chairman to send the attached letter (Attachment A) to the City of Diamond Bar, requesting the City's consideration of SCAQMD's proposal regarding installation of directional signage for SCAQMD's alternative fuel stations.

Barry R. Wallerstein, D.Env.
Executive Officer

MMM:HH

Background

At the May 2015 Board meeting, staff was directed to pursue the posting of signs along the freeways and arterial roads surrounding SCAQMD Headquarters to direct drivers and fleet operators to the SCAQMD's CNG, hydrogen and electric charging stations.

There is a three-step process for the placement of signs around SCAQMD Headquarters. Relative to the SCAQMD CNG fueling station, the sign to be placed on the SCAQMD's property has been drafted based on the specifications provided by the Gateway Corporation and submitted to the Corporation for approval. The Gateway Corporation is expected to give its decision shortly. Freeway signage is under the authority of Caltrans. Caltrans indicated that they will be able to move forward with freeway signage after the City of Diamond Bar has given its approval for signs along city streets.

Staff has been in discussions with the City on receiving approval to install signs along city streets. The City has an ordinance for off-site billboard signage that does not allow the typical alternative fuel station signage as used by Caltrans or other municipalities. The City staff requested that SCAQMD make a formal request to the City to consider alternatives under the existing ordinance or to amend its current sign ordinance, given the benefits of alternative fuel and zero-emission vehicles to the environment and the residents of the City.

Proposal

A letter has been prepared to the City of Diamond Bar requesting that the City consider the SCAQMD's request for signage along city streets to direct drivers to the SCAQMD fueling sites. This action is to authorize the Chairman to send the letter (Attachment A) to the City of Diamond Bar.

Benefits to SCAQMD

The addition of signs along freeways and city streets will allow drivers in need of refueling to more readily locate the SCAQMD fueling stations. The expansion of the alternative fueling network including CNG, hydrogen and electric vehicle charging will help enable the penetration of cleaner and zero-emission vehicles into the South Coast Air Basin. Greater deployment of such vehicles is needed for the region to attain federal air quality standards.

Resource Impacts

There will be nominal administrative costs for permits and materials for the signs to be placed along freeways and city streets surrounding the SCAQMD Headquarters.

Attachment

Attachment A – Letter to City of Diamond Bar

ATTACHMENT A
DRAFT

November 6, 2015

The Honorable Steve Tye
Mayor, City of Diamond Bar
21810 Copley Drive
Diamond Bar, CA 91765

Dear Mayor Tye:

Request to the City of Diamond Bar to
Post Alternative Fuel Signs along City Streets

Southern California faces many challenges in order to meet federal air quality standards and the state's climate goals. Mobile source emissions, in particular passenger cars and heavy-duty trucks, are among the largest sources of emissions contributing to our air quality and climate problems. Greater use of alternative fuel vehicles and zero-emission vehicles will result in significant emission reductions needed to meet air quality standards and California's climate goals. The emission benefits from cleaner vehicles and zero-emission vehicles will benefit all residents of Southern California but, more importantly, will locally reduce air toxics emissions from harmful gasoline and diesel emissions. Unlike the vast number of conventional gasoline and diesel stations, the refueling network for alternative fuel and zero-emission vehicles is in a nascent stage, and needs to be expanded in order to meet the increased number of these vehicles.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) has been operating a compressed natural gas (CNG) refueling station at its headquarters for several years. The CNG station provides fuel to not only the SCAQMD's fleet of vehicles but also enables fleet operators, such as Valley Vista, Waste Management, and R.F. Dickson who provide commercial and residential solid waste collection and street sweeping services to the City, to conveniently refuel their vehicles and provide services to the City in an efficient manner. Other vehicles such as CNG taxicabs, school buses and the general public routinely refuel at the SCAQMD station.

The California legislature has placed a high priority on development of a hydrogen refueling network to enable the commercialization of fuel cell vehicles in the state and help meet California's climate goals. To assist with these goals, the SCAQMD installed a hydrogen refueling station at its headquarters which is open to the general public. The station is one of only two stations currently in commercial operation in the region. An additional 30 stations are expected to be built in the coming years in various municipalities throughout the region.

Additionally, to advance the deployment of battery electric and plug-in electric vehicles, we plan to significantly expand our existing network of electric vehicle charging stations by up to 70 units. The charging stations not only provide convenient electric vehicle charging to SCAQMD employees but also to employees working at nearby businesses and the general public. Many local residents are charging their electric vehicles at SCAQMD during the evening hours and on weekends.

On behalf of the SCAQMD Governing Board, I respectfully request that the City explore ways to allow posting of signage on city streets to direct fleet operators and the general public to our alternative fuel and electric vehicle stations. SCAQMD staff stands ready to work with City Manager Mr. DeStefano and his staff to allow posting such signage.

I look forward to working with the City on this very important request as we work towards clean air and meeting California's climate goals. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Dr. Barry Wallerstein, Executive Officer, at (909) 396-2100, if you or City staff have questions regarding our request.

Respectfully,

William A. Burke, Ed.D.
Chairman of the Board

BRW:MMM:HH

cc: James DeStefano, City Manager, Diamond Bar