



OPERATION ★ FREE

Secure America with Clean Energy

Operation Free Statement by Mario Rivas

CARB Meeting – January 26th

Hello my name is Mario Rivas, thank you for receiving my comments today. I am here today with Operation Free, a national coalition of veterans who are advocating for clean energy. I served in the enlisted ranks of the U.S Marine Corps on active duty for nearly 12 years, and I'm an Iraq war veteran. I currently serve as a Captain in the CA Army National Guard. I am a resident of southeast Los Angeles and work in the nearby city of Huntington Park implementing the state's landmark AB939 and AB32 regulations. Today I would like to speak to you about energy security and the tremendous sacrifice that veterans pay.

Many service members, like myself, who have left for war. Not all of us come back. These veterans died securing and protecting the democracy and freedom we all cherish. Having served in combat, I can honestly say that many of these deaths could have been avoidable had we not depended on fossil fuel.

You see, 2 in 5 deaths while in a combat deployment are because of an improvised explosive device or what we now commonly known as an IED. If you're unlucky to be hit by an IED and survive, then you have to live a lifetime of pain from injuries and the guilt of your buddy dying and not you. Reducing the impact of our fuel use is critical to saving lives on the battlefield, which is why the military is continually looking for ways to operate equipment, like generators, on solar power, thereby reducing the need for convoys.

But the amount of oil we use isn't the only threat related to our fossil fuel use. The CIA, NSA, and DoD all agree that climate change is a threat multiplier, and are working to take on that threat as well.

Like the military, California has long been an example of leadership on clean energy issues. As a native Californian, and as a proud American veteran, I ask that you continue to support clean energy by adopting strong emission standards that help reduce our carbon emissions and make us energy independent from fossil fuels.