



KENNETH MAHN  
SUPERVISOR, SECOND DISTRICT

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February 19, 1953

MR. HENRY FORD II,  
President, Ford Motor Co.,  
Detroit, Mich.

Dear Mr. Ford:

As one of the five supervisors of Los Angeles County — the largest county governmental unit in the Nation — I am vitally concerned with the problem of air pollution.

It is my understanding that air pollution (described in this area as smog) is not unique to this locality but is aggravated by peculiar geographical conditions.

Air pollution in this area has in recent years become a matter of major public concern as the effects of the pollution are adverse to the health, welfare, and economy of the county. The subject has been constantly under study and while claims of progress have been made, the smog hanging in the air on certain days effectively disputes the claims as far as the general public is concerned. Some of the studies have indicated that air pollution results from a combination of many factors, from the relatively innocuous smoke of backyard incinerators to exhaust fumes from automobiles and buses, smoke from industrial plants, and vapors from gasoline refineries and storage tanks.

I am extremely interested in learning what can be done to combat effectively each of the known causes of air pollution.

Los Angeles County has the largest per capita concentration of motor vehicles in the world. During the past 10 years the number of automobiles in the county has doubled, and now, with a population of approximately 4 million, Los Angeles County has about 2 million automobiles. While the exhaust fumes from these vehicles may not be the major cause of smog, it definitely appears that these gases contribute to the problem.

I am interested in learning whether your organization has conducted, or is conducting, research or experimentation designed to eliminate or substantially reduce exhaust vapors. If you have conducted such experiments, I would appreciate any information you can provide, especially on the following points:

1. Are there any devices which can be attached to automobile exhaust manifolds or pipes which would effectively reduce exhaust gases?
2. If so, can these devices be produced inexpensively on a mass scale?

3. If there are not any such devices, is work being done to perfect anything to accomplish the same results? If so, what progress has been made?

4. What progress, if any, has been made (which could be practicably applied on a large scale) toward more complete combustion of fuel?

5. Are there any known solutions or compounds which could be added to gasoline which would counteract or render harmless the exhaust vapors?

Any reference material or other information you can provide will be very helpful.

Very truly yours,



KENNETH HAHN  
*Los Angeles County Supervisor*

*Ford Motor Company*

ENGINEERING STAFF  
21500 OAKWOOD BOULEVARD  
DEARBORN, MICHIGAN

DEARBORN, MICHIGAN

*March 3, 1953.*

MR. KENNETH HAHN,  
*Los Angeles County Supervisor,  
Los Angeles, Calif.*

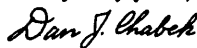
Dear Mr. Hahn:

The Ford engineering staff, although mindful that automobile engines produce exhaust gases, feels these waste vapors are dissipated in the atmosphere quickly and do not present an air-pollution problem. Therefore, our research department has not conducted any experimental work aimed at totally eliminating these gases.

The fine automotive powerplants which modern-day engineers design do not "smoke." Only aging engines subjected to improper care and maintenance burn oil.

To date, the need for a device which will more effectively reduce exhaust vapors has not been established. However, considerable research has been directed toward more efficient fuel combustion.

Very truly yours,



DAN J. CHABEK,  
*News Department*