

## 8. FUEL CELL CARS

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Fuel cell cars are now entering the marketplace. These are the next generation of vehicles following the hybrid vehicles the council has already tested. Fuel cell vehicles use hydrogen to produce electricity which is then used to power the vehicle. The only byproduct is water. Therefore the vehicles are totally nonpolluting.

Recently there has been much debate about Christchurch's smog problem. This has focused on home heating, but there is an equally large problem with vehicle emissions. The Christchurch City Council should be taking the lead in the introduction to Christchurch of nonpolluting vehicles. These also have the advantage of reducing the need for expensive imported fossil fuels. It also seems likely that if the council were to operate a fleet of fuel cell vehicles, then it should be able to sell carbon credits.

Honda has obtained approval from the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the California Air Resources Board to supply Honda's new FCX fuel cell vehicles to the city of Los Angeles (one of the world's most air-polluted cities). I understand that this contract is for the supply of thousands of vehicles. For more information there is a website at *honda.com*.

In circumstances where fuel cell vehicles are now being supplied commercially, the Council should be urgently investigating the purchase of a fleet of cars on a staged basis to replace the city's existing car fleet. The Council can then report the results to city businesses and individuals as a way of encouraging the whole community to switch to nonpolluting vehicles, as a way to clean up the air we breathe.

It is the responsibility of the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee to lead on these issues.

Attached is Honda's information page.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Council investigate the possibility of replacing appropriate components of its motor car fleet with fuel cell vehicles, on a staged basis.
  2. That following the investigation, appropriate budget provisions be considered for the 2004/05 year and/or later years.
  3. That the Council investigate whether the operation of fuel cell vehicles will result in the ability to sell carbon credits.