

# memorandum



TO	Board of Supervisors	FROM Supervisor Dominic L. Cortese, Chairman as proposed by Melissa McClaren-Lighty
SUBJECT	Gasoline Distribution - Agenda Item April 24, 1979	DATE April 23, 1979

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Adopt the attached resolution on the institution of a voluntary program for gasoline sales.
2. Distribute this Resolution (attached) to all cities in Santa Clara County with the recommendation that each city endorse same.
3. Distribute this Resolution to all neighboring counties to inform them of this action.
4. Communicate with local federal legislators to inform them of this action, and on the need to petition the U.S. Department of Energy to institute a system of regional gasoline allocation.
5. Communicate with local state legislators to inform them of this action, and on the need to petition the U.S. Department of Energy to institute a system of regional gasoline allocation.
6. Communicate with the Governor to inform him of the action, and on the need to petition the U.S. Department of Energy to institute a system of regional gasoline allocation.

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Santa Clara County Service Station Dealer's Association has asked the Board of Supervisors for assistance in mitigating the effects of the current gasoline supply/demand imbalance.

The Board of Supervisors has a policy committing the County to participate in energy management and conservation efforts.

There is a precedent for local government action in this situation, to wit the program instituted February 28, 1974 for gasoline marketing.

## BACKGROUND

Local gasoline retailers are receiving allocations of only 85% to 95% of their sales for the same period in 1978. Some non-branded retailers face cutbacks of as much as 50%. Since 1978, county population, the number of registered vehicles, and the length of the average home/work commute, have risen significantly. Through conservation efforts, county motorists

# memorandum



TO

FROM

DATE

SUBJECT

- 2 -

actually decreased gasoline consumption about 3% countwide from 1977 to 1978, but there remains a serious supply/demand imbalance. This is projected to worsen as the summer driving season approaches. Recent weeks have seen long lines at gas pumps, traffic congestion, curtailed hours of operation and Sunday closings. Gasoline retailers have reported that many customers are making purchases of less than five gallons, several times a week, in an effort to keep their tanks full at all times. This "topping" has greatly intensified the congestion at the gas pumps, and has caused an unreasonably quick depletion of the dealers' daily ration of the month's gasoline allocation. Several potentially violent incidents have been reported, results of the anger and frustration of motorists trying to get gas. This plan is designed to alleviate congestion at gas stations by proposing a voluntary program of odd/even allocation. Such a plan was instituted in early 1974 in response to the supply/demand imbalance occasioned by the OPEC Oil Embargo. It proved successful then by not only relieving congestion, but by reassuring motorists that gasoline would be available to them on appropriate days. As the fear of an empty gas tank subsided, motorists stopped topping tanks that were more than half full and retailers were able to provide more dependable service hours. The Santa Clara County Service Station Dealer's Association requested that the County support a plan for gasoline distribution, and after discussion between the Association, the County Office of Emergency Services and the County Energy Advisor, this plan was proposed.

It should be noted that this voluntary program is under the auspices of the Service Station Dealer's Association and that the County will not be responsible for any monitoring activity.

## CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

There will be no formal County support for the Service Station Dealer's Association voluntary plan for gasoline distribution.

## STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

Request Clerk of the Board to distribute as indicated in Recommended Actions #2 through #5.

Request Clerk of the Board to distribute to the Intergovernmental Council and the Intercity Council.

## Attachment

cc: County Office of Emergency Services  
Environmental Management/General Services Agency  
County Energy Advisor's Office  
County Sheriff's Office

RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A VOLUNTARY  
GASOLINE DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM IN  
SANTA CLARA COUNTY

---

WHEREAS, local gasoline retailers are receiving allocations of only 85% to 95% of their sales for the same period in 1978; and

WHEREAS, county population, number of registered motor vehicles, and length of an average daily commute have all increased significantly; and

WHEREAS, motorists of Santa Clara County are currently experiencing considerable difficulty obtaining gasoline, with every indication that the situation will worsen in the coming months; and

WHEREAS, motorists, in an effort to assure that they have adequate gasoline, are attempting to keep their gas tanks constantly full with many trips to the gas stations to top off tanks with purchases of less than five gallons of gasoline; and

WHEREAS, this has resulted in long lines, reduced operating hours, traffic congestion, wasted energy searching for gasoline, and engine idling in lines, release of gasoline fumes into the air to the detriment of air quality, anger and frustration; and

WHEREAS, county motorists have shown their commitment to conservation of transportation energy as demonstrated by the 3% decline in gasoline usage countywide from 1977 to 1978; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Clara County Service Station Dealer's Association has requested the Board of Supervisors cooperation in instituting a voluntary plan for gasoline sales; and

WHEREAS, there is precedent for such action under a program undertaken in early 1974 in response to a similar gasoline allocation problem; and

WHEREAS, there is a Federal standby gasoline rationing plan which could be imposed if the situation becomes unmanageable; and

WHEREAS, it is preferable to have a voluntary, cooperative program,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors does hereby support the service station dealers association proposal for a voluntary plan for gasoline sales; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board urges all cities in Santa Clara County to endorse and participate in this voluntary program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the plan, based on that used successfully in 1974, be as follows:

An "Odd-Even" system for buying of gasoline be established in Santa Clara County as follows:

1. Anyone driving a motor vehicle with a license number ending in an odd number (1,3,5,etc.) or those whose license plates contain only letters (environmental plates) may buy gas on odd number days of any month (1st,3rd,5th, etc.). Examples: SAM 123, 123 SAM, HI SAM.
2. Anyone driving a motor vehicle with a license number ending in an even number (2,4,6,etc.) or the digit zero may buy gas on even number days of any month (2nd,4th,6th, etc.). Examples: SAM 132, 132 SAM, SAM 130.
3. On the 31st Day of any month any motorist may buy gas.
4. Each station should post signs or flags easily seen from the street to indicate if it is selling gas to the public at that time, or if it is out of gas or closed. If flags are used, Green shall mean "Gas for Sale," and red shall mean "No Gas" or "Closed."

5. Each station shall post the minimum hours and days it expects to be open for gas sales on a sign clearly visible to passing motorists.
6. Each station operator shall manage his/her gas supply so that it will last through the month. He/She may adjust hours and days.
7. Seven kinds of vehicles are exempt from these rules. They are:
  - A. Emergency Vehicles or those a station operator believes are being used in an emergency situation.
  - B. Buses/Taxis regularly used to transport passengers.
  - C. Vehicles which a station operator believes are being used for commercial purposes.
  - D. Vehicles rented for less than thirty days.
  - E. Vehicles with out-of-state license plates.
  - F. Vehicles identified as being for the use of handicapped persons.
  - G. Vehicles being used on government business.
8. Station operators may sell gas to be carried away in cans or containers only when they feel it is necessary, and it shall be the smallest amount they believe is practical.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the SANTA CLARA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, State of California, this \_\_\_\_\_, 1979, by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisors

NOES: Supervisors

ABSENT: Supervisors

DOMINIC L. CORTESE, Chairperson  
Board of Supervisors,  
County of Santa Clara

(Agenda 4/24/79)

- X. Held recommendations re voluntary gasoline distribution program to May 29, 1979 for determination as to future gasoline allocation, with the understanding that if the allocation for this area drops below the 85% level the Board will request the Governor