

# Seattle cutting back on biodiesel

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by [GARY CHITTIM](#) / KING 5 News

Video at - <http://www.king5.com/video/index.html?nvid=372754>

SEATTLE -- It wasn't long after Seattle city government got its first taste of biodiesel five years ago that it was hooked. By 2009, it had a 73,000 gallon-per-month habit.

Last month, the city and its massive fleet of vehicles dropped that habit, cold turkey.

"We did stop orders of soy-based biodiesel last month," said Brenda Bauer, Seattle Director of Fleets and Facilities.

Bauer said the decision was based on a recent study by the Environmental Protection Agency which she said found soy-based diesel probably had a little bit higher greenhouse gas impact than regular biodiesel.

The city has since turned to cheaper, low-sulfur diesel, but Bauer said that is only temporary.

She told us Mayor Greg Nickels and the city are moving away from petroleum based fuels which have undependable fluctuations in cost and an uncertain future.

Bauer said don't expect petroleum to be

replaced by a single source like biodiesel or ethanol. She said, instead, we'll probably see a menu of fuel choices that fit in to the needs of the fleet and the budget.

King County and Washington state have already abandoned biodiesel in many of their public fleets and ferries.

The once rapidly expanding biodiesel production system has stalled under pressure from the loss of raw materials. It's still available and very attractive to governments and the public because it reduces dependence on foreign oil and puts money in the pockets of farmers.

But until alternative sources like algae are improved and mass produced, biodiesel will share petroleum's uncertain future. Seattle is currently evaluating tests of a biodiesel product produced locally from waste grease and expects to start using it soon.

Just about every Seattle city department with diesel engine vehicles used biodiesel blends, including the fire department which put it in its largest trucks with no loss of performance.