Indy To Replace Entire Fleet With Electrics, Hybrids

Rick Callahan, Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Indianapolis wants to become the first major city to replace its entire fleet with electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles in a move the mayor says is designed to reduce U.S. reliance on foreign-produced fuels, city officials said Wednesday.

Mayor Greg Ballard signed an executive order Wednesday mandating the city to replace its current sedans with electric vehicles. The city will also work with the private sector to phase in snow plows, fire trucks and other heavy vehicles that run on compressed natural gas, and it will ask automakers to develop a plug-in hybrid police car as one doesn't yet exist.

Indianapolis, the 12th largest city in the U.S. with a population of 825,000, hopes to complete the switch by 2025.

Ballard, a retired Marine officer, hopes that in making the switch, Indianapolis will help the country reduce its dependence on foreign oil. City spokesman Marc Lotter said the mayor considers it an issue of national security.

"The United States' current transportation energy model, driven by oil, exacts an enormous cost financially and in terms of strategic leverage," Ballard, a retired Marine Officer and Gulf War veteran, said in a statement. "Our oil dependence in some cases places the fruits of our labor into the hands of dictators united against the people of the United States."

The city fleet includes 500 non-police vehicles, and the police car switch alone has the potential to save taxpayers $10 million a year in fuel costs, the statement from the mayor's office said.

Lotter did not provide an estimate on the cost of the change. The new vehicles will be purchased as older vehicles are retired. He said the city buys about 50 non-police vehicles every year.

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