Study: Clean Cities Coalitions Effective in Improving Air Quality, Encouraging Alternative Fuel Station Development

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OKLAHOMA CITY -- -- (February 1) A new study has found that the Clean Cities program and coalitions throughout the county have contributed to increased alternative fuel availability and improved air quality.

The study, not requested or funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, explored air quality data and alternative fuel stations in counties with Clean Cities coalitions and those without.

According to Evaluating the Impacts of the Clean Cities Program [1] from World Resources Institute China Office/UNC Chapel Hill and researchers Shiyong Qiu and Nikhil Kaza:

The Department of Energy's Clean Cities program was created in 1993 to reduce petroleum usage in the transportation sector. The program promotes alternative fuels such as biofuels and fuel-saving strategies such as idle reduction and fleet management through coalitions of local government, non-profit, and private actors. Few studies have evaluated the impact of the program because of its complexity that include interrelated strategies of grants, education and training and diversity of participants. This paper uses a Difference-in-Differences (DiD) approach to evaluate the effectiveness of the program between 1990 and 2010. We quantify the effectiveness of the Clean Cities program by focusing on performance measures such as air quality, number of alternative fueling stations, private vehicle occupancy and transit ridership. We find that counties that participate in the program perform better on all these measures compared to counties that did not participate. Compared to the control group, counties in the Clean Cities program experienced a reduction in days with bad air quality (3.7%), a decrease in automobile commuters (2.9%), an overall increase in transit commuters (2.1%) and had greater numbers of new alternative fueling stations (12.9). The results suggest that the program is a qualified success.

Central Oklahoma Clean Cities is a U.S. Dept. of Energy designated [2] alternative fuels public and private stakeholder coalition at the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments [3]. Over the last 21 years, coalition stakeholders have displaced nearly 38 million gallons of gasoline and diesel fuel with alternative fuels and fuel saving efforts.

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