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A. Cogenerated power.

Q. What eliminates 5 million cars worth of greenhouse gases from our highways each year?

LOS ANGELES – As Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger’s Climate Action Team continues its hearings today on the dollars and cents of greenhouse gas reduction strategies, California has one success story in place right now.

“Cogenerated power not only represents an important part of the state’s electricity supply today,” Audrie Krause, spokesperson for CogenWorks, a coalition representing cogenerators in California, testified, “but it also helps meet the Governor’s call and your mandate to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

“Cogenerated electricity in California cuts greenhouse gas emissions by more than 26 million tons a year, which is the equivalent of taking more than 5 million cars off our highways each year. Perhaps that’s why the state EPA has identified cogeneration as a leading candidate for reducing carbon dioxide emissions.”

(more)

Cogeneration uses one fuel, typically natural gas, to produce two types of energy, usually electricity and steam. The steam is used for heat or industrial operations, while excess electricity is sold back to the utility company and goes onto the grid.

“In looking at the economics of cogeneration,” Krause told the hearing, “a cogeneration facility typically makes use of more than two-thirds of the resources they consume, while separate heat and power systems on the other hand, waste two-thirds of the energy they use. So it’s not surprising that the U.S. EPA supports cogeneration as a cost-effective way to achieve pollution reduction. We believe cogeneration’s ability to deliver clean power, efficiently and reliably, makes it a perfect fit with the Climate Action Team’s mandate.”

Last year, Governor Schwarzenegger called for significant greenhouse gas emission reductions in California. The Climate Action Team was created to implement that policy.

“But even as the state moves ahead with new strategies for pollution reduction,” explained Krause, “the existing benefits of cogenerated power are at risk. Current contracts for cogenerated power are beginning to expire. The state Public Utilities Commission (PUC) must act to keep this environmentally-responsible source of power online.

(more...quote open)

Krause continued, “The California Energy Commission has given us a blueprint of what needs to be done: establish annual targets for use of cogenerated power, standardize an open and fair contracting process, and create greater transparency with regard to utility costs and prices. It’s now up to the PUC to make that happen, and of course, the support of the Climate Action Team would be invaluable.”

CogenWorks represents a growing coalition of cogenerators, including cities, hospitals, universities, refineries, food processors and a variety of other businesses and industries. There are more than 770 cogenerators in California producing 9000 megawatts, which represents 17 percent of the state’s electrical power.

More information is available at www.cogenworks.com.

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