

Raoul A. Renaud

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October 10, 2007

California Energy Commission
Transportation Committee
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Comment on Draft Report on the State Alternative Fuels Plan, Docket No. 06-AFP-1

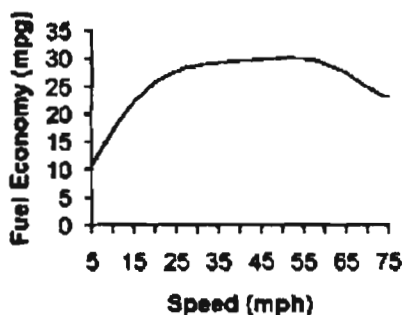
To Whom it May Concern:

I applaud the efforts of the Energy Commission and the Air Resources Board to address the issue of our state's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions through transportation. Nationwide, transportation accounts for 20% of greenhouse gas emissions. In California, however, that number soars to 40%. Thus, any reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector in California will have a substantial effect.

While many of the proposals discussed in the Draft Report are promising, for the most part they involve introduction of new technologies, increases in efficiency, and other actions which will take years to implement.

There is one action that could be taken immediately and result in at least a 10% reduction in the use of gasoline in California: *return to the 55 miles per hour speed limit.*

The federal government website www.fueleconomy.gov contains a simple discussion of the fuel savings to be achieved through vehicle speed reductions. According to information on the website, fuel economy for most vehicles peaks at 55 mph and drops rapidly as speeds increase. I reproduce below a graph taken from that website which demonstrates this:



A vehicle which achieves 30 miles per gallon at 55 mph drops to 25 miles per gallon at 70 mph and around 23 miles per gallon at 75. Each 5 mph increase above 60 mph can result in a 10% reduction in miles per gallon. Wind resistance increases exponentially with vehicle speed, accounting for the dramatic increase in fuel consumption as speed increases.

Our nation has substantial experience with using vehicle speed reduction to save fuel. In 1974 the federal government imposed a national 55 mph speed limit. This was in response to instability in the supply of petroleum and a resulting shortage of gasoline. Today the need to reduce fuel consumption is far more pressing: we need to take immediate steps to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases in order to arrest the growing threat of climate change. So pressing is this need that our state legislature has mandated, through AB 1007, that the state increase the use of alternative transportation fuels and decrease the use of petroleum fuels.

No one likes being required to drive more slowly. It was not popular in 1974, and it will not be popular today. It is an essential role of government to exercise leadership and, when necessary, make rules that may be unpopular but will benefit society. Speed limit reduction is such a rule. I encourage the Transportation Committee to include in its report a recommendation that California adopt a statewide 55 mph maximum speed limit. Doing so will provide an immediate, and significant, reduction in petroleum transportation fuel use, and a corresponding reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Thank you for including my comment in your deliberations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Raoul Renaud".

Raoul A. Renaud