



Date: January 22, 2008
To: Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Bonnie Lowenthal, Vice Mayor, Councilmember, 1st District *BL*
Subject: **Bringing Biodiesel to Long Beach**

Biodiesel is a renewable, cleaner alternative fuel with lower emissions compared to petroleum. Utilizing biodiesel results in significant benefits to the environment, improves community health, reduces our dependence on fossil fuels, and helps the national economy through investment in domestic production of biofuels. Biodiesel blends are competitively priced and often don't require significant conversions or modifications to the engine of the vehicle. B5 and B20 (a blend with 20 percent biodiesel) are the most commonly used blends of biodiesel and are approved by the California Air Resources Board. Various municipalities in California have successfully incorporated biodiesel into their fleet, including the cities of Santa Barbara and San Francisco.

As the City of Long Beach works to improve local air quality through environmental stewardship, we should look into incorporating biodiesel into our portfolio of alternative fuels to reduce toxic fuel exhaust affecting our community's health. Currently, the City of Long Beach has 361 diesel vehicles, which consumed 21,649 gallons of diesel fuel during December 2007.

The utilization of biodiesel instead of regular diesel in the City fleet and the development of a biodiesel pump or station to serve both public and private vehicles would lead to a significant reduction in regulated pollution and greenhouse gas emissions as well as the "carbon footprint" of the City of Long Beach. The establishment of a biodiesel pump or station in the City allows the cleaner alternative fuel to become a more viable and practical choice for residents. The increased purchase of biodiesel fuel for private vehicles in the City of Long Beach would create a growing market, allowing biofuel businesses to develop additional pumps and stations. This demand and infrastructure allows for more individuals and businesses to choose biofuels conveniently.

Recommendation: I respectfully request that the City Manager conduct a feasibility study of utilizing biodiesel blends in lieu of petrodiesel in the City fleet of diesel vehicles, if such use would not require significant modifications to the vehicle engine.

I also request that the City Manager investigate the possibility of encouraging fuel distributors to develop a pump or station that could provide cleaner burning biodiesel blends for both public and private vehicles.

In addition, the City could apply for state and federal programs, incentives, and tax credits involving biodiesel fuel production, refueling infrastructure, vehicle purchases, and demonstration projects.