



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **City Switches to Biodiesel** Change will Promote the Sustainable City Program

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Starting on July 1, 2006, the City of Santa Barbara will begin using **biodiesel fuel**, also known as B-20 fuel, in all 150 City of Santa Barbara diesel-powered fleet vehicles. The City has long been a leader in utilizing environmentally friendly technology in the City's vehicles. By making the switch, the City becomes one of the first southern California cities to use biodiesel as the principal fuel in their fleets. The City's vehicles use a variety of alternate energy sources, including compressed natural gas (CNG), biodiesel and electric. In addition The City uses **re-refined motor oil** as the primary oil for maintaining all fleet vehicles.

The Sustainable City Program, recently approved by the City Council in January 2006, mandated policies to shift toward the use of alternate fuel/vehicle technologies with respect to City fleet vehicles. "This is an opportunity to implement 'best practices' and take a proactive approach to improving our environment," said Mayor Marty Blum. "Many cities are still talking about becoming a sustainable community, but we're actually taking giant steps toward that goal."

Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel (ULSD) is diesel fuel that has had the sulfur content reduced from approximately 500 parts per million (ppm) sulfur to 15 ppm sulfur. Last year, the City recognized that significant air quality benefits could be derived by using ULSD fuel. The City's diesel-powered vehicles and equipment were switched to ULSD in early 2005 long before the June 1, 2006 deadline when State-mandated regulations required all vendors to offer USLD as the only diesel fuel available for sale in California.

To reduce exhaust emissions, support clean air and renewable energy goals, the City ran a pilot program using B-20 biodiesel, a blend of 80% diesel fuel and 20% virgin soy bean oil in three of the City's diesel-powered vehicles. Soybean oil is a renewable product that can be mixed with ULSD to produce an alternate fuel that significantly reduces harmful emissions, promotes greater energy independence, and boosts the economy. The pilot program ran for 18 months. Results showed that using B-20 did not have any adverse affects on vehicle operability or maintenance.

The City of Santa Barbara has a long history of working to enhance and preserve the natural environment and maintain the community's quality of life. The environmental movement was born in Santa Barbara with the 1969 oil spill that motivated the federal government to formulate and adopt rules and regulations to protect the marine environment. The State of California's recycling movement and regulations that currently regulate landfills throughout the State were also initiated in Santa Barbara. In the 1980s, the City Charter was amended to establish land use policies to "Live Within Our Resources". In the late 1990s voters approved an increase in the transient occupancy tax to raise revenues to support restoration of the City's urban creek corridors and to improve water quality. Continuing this tradition, the recent adoption of the Sustainable City Program identifies opportunities and provides guidance to City Departments to become leaders in researching and implementing sustainable practices.