

Air quality forecast and wood-burning rules

Sun-Star staff

Merced Sun-Star, Late Tues., Nov. 15, 2011

AQI Forecast for 11/16/2011: 80 Moderate (PM2.5)

School Flag color for 11/16/2011: Yellow

Fireplace/Wood Stove Burning Status for 11/16/2011: Wood burning prohibited

Air Resources Board may boost low-emission cars

By David R. Baker, staff writer

S.F. Chronicle, Wed., Nov. 16, 2011

By 2025, 15 percent of the new cars and small trucks sold each year in California would have to be powered by batteries, fuel cells or some other technology that produces little or no air pollution under rules that state regulators will propose next month.

The rules, from the California Air Resources Board, would force automakers to sell an increasing number of electric cars and plug-in hybrids in the state beginning in 2018.

California has tried to impose similar mandates in the past, without success. Starting in 1990, the Air Resources Board required carmakers to ensure that 10 percent of the vehicles for sale in the state by the year 2003 produce zero tailpipe emissions. Automakers sued, and the board backed off, concluding that electric vehicle technology wasn't ready for the mass market.

Now it is, board officials say.

Nissan last year started selling an all-electric sedan dubbed the Leaf, while General Motors has introduced a plug-in hybrid called the Chevy Volt. The L.A. Auto Show, which begins today, includes nine electric vehicles as well as a fuel cell vehicle, said Mary Nichols, chairwoman of the Air Resources Board.

"This show is proof that the cars that will help us achieve these regulations are being manufactured today, and more are on the way," she said Tuesday in a conference call with journalists. "These are not just vehicles that are virtuous. ... They're cool. They're quiet. They're fast."

The board plans to introduce its proposed rules on Dec. 7 and could vote on them as early as January.

The Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, a trade group that has often fought California car regulations, did not return a call on Tuesday seeking comment on the new requirements.

Under the board's proposed rules, 4.6 percent of the cars and light trucks sold in California in 2018 - about 69,000 vehicles - would have to be zero-emission vehicles, or something quite close. Plug-in hybrids such as the Volt would qualify, even though they use a gasoline engine as a backup power supply when the car's battery runs low.

The requirement would ratchet up year by year. By 2025, an estimated 1.4 million zero-emission vehicles would roam the state's roads.

That assumes, of course, that Californians will want to buy the vehicles. Despite the popularity of conventional hybrid cars, for example, only about 400,000 exist in the state, according to the air board's website. Many consumers remain hesitant about the limited range of electric car batteries, while others simply can't afford the vehicles, which cost more than comparable cars that run on gas.

But David Friedman with the Union of Concerned Scientists said high gasoline prices may persuade drivers to give electrics a try.

"Four dollar-a-gallon gas has become the new norm in California," said Friedman, deputy director of the environmental group's clean vehicles program. "And that's in a slow economy. Picture five

years from now when the economy's going, when China's roaring. We're going to look back at \$4 gas and think it's cheap."

In addition, the air board offers rebates of up to \$2,500 for buyers of electric cars and other clean vehicles. The board plans to pump another \$15 million of funding into the rebate program for 2011 and 2012. The rebates have proved to be so popular that the program briefly ran out of cash this year.

[Contra Costa Times Commentary Tues., Nov. 15, 2011:](#)

Silicon Valley companies support stricter clean-air rules for cars

By Bruce Klafter and Pasquale Romano
Special to the Mercury News

Over the next few weeks, our state will be in the spotlight as a leader in clean-car standards. The California Air Resources Board will unveil new greenhouse gas emissions rules to dovetail with new national fuel-efficiency and tailpipe standards for cars, SUVs, and light trucks. CARB will update the state's groundbreaking zero-emission vehicle program as well.

As a result, California residents will get cleaner air and more fuel-efficient automobiles. But in these difficult times, it's important to note that the economy will receive a boost, too.

As businesspeople, we know that California's leadership on clean technology policies drives innovation, attracts investment and hastens job growth in our state. With this latest round of clean car standards, California action will spur the next generation of cleaner, more advanced automobiles. California residents -- and our fellow Americans -- will reap the benefits.

Our businesses exemplify the clean technology sector, which is growing in California and booming worldwide. Coulomb Technologies is developing the largest network of independently owned and operated electric vehicle-charging stations in the world. Applied Materials supplies the solar photovoltaic industry while also researching new manufacturing technologies for the advanced batteries that will power tomorrow's clean cars.

Businesses like ours operate internationally but set up shop and maintain a significant presence in California because of the state's friendly policies toward clean technology. It also helps that the people of California have voiced their support -- both in polls and at the voting booth -- for programs that develop our state's budding clean energy economy.

California's forward-thinking standards have helped spur investment and create much-needed jobs. In the third quarter of this year, California attracted 52 percent of the \$1.1 billion in U.S. venture capital invested in the clean tech sector, according to Ernst and Young. These numbers also help illustrate the resilience of the clean tech sector, in which U.S. venture capital investment is up 73 percent from a year ago.

California's long-standing commitment to advancing clean car technologies is one reason more than 200 firms working on clean automotive technologies call our state home. According to a recent Next 10 study, stronger clean car standards will cut consumer costs, help clean our air, and bring more jobs and investment to California's cleantech economy.

Our businesses are just two of many that support the state's car leadership by participating in the California Clean Cars Campaign, a broad coalition of business and public health leaders, consumer groups, local governments, elected officials, organized labor, faith groups and environmental organizations. We speak with many voices and share one message: Cleaner cars are good for California.

Public health groups such as the American Lung Association say that in California, stronger clean-car standards could save \$7.2 million to \$8.1 billion in health care and societal damages due to illnesses, hospitalizations and lost work days. Municipal officials and elected representatives point to consistent polling data as evidence that their constituents want the improved air quality that cleaner vehicles will bring. In addition, the nation's leading consumer groups say cleaner cars go farther on a gallon of gas, saving families money at the pump.

All of this is evidence that California's clean-car program is making our state a healthier and more prosperous place to live. As goes California, so, eventually, will go the nation. And once again, America will benefit from California's clean-car leadership.

Bruce Klaffer is managing director of Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability for Applied Materials based in Santa Clara and co-chairs the California Clean Cars Campaign. Pasquale Romano is president and CEO of Campbell-based Coulomb Technologies, whose ChargePoint is the largest network of independently owned and operated electric vehicle-charging stations in the world. Coulomb is on the Clean Cars Campaign advisory board. They wrote this for this newspaper.