

Japanese carmakers in push for hydrogen vehicles

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Nissan Motors' X-Trail Fuel Cell Vehicle, seen here in 2006. Toyota, Honda and Nissan, along with 10 Japanese energy groups including natural gas refiners and distributors, want to build 100 hydrogen filling stations by 2015 in Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka and Fukuoka.

Japan's top three automakers Toyota, Honda and Nissan have united with Japanese energy firms in a push to commercialise greener hydrogen fuel cell cars and build a network of fuelling stations.

Along with 10 Japanese energy groups including natural gas refiners and distributors, the companies are aiming to build 100 filling stations by 2015 in Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka and Fukuoka, the companies said in a statement Thursday.

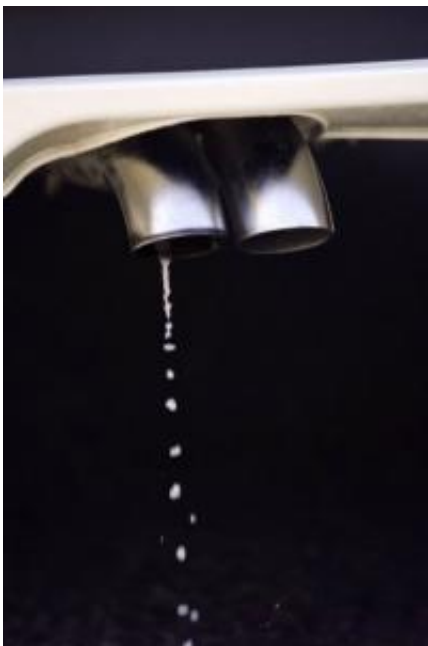
The [automakers](#) are making a renewed push behind Fuel Cell Vehicles

(FCVs), which convert hydrogen into electricity and emit nothing more harmful than water vapour.

The companies say that the creation of a hydrogen supply [infrastructure network](#) is crucial as manufacturers work to reduce the production cost of hydrogen-powered vehicles in order to make them commercially viable.

"Japanese automakers are continuing to drastically reduce the cost of manufacturing such systems and are aiming to launch FCVs in the Japanese market -- mainly in the country's four major metropolitan areas -- in 2015," they said.

"With an aim to significantly reduce the amount of CO₂ emitted by the transportation sector, automakers and hydrogen fuel suppliers will work together to expand the introduction of FCVs and develop the hydrogen supply network throughout Japan."



Water drains from the tailpipe of an hydrogen fuel cell powered vehicle.

Toyota, Honda and Nissan have united with Japanese energy firms in a push to commercialise greener hydrogen fuel cell cars and build a network of fuelling stations.

The companies did not say how much they planned to invest in the project.

While all-electric vehicles such as Nissan's Leaf or hybrids like Toyota's Prius have hogged the limelight recently, fuel cells are seen as a more powerful alternative, but expensive production and a lack of a comprehensive fuelling network has been seen as prohibitive.

Toyota, pioneer of hybrids powered by a [petrol engine](#) and an electric motor, has said it plans to launch a fuel-cell car by 2015. It is applying its [hybrid technology](#) to the vehicles, swapping the petrol engine for a [fuel-cell](#) stack.

Honda in 2008 began delivering about 200 FCX Clarity hydrogen-powered cars on lease to customers in the United States, Japan and later in Europe.

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