

Toyota aims to nearly eliminate gasoline cars by 2050

October 14 2015, by Yuri Kageyama



In this June 26, 2014 photo, visitors look at Toyota Motor Corp.'s new fuel cell vehicle (FCV) on display at a Toyota showroom in Tokyo. Toyota, under ambitious environmental targets, is aiming to sell hardly any regular gasoline vehicles by 2050, only hybrids and fuel cells, to radically reduce emissions. The automaker promised to involve governments, affiliated companies and other "stakeholders" in its push to reduce average emissions from Toyota cars by 90 percent by about 2050, compared with 2010 levels. Electric cars weren't part of their vision, outlined by top Toyota officials at a Tokyo museum on Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2015, striking a contrast with rivals such as Nissan Motor Co., which has banked on that zero-emissions technology. (AP Photo/Koji Sasahara)

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Toyota's commitments come at a time when the auto industry has been shaken by a scandal at Germany's Volkswagen AG, in which it admitted it cheated on diesel emissions tests covering millions of cars.

Toyota projected its annual sales of fuel cell vehicles will reach more than 30,000 by about 2020, which is 10 times its projected figure for 2017.

Fuel cells run on hydrogen and are zero-emissions. Toyota's Mirai fuel cell went on sale late last year. Toyota has received 1,500 orders for the Mirai in Japan, and it just went on sale in the U.S. and Europe.

Annual sales of hybrid vehicles will reach 1.5 million and by 2020 Toyota would have sold 15 million hybrids, nearly twice what it has sold so far around the world, it said.

Hybrids switch back and forth between a gasoline engine and an electric motor to deliver an efficient ride.



Toyota Motor Corp. Chairman Takeshi Uchiyamada speaks during the 2015 Toyota Environmental Forum in Tokyo Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2015. Toyota, under ambitious environmental targets, is aiming to sell hardly any regular gasoline vehicles by 2050, only hybrids and fuel cells, to radically reduce emissions. Uchiyamada, known as the "father of the Prius," said the company was taking the environment seriously because it has always tried to contribute to a better society. (AP Photo/Yuri Kageyama)

The Toyota Prius, which went on sale in 1997, is the top-selling hybrid, with about 4 million sold globally so far. Toyota is promising to develop a hybrid version in every category, including usually gas-guzzling sport-utility vehicles, as well as luxury models.

"You may think 35 years is a long time," Senior Managing Officer Kiyotaka Ise told reporters. "But for an automaker to envision all combustion engines as gone is pretty extraordinary."

Ise acknowledged some gasoline engine cars would remain in less developed markets, but only in small numbers.

He and other Toyota officials insisted on the inevitability of their overall vision, stressing that the problems of global warming and environmental destruction made a move toward a hydrogen-based society a necessity.

Experts agree more has to be done to curtail global warming and pollution, and nations are increasingly tightening emissions standards.

But they are divided on whether all gasoline engines will disappear, or they'll stay on, thanks to greener internal combustion engines, as well as the arrival of clean diesel technology.

Tatsuo Yoshida, senior analyst at Barclays Securities Japan in Tokyo, said Toyota's goals weren't far-fetched.



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"The internal combustion engine is developing and metamorphosing into hybrids," he said. "Toyota has been working on this technology for a long time. When officials speak out like this, it means they are 120 percent confident this is their scenario."

As part of its environmental vision, Toyota also promised to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from production lines during manufacturing in

2030 to about a third of 2001 levels.

Toyota said it will develop manufacturing technology that uses hydrogen, and will use wind power at its Tahara plant, both by 2020. It also promised to beef up various recycling measures, including developing ways to build vehicles from recycled ones.

When asked why Toyota remained so cautious on electric vehicles, they said they take too long to recharge, despite battery innovations that have made them smaller, restricting them for short-range travel in cities.

Toyota Chairman Takeshi Uchiyamada, known as the "father of the Prius," said the company was taking the environment seriously because it has always tried to contribute to a better society.

"We have the same principles since our founding," he said, showing on stage a photo of Sakichi Toyoda, the Toyota founder's father, who invented a textile loom in 1891. "That is Toyota's DNA."

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