

**Propane: A Bridge Fuel, or the Destination?**



With recent rulings by the Environmental Protection Agency and California Air Resource Board related to tightening NOx standards, we collectively understand that we must head toward a cleaner destination. These new regulations are driving a significant shift in class 4-7 vehicles from diesel engines to something cleaner *and* lower cost. But what does that look like in real, day-to-day business operations?

The candid discussions around the challenges that come with battery electric vehicles at this year’s ACT Expo really support the message we’ve been preaching for more than a decade: propane autogas is a viable solution to make the transition to net zero emissions possible, and will help us sidestep some of the challenges with EVs.

Despite its strong record as a sustainable, readily available alternative fuel, propane is often referred to as a “bridge fuel” to a fully electric future. While the team at ROUSH CleanTech agrees that propane could pave the way for other fuel technologies to become mainstream, we must ask the question: How long is that bridge?

We’re really bullish on the future of electrification, but we also understand that the challenges related to upfront costs, supply chain, materials, charging infrastructure and grid resiliency may cause the adoption curve to be slower than experts predict.

Because of these headwinds and the emergence of a significant renewable propane supply, we believe that propane is no longer a “bridge” but rather a destination for transportation energy.

Propane has staying power for so many reasons. With more than 100 years on the market, propane is a widely available and commonly used source: 700 million gallons are used in the transportation industry. In fact, the global propane market is the same size as the aviation fuel market as well as the marine fuel market. Not only is propane inexpensive to manufacture, it’s cost-effective to store and economical to transport.

And, as we gaze into the future, let’s not forget that renewable propane will soon be crossing that bridge. Once fleets adopt renewable propane — either as a stand-alone fuel or as a drop-in fuel — they’ll operate with the same power and reliability as conventional propane, but with even lower carbon emissions. Renewable propane has an ultra-low carbon intensity, and at the point of combustion it’s actually carbon neutral.

There’s no silver bullet. We need all available options — battery electric, hydrogen fuel cell, propane, natural gas and renewable diesel — to help fleets make the required transition.

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