

Toyota bumps up hydrogen-powered car in US to 2015 (Update)

January 6 2014, by Ryan Nakashima



Toyota FCV-R concept exhibited at the 2012 Washington Auto Show. Credit: Wikipedia

Toyota said Monday that a hydrogen-powered vehicle that emits only water vapor as exhaust will go on sale in the U.S. in 2015, a year earlier than it promised just two months ago.

The Japanese automaker made the announcement Monday at the

International CES, the technology industry's annual gadget show. The shift came months after rival automakers Hyundai and Honda both said they'd start selling cars with that technology in the U.S. in 2015.

The electric car, which Toyota calls FCV for now, uses hydrogen as fuel for a battery. Toyota says it will have a range of 300 miles (480 kilometers), can accelerate from standstill to 60 miles per hour (96 kph) in 10 seconds, and can refuel its hydrogen tank in three to five minutes.

Toyota says it will focus on selling cars in California at first. Working with researchers at the University of California, Irvine, Toyota said the first 10,000 vehicles can be supported with only 68 refueling stations from San Francisco to San Diego. It noted that California has approved \$200 million to build about 20 fueling stations by 2015, 40 by 2016 and 100 by 2024.

"This infrastructure thing is going to happen," said Bob Carter, senior vice president of automotive operations for Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A. Inc.

Carter said all the cars in California could be served with just 15 percent of the 10,000 gas stations in the state now if they were spaced correctly. Researchers estimated where likely FCV buyers would need hydrogen stations and planned to put them within six minutes of their home or work.

"We don't need a station on every corner," he said.



A Toyota fuel cell concept vehicle is displayed during press event at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center for the 2014 International CES on January 6, 2014 in Las Vegas, Nevada

Carter added that the U.S. branch of Toyota had recently increased its request for vehicles. He said that a 95 percent cut in production costs from the initial prototype would help it make fuel cell cars that are "a reasonable price for a lot of people."

Toyota Motor Corp. has promised to sell its fuel cell cars for \$50,000 to \$100,000, aiming for the lower end of the range.

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