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CALIFORNIA UTILITIES TO LAUNCH HYDROGEN BLENDING DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

On 23 November 2020, [Southern California Gas Co.](#) (SoCalGas) and [San Diego Gas and Electric](#) (SDG&E) **announced** the creation of the Hydrogen Blending Demonstration Program. The Program's goal is to use surplus renewable energy generated during daylight hours to produce “green” or carbon-neutral hydrogen. The hydrogen produced will be blended into natural gas in existing natural gas pipelines. The initial hydrogen blend level will be 1 percent but may be increased to as much as 20 percent. The process of converting surplus renewable energy into carbon-free hydrogen gas is referred to as “power-to-gas” and serves as one means of storing excess renewable energy. SoCalGas expects to choose the location of the initial project in early 2021.

SoCalGas and SDG&E, both subsidiaries of [Sempra Energy](#), intend the demonstration program to provide an understanding of how to safely incorporate hydrogen, a zero-emission fuel, into the natural gas grid. While the [California Public Utilities Commission](#) must still approve the program, the hydrogen blending demonstration project could start momentum toward establishing a California statewide hydrogen injection standard, and possibly offer carbon-friendly solutions towards prolonging the state's gas fleet.

This is not SoCalGas Co.'s first foray into power-to-gas technology. In partnership with the [National Fuel Cell Research Center](#) and the [University of California–Irvine](#), it has already begun developing power-to-gas technology capable of producing green hydrogen.

TACOMA PUBLIC UTILITY BOARD PASSES RESOLUTION TO EMPLOY “ELECTROFUEL SERVICE” INITIATIVE

On 28 October 2020, the [Public Utility Board of the City of Tacoma, Washington](#) (Tacoma PUB) approved an interruptible electrofuel tariff that will go into effect on 1 April 2021. Electrofuels are carbon-neutral replacement fuels for applications that would usually require the use of fossil fuels. The proposed pilot tariff, known as the **“Electrofuel Service Pilot”**, would offer a discounted energy rate, demand rate, and a fixed monthly administration charge to provide guaranteed service for 85 percent of the year. The tariff would then grant the utility, [Tacoma Power](#), the option to curtail electric consumption during times of high market prices or other electrical system needs, for the remaining 15 percent of the year.

The Electrofuel Service Pilot is subject to approval by the city council. The pilot program's purpose is to induce electrofuel producers to relocate to Tacoma thereby promoting the Tacoma PUB's overall strategy to “prevent climate catastrophe.”

FORM ENERGY RECEIVES ADDITIONAL \$76 MILLION IN FUNDING FOR LONG-TERM AQUEOUS AIR BATTERY

On 30 November 2020, [Form Energy](#)—a long-duration energy storage startup—[announced](#) new investors in its Series C funding round for US\$76 million. Form Energy's funding now exceeds US\$125 million in support of its “aqueous air battery system” equipment that claims to deploy 150-hour storage solution at a commercial scale.

Many believe that long-term storage will be necessary to maintain grid reliability during extreme conditions and to mitigate the intermittent nature of renewables. Form Energy's pilot commercial project is a 1 MW, grid-connected storage system capable of delivering its rated power continuously for 150 hours with Minnesota's second-largest electric utility, [Great River Energy](#). Form Energy designed the system, which will come online in 2023, to operate for at least 20 years.

CITY OF BOSTON ANNOUNCES A ZERO EMISSION VEHICLE ROADMAP

On 16 November 2020, Boston Mayor Martin Walsh [announced](#) the Boston Transportation Department's “Zero-Emission Vehicle Roadmap” (Roadmap). The Roadmap establishes the goal that every household in the Boston city limits be within a 10-minute walk of an electric vehicle (EV) car-share or charging station by 2030. By that time, the Roadmap also calls for affordable access to EV charging infrastructure and electrification of Boston's municipal fleet of vehicles.

The Roadmap estimates net savings to EV owners and the city of approximately US\$6.5 billion, collectively, by 2030. Of that US\$6.5 billion, EV owners are projected to save US\$3.6 billion in annual vehicle operating costs and US\$1.4 billion from reduced electricity costs. The City expects to achieve an equivalent of US\$1.5 billion in savings from the value of reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

The Roadmap could help the City reach its sustainability benchmarks. Approximately 65 percent of the City's greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation are generated by personal vehicles. A significant reduction in such emissions could help the City reach its objective of carbon neutrality by 2050.

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