



Fueling Conversation



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When I first started traveling to Los Angeles in the 1980s, I could rarely see the San Gabriel Mountains just north of the city. Air pollution clouded the sky, caused in large part by automobile emissions. Warm California sunshine turns gasoline's volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into unhealthy smog, which can have significant adverse health effects.

I still fly frequently to LA, but now the rugged San Gabriels provide a scenic backdrop to this great city. What has changed is that both cars and gas stations now cause only a fraction of the pollution they used to.

Air pollution is minimized when gasoline is properly stored, dispensed and burned. Autos now have sophisticated emission-control systems, including catalytic converters, exhaust-gas recirculation and fuel injection. Gas stations also have improved, with vapor recovery systems, tighter tank and piping systems, and continuous environmental monitoring. Costco Gas Stations all over the country are at the forefront of these environmental improvements. We work with regulatory agencies in California and throughout the country to both follow their rules and help make them better by using our gas stations to test new technologies.

There is now solid proof of what LA residents can sense with their eyes, noses and throats. The California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) just issued a study that demonstrates this remarkable progress. Since 1996, toxic gasoline-related VOC emissions have declined by 70% statewide. While all of this is great news for California, even better news is that many of these technologies have been adopted nationwide. This allows all of us to breathe a little easier. ■

<https://oehha.ca.gov/air/press-release/press-release-air/states-cleaner-gasoline-significantly-reducing-air-pollution>