

County of Santa Clara

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County Approves Fuel Cell Initiative

SAN JOSE, CALIF.—Today, the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors jumpstarted a new initiative to begin work on demonstration projects using fuel cell technology. The initiative proposed by Supervisor Jim Beall, was approved unanimously by the Board. The Board's Committee on Finance and Government Operations has been tasked with responsibility to develop a work plan that would outline possible demonstration projects in public and private buildings and emergency operations centers. The demonstration projects may also include county-owned vehicles.

“We must actively pursue alternative energy sources,” said Supervisor Beall, citing the tragedy of the loss of life in Iraq. “We must reduce our dependence on foreign oil.”

Several individuals in attendance testified in support of the initiative, citing the connection between reliance on fossil fuels to global warming and health problems. Among them were Susan Ode, Outreach Director of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives and Terry Trumble of the American Lung Association of Santa Clara-San Benito Counties. Chris Block, Executive Director of Charities Housing spoke about the need for partnerships to ensure energy efficient affordable housing.

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“This is a matter of importance to everyone,” Beall continued. “The high cost of energy impacts the economic competitiveness of Silicon Valley. We’ve lost jobs to other regions where the costs of energy are lower.”

“Fuel cells hold promise for the future, however, there remain unanswered questions about costs and timing,” said Supervisor Liz Kniss. “I am confident the County will address all aspects of fuel cell potential as we go forward.”

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