

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today I have the pleasure of welcoming a group of distinguished guests from the International Energy Agency Hydrogen Implementing Agreement (the IEA HIA) who rode in today in our fuel cell cars. As you are probably aware, the International Energy Agency (the IEA) was founded by international treaty in the early 70's at the time of the gas crisis. One of the IEA's key missions is research and development. The IEA headquarters are in Paris, but its research efforts span the globe.

The IEA HIA was created in 1977. It now has 22 members, consisting of 21 countries and the European Union, and it continues to grow. The United States was a founding member and has been a strong supporter of the IEA HIA since its creation. Membership is now pending for the Russian Federation, Brazil and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization known as UNIDO.

The IEA HIA is the world reference for coordinated hydrogen research, development and demonstration activities on a global basis. Through the creation and conduct of 27 tasks, the IEA HIA has facilitated and managed a comprehensive range of research, development and analysis programs among its members. The IEA HIA continues to collaboratively address many innovative, R,D&D issues of near and long term interest in the areas of production, storage, safety, integrated systems and markets. It is further committed to analysis and outreach in support of its R,D&D activities.

A retrospective examining the past five years of the IEA HIA's operation will soon be available, free on charge, on the IEA HIA website, [www.ieahia.org](http://www.ieahia.org), along with the Agreement's Strategic Plan for 2009-2014.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is an honor to welcome our international colleagues to celebrate with us as we take another step in the United States toward realization of a shared vision for hydrogen energy.

And now, the IEA HIA Chairman, Mr. Antonio G. García-Conde, has agreed to say a few words to us today: