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Comment Received From: Michael McThrow

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Support Investments in Hydrogen Fueling Infrastructure

Dear Commissioner Monahan and Members of the Clean Transportation Advisory Committee,

I am writing to you as an owner of a zero-emission, fuel cell electric vehicle (FCEV).

When gas prices spiked in the spring and summer of 2022 as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, I was determined to switch to an alternative fuel. I considered purchasing a battery electric vehicle, but unfortunately I live in an apartment complex where there are no electric charging stations. I then discovered fuel cell electric vehicles, which did not emit any pollutants and also enabled me to refuel at hydrogen stations in just a few minutes, quicker than charging a BEV. In July 2022 I put myself on a wait list at Toyota Sunnyvale for a brand new Toyota Mirai, and since November 2022 I've been the owner of a 2022 Toyota Mirai. My Mirai is my sole vehicle; I traded in my 2015 Toyota Prius c for my Mirai.

I believe that light-duty FCEVs are an important element for California's ambitious goals to reduce CO2 emissions, which is crucial for addressing climate change. While BEVs are popular and effective alternatives to gas-powered cars, there are many Californians who lack access to residential electric charging units. Many apartment complexes don't have charging units, and many Californians are reliant on street parking. While BEV owners without residential charging units could depend on public charging stations, this isn't convenient due to long charging times and potential waits at the stations. FCEVs help fill in these gaps; they allow people who find charging BEVs inconvenient a zero-emission alternative to gas-powered vehicles. This is why I purchased a Toyota Mirai, and this is why I hope light-duty hydrogen infrastructure becomes more widespread in California.

However, I am deeply concerned about California's slow progress in achieving the goal of establishing 200 fueling stations. Following the June 7th discussion of the Clean Transportation Advisory Committee, it seems that this objective is not a priority for the Commission or the Committee. The current limitations of the fueling network have significant impacts on my daily life. I have occasionally had to wait very long times for hydrogen; my longest wait was over an hour. I also have to plan my trips carefully in case a hydrogen station becomes out of service. The most pressing issue for me is the cost of hydrogen. When I purchased my Mirai in November 2022, hydrogen at True Zero stations cost \$19.70/kg, and Shell charged under \$17/kg. Less than a month after I purchased my Mirai, True Zero raised the price to \$23.75/kg, and then a month later True Zero raised it again to \$26.75/kg. Sometime last summer True Zero raised the price to \$36/kg, and the price has not changed since. At \$36/kg a 5.5kg tank of hydrogen, which gets 402 miles of range according to Toyota, costs \$198. By

comparison, even when gasoline reached \$7/gal, my old 2015 Prius c cost \$56 to travel 360 miles based on my mileage history. The cost of hydrogen, as well as availability problems, is hindering the Mirai. Resale values are abysmal; Toyota Sunnyvale offered me \$8,601 for my 2022 Toyota Mirai XLE, which had an MSRP of around \$52,000 and a \$17,000 discount. I still owe over \$31,000 on my car loan; I would have to write a five-figure check if I chose to sell the vehicle.

It is particularly troubling to learn that the Commission has decided against future support for light-duty hydrogen stations, and that previously allocated funds might be redirected to heavy-duty hydrogen stations or electric vehicle charging stations. This decision is unacceptable.

As an early adopter of zero-emission vehicles, I support California's clean vehicle goals and climate initiatives. However, it is apparent that the state does not equally support both available zero-emission vehicle options. Currently, less than \$0.04 of every dollar invested by utility ratepayers is directed towards hydrogen infrastructure, with the majority being allocated to charging stations.

I respectfully urge the Commission and Advisory Committee to reconsider their stance and to reinstate support for the light-duty hydrogen fueling network. The funds previously earmarked for light-duty hydrogen stations should be reallocated to fulfill their original purpose, and future funding should be secured to ensure California meets its goal of 200 passenger stations.

Thank you for your attention to this crucial matter.

Sincerely,

Michael McThrow