

# WRCOG's Clean Cities Coalition: 14th Annual Advancing the Choice Expo

*September 26, 2013*

Thank you for the invitation to speak at the 14th Annual Advancing the Choice Expo.

I am speaking today as the proud founder of Clean Cities Coalition, and as a Political Science Professor and Director of the Center for Sustainable Suburban Development at UCR.

What are the key objectives of DOE's Clean Cities Coalition Program?

To quote from the official web site--"advance the nation's economic, environmental, and energy security by supporting local actions to reduce petroleum consumption in transportation."

"Clean Cities Coalition helps vehicle fleet and consumers reduce their petroleum use. Clean Cities builds partnerships with local and statewide organizations in the public and private sectors."

For the record, I drive a plug-in Prius, and for about five days a week, I do not use petroleum.

When the Coalition started, Joe Norbeck, then Director of UCR's College of Engineering Center for Environmental Research and Technology (or CE-CERT) said we could/would be the best in the country.

Many good things have happened since the Coalition's start in October of 1997. There are now 80 stakeholders, 3,040 alternative fuel vehicles and 72 alternative fuel fueling stations, displacing nearly 7 million gasoline gallon equivalents and reducing nearly 17,000 tons of Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

And kudos to many specific awards and recognition:

In 2005, the Coalition was recognized with a Clean Air Award by the American Lung Association.

In 2006 the Coalition received a Clean Air Award for Effective Public Outreach by the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

In 2011 the Coalition received recognition by the DOE as producing one of the top eight Clean Cities Coalition videos.

And in 2011, the Coalition passed the re-designation process, and received a commendation for its commitment to the national Clean Cities Program.

In 2012, the Coalition was awarded a Best Coalition Collaboration Award by DOE for its work on Plug-In Electric Vehicle planning with the Southern California Association of Governments and the Clean Cities' Coalitions from Los Angeles, Long Beach, and South Bay.

Congratulations to the Coalition and to its many stakeholders.

As Mayor, I quickly concluded that for good things to happen, there needed to be a staff person, someone accountable and responsible. Kudos to the vision and leadership of Rick Bishop, Executive Director of

WRCOG and to Jennifer DiCiano, Program Manager for the Coalition. Jennifer, please stand and be recognized.

However, much work remains to be done if the Coalition is to be the best in the country.

Why start a Clean Cities Coalition? Let me answer by telling a personal story.

When I was a political science doctoral student at Stanford, I interviewed in Riverside in December, 1964.

After deciding to come to UCR, I was told that smog was bad. It did not seem bad in December. In August, I submitted my dissertation and then left Palo Alto to teach at UCR.

Coming down the Cajon Pass, I vividly remember turning to my wife and asking "What is this stuff?"

On my first day on campus, I visited with John Middleton, the Director of UCR's Statewide Air Pollution Research Center.

In 1965, there were in Riverside about 200 first stage alerts, and 45 second stage alerts. You could see it, and feel it in your eyes and chest. It was like a great wave coming every day and then crashing on Riverside.

Before my two girls could play outside, either my wife or I would call for the latest measurements.

There was even a smog flag at City Hall that was raised on alert days. In 1971, the Mayor called on the Governor to declare an emergency in Riverside, citing high levels of smog and their health impacts.

In the late 1960's and 1970's, when asked what problems faced the community and/or region, residents always ranked air pollution first.

Local legislators such as Craig Biddle, Jerry Lewis, and Robert Presley led statewide control efforts for clean air.

As a resident, parent, and university professor, there was an obligation to make a difference.

In one way or another, for nearly 50 years, I have been trying to reduce air pollution and enhance air quality. For the record, I served 17 years on South Coast Board and six years on California Air Resources Board.

In 2012, I was honored by CARB with the Haagen-Smit Clean Air Award for "Outstanding Contributions to Environmental Policy"; and in 2013, I received the California Air Quality Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Coalition for Clean Air.

Since 1965, and the view from Cajon Pass, we have come a long way, in spite of a doubling of the population.

Two markers for the South Coast Basin--health advisory days have gone from 184 in 1977 to 0 in 2012 and stage episode days from 121 in 1977 to 0 in 2012.

But the work for clean air is not done. There is still a long way to go, to meet federal air standards and more importantly, to protect the health of the residents of Southern California.

Every morning as I walk Riverside's Mt. Rubidoux, I can see a South Coast monitoring station. It records the worst particulate measurements in this Basin and among the worst in this country.

In the future, improving air quality will be even more complex, more difficult, and more innovative--both in technology and social policy.

Let's return to the question of why establish a Clean Cities Coalition. It was a major policy, and political, position that Riverside should be an important leader on matters of air quality. The city needed to step up, to show regional leadership to all of Southern California.

This personal perspective highlights the rationale for founding the Clean Cities Coalition in 1997, some 14 years ago.

However, the question before us in 2013 remains the same, how to be the best Clean Cities Coalition in the country? How does the Coalition continue to reduce petroleum use? How does the Coalition continue to improve air quality for the residents of western Riverside County?

Let me offer five challenges, or better yet opportunities.

First, come and visit Riverside. The city is a national best practice for the use of alternative fuel vehicles. In 2012, the City of Riverside was nationally recognized as the public green fleet of the year, the best in the country.

The alternative fuel vehicle percentages are striking, and impressive. Except for public safety, the percentages are over 75%. The fleet numbers are large, totaling about 1,400.

And for the question of whether or not alternative fuel vehicles work, and effectively so, come to Riverside.

Equally impressive, Riverside has built major alternative fuel stations, including a station for hydrogen. This year, the city will build a large, state of the art natural gas fueling station on the corner of Acorn and Jurupa.

Let me call out Martin Bowman, the City of Riverside's Fleet Manager and sometimes chair of the board for the Clean Cities Coalition. There is no better leader and champion of alternative fuel vehicles in the country! He has figured out the funding. He has in deed walked the talk. Martin, please stand and be recognized.

Second, AB 2766 funds can be used to reduce the use of petroleum. A percentage of vehicle license fees provide funds for all cities and counties to initiate or support programs to reduce air pollution.

I'm proud of how AB 2766 has funded important policy innovations in Riverside. Too often, these monies are used to back fill public works budgets. Rather, policy choices should be identified, discussed, and implemented.

In Riverside, AB 2766 funds have, for example, been used for free bus passes for all university students and city employees, bus discounts for seniors, cash incentives for buying plug-in or alternative gas vehicles, financial support for biking rallies, and funding for air pollution training for high school teachers.

As Mayor, I appointed a Council approved committee on air pollution. We met once a quarter and discussed how to use AB 2766 funding. I cannot overemphasize the importance of looking and evaluating how best to spend these funds. They should be policy decisions!

The Committee was staffed by Virginia Field. She was then my Board Assistant to the South Coast. But more importantly, Field has been a leading citizen advocate for clean air in southern California for more than 40 years. A longtime leader of Clean Air Now, she currently serves on the Board for the Coalition for Clean Air. Virginia, please stand and be recognized.

As to next steps, I would encourage Ben Benoit, Wildomar Council member, to request that the South Coast District host in partnership with the Coalition an annual AB 2766 workshop in western Riverside County. Benoit is the current representative of cities of Riverside County on the South Coast Board. Noteworthy, AB 2766 funding can be coordinated with other cities.

Third, western Riverside County needs to be PEV ready. Electric cars are out of the laboratory and into dealer stores. Electric vehicles deserve continuous promotion, and perhaps cooperative funding to put more on the streets.

Navigant Research, a market research firm, recently forecasted that California, by 2022, would have more than 815,000 cumulative EV sales, more than double the total for the next three most popular EV states combined.

Navigant expects the following California market areas to represent four out of the top five EV markets through 2022: Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacramento, and Riverside (California). These areas, plus New York City, will account for nearly one-third of US sales of electric cars and plug-in hybrids by 2022, according to Navigant.

There was a recent article in the NY Times titled, "A City's Bet on Plug-In Cars." It was about Santa Monica being PEV ready. However, so far less than 4% of the City's registered cars are run only on battery power. One observer noted, "Even in this town, there's still a need for education on plug-ins."

DOE's Clean Cities initiative created the Plug-In Electric Readiness Scorecard. The Scorecard is an interactive online tool that allows communities to measure current "PEV-friendliness." The topic areas include the permitting and inspection process, incentives, education, level of involvement of the local utility, and infrastructure planning. Is the Coalition using the Scorecard? And if so, how are we doing?

For the record, the City of Riverside offers a \$2,500 incentive if you buy a plug-in from a Riverside dealer. Funds are from AB 2766.

And in 2012, the city contracted with Gary Polakovic, long recognized as a voice for environmental expertise, to help market and promote the sale of electric vehicles. He prepared some excellent materials and messages. Again, funds were from AB 2766. I would encourage the Coalition Board to look at both his contract and work for possible support. Regardless of who does the work, there is a need for education on plug-ins!

As you know, to meet CARB requirements, the major auto companies have a high stake in increasing the sale of electric vehicles. And likewise, the South Coast District has a high stake in their increase. So too does SC Edison. There are stakeholders to create partnerships for western Riverside County to be PEV-friendly!

Fourth, the Clean Cities Coalition should be a champion of Active Transportation. It is another important way to reduce the use of petroleum.

The 2012 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Community Strategies is widely recognized as the most important plan ever adopted by SCAG, Southern California Association of Governments.

And Active Transportation was a critical emphasis--as I recall, the Plan recommended \$8 billion be spent for Active Transportation.

To implement Active Transportation, SCAG has adopted and is implementing four recommendations: 1) Develop a definition of "Active Transportation" which recognizes the varying types and needs of active transportation users; 2) Consider and refine the availability of data and information to evaluate the RTP/SCS and its alternatives relative to active transportation policy; 3) Develop, with partner agencies, a methodology for selecting and prioritizing regionally supported active transportation projects; and 4) Seek opportunities to promote and support transportation investments with an active transportation component.

It is time for the Coalition to focus on Active Transportation. Western Riverside County should be an Active Transportation success story.

There is an emerging interest in walking, in walkable cities. CSSD, the Center for Sustainable Suburban Development has a Caltrans grant to study walkability in two older suburban neighborhoods in Riverside. And I would strongly recommend a readable book by Jeff Speck: *Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America One Step at a Time*. He identifies and persuasively explains ten steps to increase walking.

There is a bicycling renaissance taking place. Riding bikes is now a cool thing to do. Many cities are appointing oversight committees and funding biking improvements.

There is in many cities an agreement on Complete Streets, a Public Works view of streets that includes biking and walking in addition to cars and trucks.

There is a new approach called healthy cities that many communities have adopted, and are implementing. And in Riverside County, this approach is taking a dynamic form in the Riverside County Health Coalition. At their meetings, you see many partners and sense excitement and momentum. Active Transportation is on their agenda.

Therefore, I would strongly recommend that the Clean Cities Coalition join with the Riverside County Health Coalition and host an Active Transportation Conference. SCAG and RCTC should also participate. There is much that cities can learn by sharing and identifying best practices for Active Transportation.

And fifth, the Clean Cities Coalition should see itself as an effective participant in the sustainability efforts of cities in western Riverside County. Taking sustainability seriously, however, goes beyond the use of petroleum.

Many cities in western Riverside County have detailed sustainability plans. Riverside, for example, has a Green Action Plan; the Plan covers goals for energy, greenhouse gas, waste, urban design, urban nature, transportation, water, and healthy communities. Many cities across the country likewise have sustainability plans--for example, Dubuque, Iowa has a well-crafted plan they title, "Creating a National Model for Sustainability."

Sometime in 2014, CSSD will host a sustainability conference for cities in Inland Southern California. What progress? What can we learn from each other? What priorities? What sustainability goals can be connected to city policy and financing choices? And, what are the barriers and opportunities for sustainability?

As we search for and define a future vision for Western Riverside County and Inland Southern California, sustainability--focused on the three E's: economy, environment, and equity--should be one key priority for all of us.

To conclude, thank you for your attention. Kudos to the past work of the Coalition--I am a proud founder. And God speed on becoming the best Clean Air Coalition in the country.