

Comment: Alternatives to Alternative Fuels & Technology Re: 10-ALT-1 Advisory Committee Meeting

By George Huang

Economist, San Bernardino County Economic Development Agency (until 7/15/11)

Owner, IDEASolutions

June 21, 2011

DOCKET

10-ALT-01

DATE JUN 21 2011

RECD. JUN 21 2011

AB 118 seeks to improve air quality by encouraging the switch to alternative fuels and the development and adoption of new automotive technologies. It is part of California's noble effort to lead the world in environmental protection. To further achieve the objectives of AB 118, we hereby ask the California Energy Commission to consider an expansion of qualified technologies.

Alternative fuels are currently significantly more expensive than traditional fuels such as petroleum diesel and gasoline. Some alternative fuels have transportation and distribution infrastructure issues. Most require significant investment in the conversion of the internal combustion engines. Cost issues are the biggest challenges for AB 118, and government subsidies can only cover a small portion of the total conversion and operational costs of using alternative fuels and/or power systems.

The objectives of AB 118 -- cleaner air -- can also be met with traditional fuels and automotive technology if the total driving distance and time is reduced. In fact, reducing driving distance will also reduce other particulate emissions such as brake pads and tires. These particulate emissions are often forgotten in the discussion of cleaner air.

The use of route optimization hardware and software should therefore be considered for the next round of AB 118 guidelines. Software such as ArcLogistics from Esri help companies plan their vehicle routes, which reduce the overall driving distance and time and thereby reduces air pollution. Some systems can be configured to avoid known congestion locations or sensitive areas such as schools. The total fuel and time savings far exceed the licensing and implementation costs of the software, and therefore government subsidies are not needed. The software also reduces vehicle traffic on streets, which means less congestion, higher vehicle speeds for all affected traffic, and less pollution from the affected traffic. And because it can be integrated into the existing transportation system with no costly mechanical modifications to operational vehicles, it can be implemented within a very short period of time.

During this era of limited government resources, such technology can be a very desirable option to help achieve the objectives of AB 118. We hereby ask the CEC to consider adding route optimization hardware and software to the list of qualified technologies for AB 118.

Contact information:

George Huang, ghuang@eda.sbcounty.gov, 909.387.4359 (until 7/15/11) or
George Huang, george@ideasolutions.biz, 909.680.5951