

Governor Bill Richardson Test Drives State-of-the-Art Renewable Energy Vehicle- Toyota's Hydrogen-Fueled Highlander

Governor Reiterates Commitment to New Mexico's Leadership in Hydrogen Technology R & D and Renewable Energy

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Contact: Rorie Hanrahan
505.476.3747

SANTA FE -Governor Bill Richardson today repeated his commitment to supporting New Mexico's leadership role in hydrogen fuel cell technology during a demonstration of a hydrogen-powered Toyota Highlander mid-size SUV. New Mexico was the first stop for a delegation of Toyota executives who will be making a series of visits to hydrogen fuel cell research centers across the country.

"Developing renewable energy technologies, such as hydrogen, is not simply good for the environment and the national economy, it means we will continue to create high-tech, high-wage jobs that will put more money in the pockets of New Mexicans," said Governor Richardson. "We'll continue to grow our outstanding research universities, and we'll build a cutting-edge workforce that will be very attractive to high-tech businesses looking to start-up or relocate."

Governor Richardson noted New Mexico will host a major energy summit next April with officials from Canada, Mexico, and the United States. The Governor also plans to have an important clean energy package ready to introduce during the upcoming legislative session.

New Mexico Economic Development Secretary Rick Homans pointed out the state's long history of leadership in hydrogen technology research and development. "New Mexico has the facilities, talent, and experience to lead the national effort in this area," said Secretary Homans. Los Alamos National Laboratory has more than 25 years of experience in fuel cell research, Sandia National Laboratories is a leader in research and development for hydrogen storage, the University of New Mexico performs critical research in nanotechnology for hydrogen storage, and New Mexico State University is developing controls for hybrid power systems. New Mexico is also home to the country's leading testing environments at New Mexico Tech and White Sands Missile Range.

The Toyota delegation visited New Mexico at the request of Governor Richardson and Secretary Homans. As part of Governor Richardson's economic growth initiatives, the Governor worked with Toshikaki (Tag) Taguchi, president and CEO of Toyota Motor, North America to arrange meetings for Secretary Homans with key Toyota executives

including those involved in hydrogen research, during his October 2003 trip to Asia. As a follow up to those meetings in Asia, Secretary Homans requested that a delegation from Toyota come to New Mexico to begin discussions of possible partnerships in hydrogen fuel cell research. Monday's meetings are a series of informal meet and greet gatherings.

Toyota executives also met with the State's hydrogen research group - HyTep (Hydrogen Technology Partnership), as well as researchers from Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories during their one-day visit.