

LAT Home | My LATimes | Print Edition | All Sections

Hello tclim@calstatela.edu Profile Logout

Jobs | Cars.com | Real Estate | More Classifieds

Los Angeles Times | Print Edition

SEARCH

You are here: [LAT Home](#) > [Print Edition](#)



Print Edition

- » [Front Page](#)
- » [Column One](#)
- » [Inside "A"](#)
- » [California](#)
- » [Business](#)
- » [Sports](#)
- » [Calendar](#)
- » [Editorials, Op-Ed](#)

Weekly:

- » [Food](#)
- » [Health](#)
- » [Autos](#)
- » [Home](#)
- » [The Guide](#)

Sunday:

- » [Books](#)
- » [Calendar](#)
- » [Magazine](#)
- » [Sunday Opinion](#)
- » [Real Estate](#)
- » [Travel](#)

News

- [California | Local](#)
- [National](#)
- [World](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Campaign '08](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Columnists](#)
- [Print Edition](#)
- [Readers' Rep](#)
- [Corrections](#)
- [The Guide NEW](#)
- [The Envelope](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Magazine](#)
- [Home & Garden](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Food](#)
- [Autos](#)
- [Books](#)
- [Image](#)
- [Arts & Culture](#)
- [Living Green](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Photography](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Crossword, Sudoku](#)
- [Your Scene](#)
- [Blogs](#)
- [All Sections](#)

Buy, Sell & More

Jobs

Vegetable oil fuels cars -- and tax bills

Email | Print | Text | RSS

ADVERTISEMENT



Irfan Khan / Los Angeles Times

GREEN IDEA: Matthew Tiffany, 26, of Monrovia fills his 1981 diesel Mercedes with fryer grease from a neighborhood restaurant. His effort to launch a fuel cooperative failed because of red tape. [Email Picture](#)

Diesel owners who switch to cooking grease can run afoul of the law. Just ask the governor.

By Evan Halper, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer
May 6, 2008

Dave Eck, a Half Moon Bay mechanic, had attracted a media spotlight with his fleet of vehicles fueled by used fryer grease from a local chowder house. So when Sacramento called, he figured officials wanted advice on promoting alternative fuels.

Not at all. The government rang to notify Eck that he was a tax cheat. He was scolded for failing to get a "diesel fuel supplier's license," reporting quarterly how many gallons of grease he burns, and paying a tax on each gallon.

Related Content



Fuel dilemma

"All of a sudden they nailed me for a road tax," said Eck, who drives a Hummer converted to run on vegetable oil. "I said, 'Not a problem. I'll do my part. But what do I get? At least let me into the carpool lane.'"

No such luck. The state offered Eck only a potentially large fine -- and not just for failing to pay taxes. He can also get in trouble for carting kitchen grease away from eateries without a license from the state Meat and Poultry Inspection Branch.

Or for not having at least \$1 million in liability insurance, in case he spills some of the stuff. Or for not getting

permission from the state Air Resources Board to burn fat in the first place.

The regulations are so burdensome that even Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, trying to set an example for Californians by driving a Hummer that burns cooking oil he buys at Costco, had not complied. Schwarzenegger, who has said that the exhaust from his Hummer smells so much like French fries that his passengers get hunger pangs, was unaware that he was required to send Sacramento an 18-cent road tax for every gallon of kitchen oil he burned, according to spokesman Aaron McLear. After The Times raised the issue, McLear said the governor would pay the taxes he owed.

The governor's staff says it is working on making it easier to drive using vegetable oil without being an outlaw.

"We are very interested in making sure people who have these kinds of vehicles are able to comply as easily as possible," McLear said.

But environmentalists are frustrated. "It is ridiculous that we live in what is assumed to be one of

Most Viewed Most E-mailed

[BBC World News America](#)
Many views...One world Weeknights @ 7pm et/pt
[bbcamerica.com/worldnewsamerica](#)

[Quotes from The Office](#)
Read Funny Quotes from the TV show The Office at tbs.com.
[www.tbs.com/theoffice](#)

[10 Rules to Shrink Belly](#)
Lose 9 lbs every 11 Days with these 10 Idiot Proof Rules of Fat Loss.
[www.FatLoss4Idiots.com](#)

[Oscar De La Hoya](#)
Who Won the Mayweather-de la Hoya Fight? Find out w/the News Toolbar
[News.alotoolbars.com](#)

[Recognition Awards](#)
Recognition Awards sites Save on Recognition Awards
[shopping.doogate.com](#)

