

Korea Environmental Policy Bulletin

Natural Gas Vehicles Promotion Program in Urban Areas

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Summary

With the increase of motor vehicles on the road in Korea, transportation has become a significant source of air pollution. In particular, diesel vehicles emit large amounts of particulate matter (PM₁₀) and nitrogen oxide (NOx), which is the reason why diesel buses are being replaced by NGVs (natural gas vehicles). Pilot projects for NGVs started in 1998, and as of December 2007, 15,097 natural gas buses and 289 natural gas garbage trucks have been introduced. Ministry of Environment plans to replace 23,000 diesel vehicles with NGVs and install 400 natural gas stations by 2010. In order to increase the demand for natural gas buses, financial incentives and tax benefits are being offered for the purchase of the vehicles, or for the installation and operation of natural gas stations. The benefit of this program is estimated to reach 1.57 trillion Korean won in environmental improvement effect and 1.22 trillion Korean won in net economic benefit. Ministry of Environment is making an effort to share the experiences of its natural gas vehicles promotion program and

cooperate with other countries in introducing NGVs and relevant equipments. A General Assembly and Exhibitions for the 3rd ANGVA and IANGV will be held in the city of Donghae in 2009 and the city of Chuncheon in 2012, respectively. The Green Highway Project II is

underway in commemoration of the 2009 ANGVA General Assembly and Exhibitions. Ministry of Environment will organize a demonstration project and prepare a mid- and long-term plan for introducing LNG vehicles in 2009.

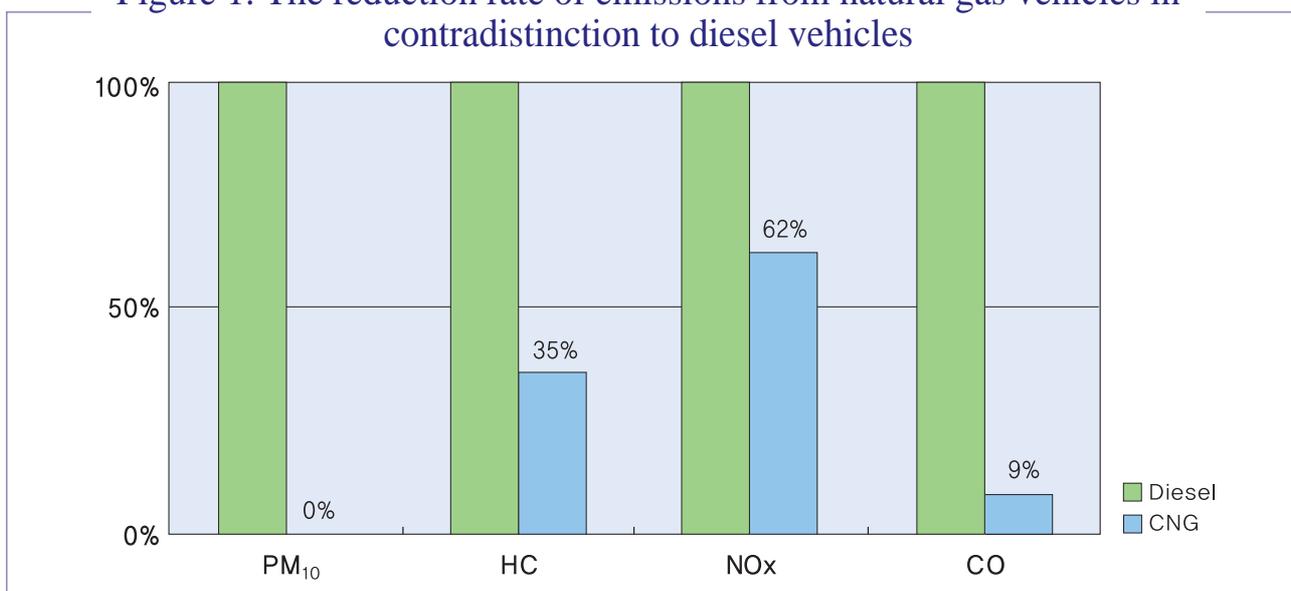
I. Background of the Natural Gas Vehicles Promotion Program

The world is suffering from serious air pollution because of the increase of automobiles and the exhaust emissions they emit. Mobile sources on the road are becoming increasingly responsible for air pollution and cause more than 65% of particulate matter (PM₁₀), and 51% of nitrogen oxide (NO_x) in the Seoul metropolitan area. Diesel motor vehicles are considered to be the primary cause of air pollution. Although they represent only 26% of total motor vehicles on the road, they account for 100% of particulate matter and 75% of NO_x in the

emissions from mobile sources on the road.

Therefore, to reduce the emissions from motor vehicles, Natural Gas Vehicles (NGVs) are being introduced to replace diesel vehicles. This will reduce air pollutants such as particulate matter (see Figure 1). Recently, compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles, liquefied natural gas (LNG) vehicles, and hybrid electric vehicles that run on gasoline and electricity, or natural gas and electricity have been introduced in order to save energy and mitigate pollution in urban areas.

Figure 1. The reduction rate of emissions from natural gas vehicles in contradistinction to diesel vehicles



Source : Environmental Transportation Division, Ministry of Environment, The presentation material of “the supply policy of natural gas vehicles”, 2007.

Natural gas is an inflammable gas mixture of lower molecular weight hydrocarbons that is extracted from underground, and is mainly composed of methane (CH₄). Unlike oil reserves which are concentrated in the Middle East, natural gas resources are distributed throughout the world, and they are estimated to be sufficient in meeting demand for a long time in a stable way. Therefore natural gas is considered a good substitute for petroleum-based fuels.

Natural gas combustion emits very little pollutants due to the removal of impurities such as particulate matter and sulfur during the liquefying phase. In the case of leaks, natural gas diffuses in the air very quickly because its density (0.6) is lighter than air. The gas is considered to be relatively safe to use because the combustion limit¹⁾ is as high as 4.5% and ignition temperatures are high enough.

Depending on their fuel storage system, there are three types of natural gas vehicles. Compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles use compressed (200 bar) gas in high-pressure containers, and liquefied natural gas (LNG) vehicles use low temperature (-162°C) liquefied gas in vacuum insulated containers. Adsorption natural gas (ANG) vehicles use adsorbed lower pressure (1/3-1/5 of CNG) gas to adsorbents such as activated carbon.

The CNG variant is currently the most popular, but LNG vehicles have recently been developed and commercialized. Though CNG vehicles have 1/4 lower MPG than gasoline vehicles due to the low energy density of CNG, LNG vehicles have three times more MPG than CNG.

In addition to fuel storage systems, there are also three types of natural gas combustion modes. Bi-fuel vehicles use both gasoline and natural gas. Dual fuel vehicles mainly use natural gas, and diesel is also used as auxiliary fuel for ignition. Dedicated natural gas vehicles use only natural gas and utilize the spark ignition method. The bi-fuel system is primarily applied to small gasoline vehicles, and the dual fuel system is mainly used for medium/large diesel vehicles. Since the late 1990s, a more efficient, less-polluting, and optimized dedicated system has been introduced and commercialized.

The development of advanced natural gas engines and other new technologies are crucial to meet strengthening emission standards across the world and also to limit CO₂ emissions to tackle climate change.

Domestic CNG vehicles were developed by modifying 6-cylinder diesel engines in order to spark ignition (Lean-burn engines). Natural gas fueled buses are the same as diesel buses in basic structure, but different in fuel supply system. High-pressure (20 Mpa) natural gas is stored in the vehicle's high-pressure gas container through a dispenser, and the amount of stored fuel can be monitored by a barometer at the dashboard. In the case of extremely high pressure, a safety system will work to release the pressure through a safety valve.

After the compressed gas passes through its supply pipeline from the container, the pressure of the gas is adjusted by a reduction valve, and the gas is fed into the engine after having been mixed with air.

II. Natural Gas Vehicles Promotion Program

1. Present status and goal

The government of Korea developed natural gas

vehicles between 1991 and 1997 as part of the "G-7 Project" and started test operations of four urban buses in two cities (Incheon and Ansan) in July

¹⁾ Combustion limit : the minimum fuel concentration to combust in the air

1998. Between June 2000 and 2002, 5,000 diesel buses in Seoul, six metropolitan cities, and the city of Suwon were replaced by NGVs.

The central government and local municipalities have been actively involved in replacing diesel

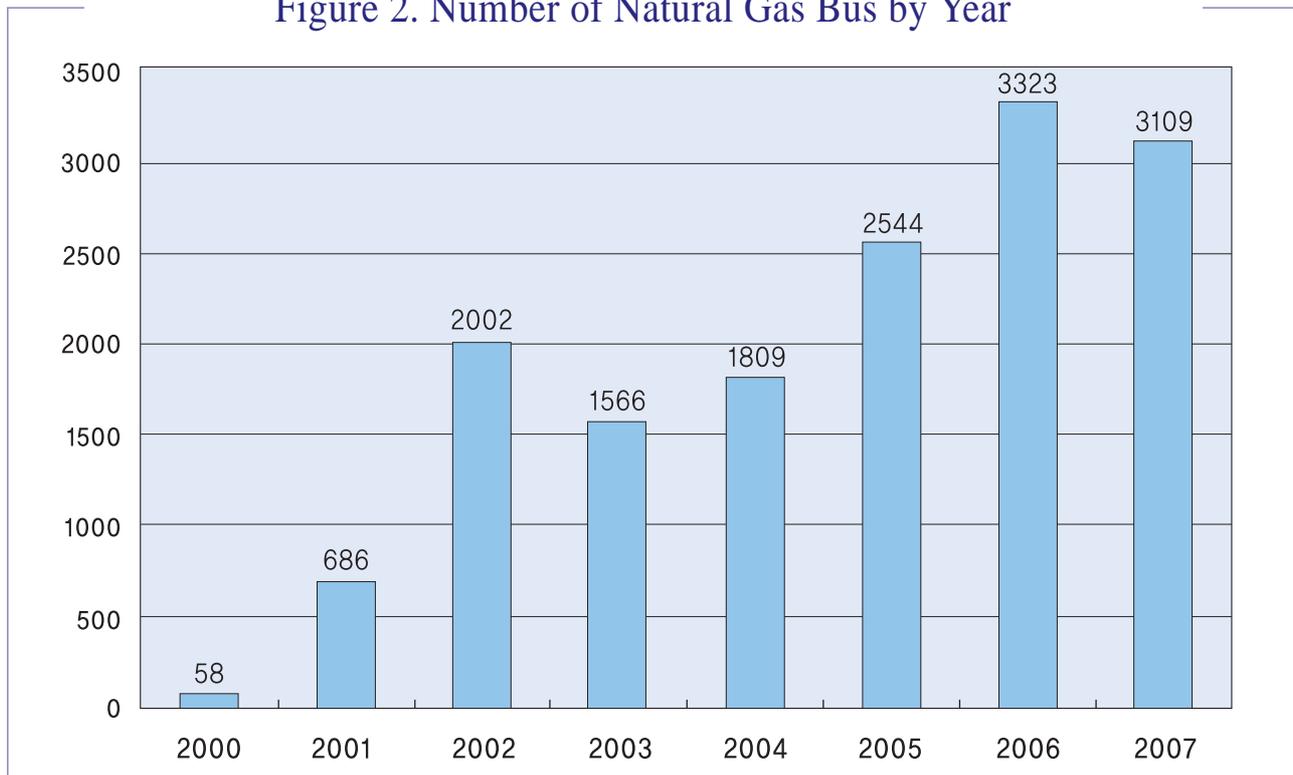
buses with natural gas buses in urban areas. As of December 2007, 15,097 natural gas buses and 289 natural gas garbage trucks were introduced and 87 natural gas stations were constructed.

Table 1. Number of natural gas buses and construction of natural gas stations and machines by year

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total
Natural gas bus	58	686	2,002	1,566	1,809	2,544	3,323	3,109	15,097
Gas station (machine)	4 (24)	24 (55)	8 (27)	7 (27)	20 (54)	14 (42)	1 (14)	9 (21)	87 (247)

Note : Only fixed gas stations are calculated.

Figure 2. Number of Natural Gas Bus by Year



Source : Ministry of Environment, The updated data based on “the study on the effect evaluation of NGVs promotion program and its promotion alternatives”, April, 2007.

In areas where it is difficult to install natural gas supply pipelines, 85 gas-charging vehicles are running to supply natural gas (in December 2007), and gas stations in Dae-jon, Gim-hae, Pyeong-taek, and Go-yang are in operation as the mother stations

to supply natural gas to gas-charging vehicles.

Ministry of Environment plans to replace 23,000 diesel motor vehicles in areas where city gas is being supplied and to construct 440 gas stations by 2010.

2. Institutional Arrangement of NGVs Promotion Program

Over the past 7 years, the central government has been promoting financial aid policies such as tax cuts to stimulate the supply of natural gas vehicles, and revised related laws in order to ease regulations

on gas station construction.

The government provides various benefits, such as grants for the purchase of vehicles, loans, and financial support for the construction and operation of natural gas stations, and tax cuts to promote the introduction of natural gas buses.

Table 2. Promotion Policies for the Purchase and Operation of NGVs

Date	Legal Arrangement
April 1999	Establishment of legal basis for natural gas supply (Amendment of the Clean Air Conservation Act)
August 1999	VAT and acquisition tax exemptions for natural gas buses (Amendment of the Restriction of Special Taxation Act)
January 2000	Grant-in-aid for the natural gas vehicle promotion program (Establishment of the guideline on grant-in-aid for the natural gas vehicles promotion program)
2001-2006	Exemption of custom duties for major imported parts of buses (Amendment of the enforcement regulations of the Customs Act)
December 2002	Permission for gas station construction, excluding residential areas (Enactment of the National Land Planning and Utilization Act)
December 2002	Mandatory non-/low-emission vehicle purchasing (Amendment of the Clean Air Conservation Act)
March 2003	Expansion of grants for garbage trucks and town buses in limited local areas, etc. (Amendment of the grant-in-aid service processing guideline)
December 2003	Mandatory low emission vehicle purchasing (Enactment of the Special Act on Metropolitan Air Quality Improvement)
2004-2006	Provision of grants for airport limousines, commuter buses, school buses, and intercity buses

Source : Ministry of Environment, The study on the effect evaluation of natural gas vehicle promotion program and its promotion alternatives, April, 2007.

First, the price differential between natural gas and diesel vehicles is covered by the grant. In the beginning, only inner city buses were eligible for the grant. However, the grant became available for

garbage trucks, airport limousines, intercity buses, and school buses. Prime rate loans are also applied for the construction of natural gas stations.

Table 3. Grant-in-Aid and Loans for the Purchase of NGVs

	Grant & Loan Amount
Purchase of CNG Bus	22.5 million Korean won/bus
Purchase of CNG Garbage Truck	· 5 ton: 30 million Korean won/truck · 11 ton: 60 million Korean won/truck
CNG Station Construction	700 million Korean won/gas filling machine (loan)

Second, the government partly supports the fuel expenses and operation costs for natural gas buses and gas stations.

Table 4. Grant-in-Aid Policies for NGVs and Gas Station

	Detailed Measures
Fuel Cost	Financial assistance to offset price differentials between natural gas and diesel at a maximum of 115 Korea won/liter
Empty Running Cost	In the case of more than 4 km distance from the nearest gas station, grants for empty running cost of up to 22 km
Gas Station Operation Expense	Grants for the loss of the services of less than 31 vehicles in a station with the service capacity of 100 vehicles per day
Mobile Filling Cost	Financial support for fuel filling cost difference between mobile gas stations and fixed gas stations

Third, VAT, acquisition tax, and customs duty reductions are provided for purchasing NGVs. They are also exempted from charge for Environmental Improvement on diesel motor vehicles. The corporate tax cuts and lower industrial electricity fees are also applied for natural gas stations.

Environmental damage charges on building parking lots and gas stations in limited development districts can be reduced by 10-20% by amending the enforcement decrees of the "Act on special Measures for Designation and Management of Areas of Restricted Development".

Table 5. Tax & Charge Reduction & Exemption Policies

	Amount of Tax Reduction
VAT & Acquisition tax	VAT: 9,000,000 Korean won/vehicle Acquisition tax: 3,000,000 Korean won/vehicle
Charge for Environmental Improvement	1,660,000 Korean won/year/vehicle
Corporate Tax	15,000,000 Korean won/gas station
Customs	Application of Reduced rates for the import of major parts of NGVs such as cylinders

In addition, to encourage the construction of natural gas stations, related regulations such as

facility standards on safety distance and guards have been amended.

Table 6. Regulation Amendment on Standards of Natural Gas Station Construction

Date	Regulation Amendment
April 1999	Permission of gas station construction in inner city bus garages (Downtown areas) (Amendment of the enforcement decrees of the Building Act)
January 2000	Relaxation of safety distance from gas station border; from 10m to 5m (Amendment of the related notifications of Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy)
March 2000	Permission of gas station construction in public parking lots under a local government's ordinance (Amendment of the Seoul city's municipal ordinance)
July 2000	Permission of gas station construction in green belt zones (Amendment of the enforcement decrees of the Act on Special Measures for Designation and Management of Areas of Restricted Development)
June 2001	Safety guard employment obligation eased from 4 persons to 3 persons (Amendment of the enforcement decrees of the High-Pressure Gas Safety Control Act)

April 2001	Relaxation of safety distance of protection wall from residential zones: from 50m to 25m (Amendment of the Regulations on Standards, etc. of Housing Construction)
September 2001	Reduction of environment damage charges on building parking lots and gas stations in development restricted zones to 10-20% (Amendment of the enforcement decrees of the Act on Designation and Management of Areas of Restricted Development)
September 2002	Permission of gas station construction in areas with distribution facilities (Amendment of the municipal rule on standards of facilities for urban planning)

Source: Ministry of Environment, The study on the effect evaluation of natural gas vehicles promotion program and its promotion alternatives, April, 2007.

Standards have been set on the manufacture and inspection of natural gas containers used for NGVs. There are two major gas container inspection standards at the domestic level: one developed by the Korea Gas Safety Corporation, and the other by the Korean Standards Association. These two standards on steel containers without joints are in force.

3. Environmental and Economic Effectiveness

Comparisons of air pollutant emissions from natural gas buses and diesel buses showed that emissions per horsepower (g/kWh) of CO, NMHC, NO_x, and PM₁₀ from natural gas buses are 8.89~10%, 27.7~43.1%, 49.2~74.8%, and 0% respectively of those of diesel buses.

Table 7. Comparison of Emission Standards and Emission Test Results per Power Output

		Emission Test Results (g/kwh)				Year
		CO	NMHC	NO _x	PM ₁₀	
CNG bus	Emission standard	0.400	0.200	3.500	–	2002
	Company A	0.105	0.121	3.190	–	2006
	Company B	0.007	0.109	2.277	–	
Diesel bus	Emission standard	2.100	0.660	5.000	0.100	2002
	Company A	1.181	0.437	4.267	0.098	2006
	Company B	0.070	0.253	4.626	0.068	

Source : Ministry of Environment, The study on the effect evaluation of natural gas vehicles promotion program and its promotion alternatives, April, 2007.

The environmental impacts of NGVs were evaluated by estimating the amount of air pollutant emissions reduced by the introduction of natural gas buses. Air pollutant reduction was estimated through the quantitative analysis of emissions by applying an emission coefficient per kilometer traveled (g/km).

Applying the pollutant-specific marginal social costs of the EC to the air pollutant reduction benefits of natural gas buses showed that the environmental improvement benefits of the natural gas buses introduced until 2006 would equal 1,560,811 million Korean won.

Table 8. Estimated Environmental Benefits from Natural Gas Bus Promotion by Pollutants

(Unit: million Korean won)

Pollutant	PM ₁₀	NO _x	HC	CO	Total
Environmental Benefit	1,280,782	327,155	-83,604	36,478	1,560,811

Note : All Natural Gas buses are regarded to have 10-year durability

Source : Ministry of Environment, The study on the effect evaluation of natural gas vehicles promotion program and its promotion alternatives, April, 2007.

The net economic benefit of natural gas buses promotion program was evaluated by the cost-benefit analysis on the expenses paid by the central governments and local municipalities for the introduction of those vehicles and their environmental improvement benefits applying the

EC marginal social costs of air pollutants, which is suitable to the situation in Korea. The results showed that the net economic benefits of natural gas buses introduced until 2006 were about 1,221,000 million Korean won, which was adjusted for the price levels in 2000.

Table 9. Net Economic Benefits from the Natural Gas Bus Promotion

(Unit: million Korean won)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	total	
Environment improvement benefit (A)	6,086	86,999	247,502	199,730	267,968	328,930	423,596	1,560,811	
Cost (B)	Grant-in-aid for vehicles	1,305	15,435	45,045	35,235	40,703	57,240	74,768	269,730
	Loans for gas stations	583	1,176	6,320	2,861	2,965	2,194	2,113	18,212
	Sales and registration tax reductions and exemptions	53	631	1,807	1,441	1,664	2,340	3,057	11,029
	Exemption from environmental improvement charges	197	2,332	6,807	5,324	6,151	8,650	11,298	40,759
	Subtotal	2,139	19,575	60,014	44,861	51,482	70,424	91,236	339,730
Net Economic Benefits (A-B)	3,947	67,424	187,488	154,869	216,486	258,506	332,360	1,221,080	

Note : 1) Acquisition and registration tax benefits : 920,000 Korean won/vehicle

2) Exemption from environmental improvement charges : 3.4million Korean won/10 years/ vehicle

Source : Ministry of Environment, The study on the effect evaluation of natural gas vehicles promotion program and its promotion alternatives, April, 2007.

III International Cooperation for NGV Promotion

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