



RON ROBERTS
SUPERVISOR, FOURTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: February 24, 2004

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: POLICY ON LIMITING THE PURCHASES OF SPORT UTILITY VEHICLES (SUV) FOR THE COUNTY (DISTRICT: ALL)

SUMMARY:

Overview

Of the 4,000 vehicles the County of San Diego currently has in its fleet, 188 non-law enforcement vehicles are Sport Utility types (SUVs). Evidence from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has shown that SUVs consume more gas and cause more emissions that negatively impact our air quality. As a member of the California Air Resources Board (CARB), I review the data on what poor air quality does to children and adults with asthma and feel this issue needs to be addressed seriously by this body. Also, the taxpayer has an interest in knowing that the excessive cost for fuel consumption of these vehicles is impacting our limited resources at the county. I am not opposed to individuals owning SUVs and they do serve a valuable purpose for certain job functions in the county. However, as a public agency, we have a duty to preserve public health and limit, where we control, the purchases of these vehicles that impact the air quality in our region and add an excessive cost to our budget. Although, the County of San Diego's Department of General Services should be commended for their support of the environment by using re-refined oil to reduce virgin oil consumption and implements an unwritten policy of purchasing Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFVs) and hybrid vehicles where necessary, I believe a more formalized policy should be adopted by this Board to limit the purchases of SUVs for only those functions that absolutely require the unique features of an SUV.

Recommendation(s)

SUPERVISOR ROBERTS:

Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to:

Work with County Counsel to develop a policy for the Director of General Services to purchase the appropriate size of vehicle for each County vehicle assignment, specifically evaluating fuel efficiency, emissions and standardization of maintenance in arriving at the decision of the appropriate vehicle. The goal is to purchase the most fuel efficient, lowest emission vehicle available within the class of vehicle that is available through the County's acquisition contract. Sport Utility Vehicles (SUVs) will not be purchased unless justified based on verified work assignment. Also, in all fleet vehicle purchases, to the extent practical, the County of San Diego will continue to support Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFV) and strategies to reduce the consumption of petroleum based fuels. Law Enforcement vehicles will be exempt from this policy.

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Fiscal Impact

None by this action.

Business Impact Statement

N/A

Advisory Board Statement

N/A

BACKGROUND:

Air pollution continues to be an important public health concern, according to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and the County's Air Pollution Control Board (APCB), both of which I am a member. The CARB's air monitoring shows that more than 90 percent of Californians breathe unhealthy levels of one or more air pollutants during some part of the year, although it should be mentioned the County of San Diego has met the federal one-hour ozone requirement last year. We did not, however, meet the more stringent state eight-hour standard. We hope to be changing that soon over time.

A primary culprit to poor air quality has been proven time and time again by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to be cars and trucks that are fuel-inefficient, an example being the Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV). I am not arguing the use for Sport Utility Vehicles is not important for certain job functions in the County. A good example of this is during the October fires, we needed SUVs to travel off-road when repairs needed to be made by our Department of Public Works (DPW). Also, there is a need for SUVs for various law enforcement activities. Nevertheless, there are many reasons why we do not need to purchase SUVs as well. Even though our Department of General Services does a great job in trying to limit these purchases, it is unwritten and subject to wide interpretation of what is "needed." Thus, a more formalized policy needs to be adopted so we can feel confident in the fact that any purchase of a future SUV is truly "needed" by the County for their work.

The goals of this policy are simple. One, to reduce air pollution and excessive gas consumption caused by SUVs that have been shown not to be fuel-efficient. Two, to reduce taxpayer dollars wasted on gasoline and diesel purchases for SUVs. And, three, to reduce County dollars on purchasing of SUVs when other less expensive and more fuel-efficient vehicles are appropriate.

Again, I want to reiterate that I am not opposed to individuals who own and operate SUVs for work or pleasure. However, the fact that they are serious contributors to poor air quality is not in dispute. Thus, as a public agency, we have a duty to protect the public health where necessary. Limiting the purchases of non-essential SUVs is a start, and hopefully an example for others to follow in our region.

Respectfully Submitted,

RON ROBERTS
Supervisor, Forth District

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AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

CONCURRENCE(S)

COUNTY COUNSEL REVIEW	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Written Disclosure per County Charter Section 1000.1 Required	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
GROUP/AGENCY FINANCE DIRECTOR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Requires Four Votes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
GROUP/AGENCY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
COUNTY TECHNOLOGY OFFICE	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A

Other Concurrence(s): [Click here and type, or type N/A if not applicable]

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: Ron Roberts
Supervisor, District Four

CONTACT PERSON(S):

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AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: February 24, 2004 Meeting Date