

California Freeways Will Soon Generate Electricity

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[Dennis Romero](#)

Freeways inspire road rage, serve as giant trash receptacles and take us home, often very slowly.

And now, a new statewide initiative means they could soon be generating some much-needed electricity.

The office of L.A.-area Assemblyman Mike Gatto announced recently that the California Energy Commission has agreed to fund multiple piezoelectric pilot projects in the Golden State.

According to a state [energy commission report](#), “Piezoelectric crystals give an electrical discharge when mechanically stressed.” So as vehicles roll over a highway embedded with these crystals, an electrical current is created, which can be harvested to feed the grid.

Similar programs have been launched in Israel and Japan, while Italy has a roadway project in the works. And the San Francisco nightclub Temple has even [installed a piezoelectric dance floor](#).

“I still get stopped on the street by people who ask what happened to the idea of using our roads to generate electricity,” Gatto says. “California is the car capital of the world, and we recycle just about everything. So why not capture the energy from road vibrations and put it to good use?”

Click here to watch “THE PIEZOELECTRIC SYSTEM ON ROADS”:

<https://youtu.be/5FH3zzxIVnk>

The program's schedule, including when ground will be broken, has not been revealed. The commission's move follows years of research on how this might work on California's busy freeways — and on whether it will be worth it for taxpayers.

Having so many cars create so many vibrations “is a challenge for this technology,” the commission's report says. But innovations are addressing that challenge, it said.

The state's analysis concluded that a pilot demonstration of the technology would be the best way to determine if it's worth our money — if we can actually squeeze some juice from concrete and asphalt.

“Thirty years ago, no one would have believed that black silicon panels in the desert could generate 'solar' power,” Gatto said. “Piezoelectric technology is real, and I am glad the state has finally acknowledged its potential in becoming an energy source.”
