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Mexico State Promotes Construction of Compressed Natural-Gas Stations

by LADB Staff

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Mexico state Gov. Cesar Camacho Quiroz is pushing a plan to install service stations offering compressed natural gas for passenger and public transportation in areas surrounding Mexico City. Camacho Quiroz said the plan envisions the construction of 100 or more stations catering to natural-gas vehicles in Mexico City and surrounding areas by the year 2000. Camacho was on hand at the ground breaking of a natural- gas service station in the municipality of Naucalpan, Mexico state. Combustibles Ecologicos Mexicanos will construct the station at a cost of US\$2.5 million.

According to Camacho, eight such stations will be operable in Mexico state and another in the Federal District by 1999. The governor said the construction of natural-gas stations is part of the government's program eventually to convert most public buses and official vehicles to natural gas, which will help address growing pollution problems in Mexico City and surrounding areas.

To facilitate the conversion, the World Bank has loaned the Mexico City government US\$12 million to boost its fleet of natural-gas powered vehicles. Alejandro Maldonado, president of the Asociacion Mexicana de Gas Natural (AMGN), said the stations would provide natural gas for 40,000 public buses and other government-owned vehicles by the year 2000. Maldonado said multinational energy companies like Shell, Mobil, Agip, and Lone Star Gas are exploring investing in natural-gas service stations during the next several years.

While the conversion of government vehicles to natural gas is considered a step in the right direction, a study by the Mexico City government suggests pollution levels may not drop significantly unless authorities can reduce harmful emissions from private passenger vehicles. According to the study, gasoline-powered motor vehicles account for 76% of all pollution in Mexico City. (Sources: La Jornada, 07/14/98; Excelsior, 07/16/98; El Universal, 07/21/98)

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