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Dear Editor,

Dan Niel's Feb. 13 piece "Honda FCX Clarity: Beauty for beauty's sake" is a beautiful, eloquent yarn with some absolutely dead-wrong conclusions about hydrogen technologies.

Let's start with the conclusion that "hydrogen fuel cell technology won't work in cars," citing battery technology as more capable, which is one of the most egregious. The comparison of the family-sized FCX Clarity to the 2-seater Tesla roadster is frought with bad assumptions. I'm strapped with my calculator, but let's go straight to the punchline: vehicles like the Tesla can never survive as multi-purpose cars even if you scaled them up. A battery vehicle cannot carry a family for 300 miles on one tank/charge. But Hydrogen can. Today.

If you built one, even the most advanced batteries would be twice as heavy and take up twice as much space as a hydrogen system would—a non starter for designing cars.

How about infrastructure? You bring up those costs, too. The National Research Council, backed up by a recent study by the National Hydrogen Association, estimates that the investment needed to subsidize the expansion of the hydrogen infrastructure AND subsidize the initially higher cost of hydrogen vehicles will be less than the cost of one blueberry muffin a year for every American for 15 years--or $48 billion over the next 15 years. Incidentally, this is also less than incentives currently provided for the development of other alternative fuels and a fraction of the $87 billion needed to maintain our existing gasoline infrastructure for just one year. Oh and how much would it cost to expand the electricity infrastructure so that every kid-less adult in America (you can't carry kids if you drive a Tesla) can come home and plug in their roadster and turn on the A/C, TV and lights? That part is conveniently left out.

Then there's the emissions. The electricity coming from the national mix with 52% coal would produce more emissions than if the Clarity's hydrogen was made from natural gas. Plus there's the refueling time—minutes for hydrogen cars, hours for batteries.

I must applaud Mr. Neil for claiming to give Honda the benefit of the doubt, albeit at the end of his criticisms. After all, Honda's not alone, since almost all the world's major automakers have hydrogen programs. The industry might not do a perfect job of communicating how incredible hydrogen technology is, but you can trust that there are a lot of smart people making hydrogen technologies better and cheaper every day and we're doing it because we know that the hydrogen fuel cell vehicle is the only vehicle that can simultaneously reduce greenhouse gases to over 80% below 1990 levels, reduce oil consumption (eliminating oil imports by 2060) and reduce societal costs by up to $600 billion/year by the end of the century.

Sincerely,
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