

California to spend \$20 million on building part of 'hydrogen highway'

Marc Lifsher, Los Angeles Times, 2-22-15

It's been more than a decade since former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger regularly talked about his dream of building a "hydrogen highway" that would speed fleets of non-polluting cars from Mexico to Canada.

The vision never materialized anywhere other than in the governor's upbeat, eco-friendly speeches.

Now, finally, a modest form of Schwarzenegger's highway might actually become a reality.

The California Energy Commission reports that it's spending \$20 million to build nearly half of the approximately 100 stations needed to give a driver of a hydrogen car enough range to travel freely through most parts of the Golden State.

So far, only about 10 stations are operational, mostly in the Los Angeles and the San Francisco areas, servicing only a couple of hundred hydrogen-powered cars running statewide. Stations are open in Burbank, Fountain Valley, Irvine, the Harbor City neighborhood of L.A., Newport Beach and Torrance.

Starting in October with a new fuel station in the city of Coalinga, near Interstate 5 in the San Joaquin Valley, hydrogen cars will be able to get from Los Angeles to San Francisco. Such vehicles can go about 300 miles on a fill up.

The current goal, said Energy Commissioner Janea A. Scott, "is to match the number of stations to the number of cars coming in," and then let the market take over.

The key to success, she said, is getting car manufacturers to give more motorists the option of conveniently switching to hydrogen cars that release no carbon dioxide or other pollutants.

Hyundai, Toyota and Honda already have or are planning soon to make hydrogen cars available in dealer showrooms.

"The technology," she said, "is here now."