

Report on Clean Fuels Ohio Meeting

Kent Environmental Council member Ted and Swanny Voneida and Harold Walker attended the clean fuels meeting at the University of Akron on October 13, 2009. A summary of the meeting follows.

The state of Ohio has received \$11.2 million in federal stimulus money to be used for developing new and improved methods for energy generation and for reducing energy consumption. The major issues for discussion by a panel of four experts on clean-fuel development and use covered the following questions: What can be done about energy consumption in order to minimize air pollution in general, and carbon dioxide emissions in particular, and about the rapidly increasing depletion rate of fossil fuels? In particular, how can the stimulus money be best used to reduce the use of fossil fuels such as petroleum and coal as major energy sources for transportation?

The discussion revolved around the following seven points, all of which are being actively pursued:

1. *Develop more fuel efficient vehicles, such as the hybrid and electric plug-in cars.* Greater research is needed in the area of vehicle braking as an energy source. Hydraulic powered engines also were discussed.
2. *Reduce the use of petroleum products and coal as energy sources.* Ethanol from corn and soybeans are not satisfactory substitutes, because their production actually uses more energy than is derived from them, and both corn and soybeans are valuable and much needed food products.
3. *Research efforts are being funded in the area of alternate, nonfossil fuel energy and improved vehicle aerodynamics.* Solar, wind, water, animal fats and other food wastes, and methane (e.g., animal waste streams) were discussed as was the use of natural gas and propane. Major problems exist, however, in gas-extraction procedures, such as hydraulic fracturing, and in transmission from energy sources to end points. Efforts are under way to reduce idling of large (primarily diesel) vehicles.
4. *Efforts are being made to increase the use of bicycles and public transit.*
5. *Tax credits are being discussed for plants generating fossil-free energy.* Germany presently has 300 such plants in operation and has achieved a 20 percent renewable-energy level. The United States has a 1 percent to 2 percent renewable-energy level.
6. *Increase research in the area of biofuel separation technology.* This was discussed by a panel member who works in this area. A new product, Osorb, has been developed, and test results in the process of separating water from petroleum fuels, thus greatly increasing fuel production efficiency, have been very encouraging.
7. *Fueling stations for propane and for plug-in vehicles are being built in Ohio.*

For more information about clean fuels in Ohio, [click here](#).