

Clovis PD Launches Nation's Largest Electric Motorcycle Fleet

By Ezra David Romero

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It's the dead of summer and the air quality in the San Joaquin Valley is red or unhealthy for sensitive groups. But one Valley police department is doing their part to change that. FM89's Ezra David Romero reports.

John Weaver is in charge of the Clovis Police Department's motorcycle traffic fleet. Until today he drove a chic black and white police grade BMW R1200 motorcycle.

But that's all changed for him. Today Clovis PD received five electric motorcycles making them the largest fleet of environmentally friendly motorcycle cops in the nation.

The Zero Electric Police motorcycles were purchased from Clovis based Ekhaus Fleet for just under \$95,000 through a Public Benefit Grant from the San Joaquin Valley Air District. Thirty plus bikes are waiting in the grant process for other Valley locales.

The California made bikes look like beefed up dualsport bikes, but unlike their loud cousins the electric version produces practically no noise and zero exhaust.

"The Zero Motorcycles weigh just slightly over 400 pounds you can go all day riding it and you can go home plug it into socket and it takes about eight hours and it recharges," says Weaver.

"They're going to be used in areas where there's a lot of traffic, areas where there's maybe a lot of pedestrians and that's a great area for a vehicle that's not kicking nitrogen oxides out of the tailpipe." - Jamie Holt.

Weaver and air district spokeswoman Jamie Holt agree that the battery powered motorcycles are a step in the right direction for a region plagued with bad air days. Dinuba, Parlier, Visalia and other cities across the Valley already have a few bikes.

"They're going to be used in areas where there's a lot of traffic, areas where there's maybe a lot of pedestrians and that's a great area for a vehicle that's not kicking nitrogen oxides out of the tailpipe," says Holt.

Starting Friday the Zeros, as Weaver calls them, will be out in full force with motorcycle cops ready to site traffic violations, monitor trails and patrol rodeo grounds.

California's Cap and Trade System Could Help Ease Central Valley Pollution

By Diana Aguilera

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California's cap and trade program could help clean up pollution in the Central Valley. FM89's Diana Aguilera explains the early stages of the effort.

A few months ago the state came out with a report ranking the most polluted places in California. Many Fresno County neighborhoods ranked among the worst.

Now the California Environmental Protection Agency is hoping to use that data to clean up these areas through the state's cap and trade system.

"Clearly areas like Fresno and other communities throughout the Central Valley will benefit from this because they will probably fall under the threshold of disadvantaged communities."

That's Stanley Young with the California Air Resources Board.

He says this is part of an effort that will eventually award grants to environmental projects using money already collected from the cap and trade program.

Under this program, there's a limit on how much a company can pollute. If a company exceeds its quota of pollution it can buy credits from another company that hasn't reached its limit.

State law ensures that at least 10 to 25 percent of cap and trade funds benefit low-income communities most affected by pollution and other hazards.

In September, the CalEPA will announce how many communities will benefit from this effort using the state's report. The Air Resources Board has plans of finalizing the guidelines in a few weeks in order to distribute the funds.

California closer to increasing incentives to switch to electric cars

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Legislation that would increase incentives to buy electric cars has moved closer to approval in the California Legislature as the clock ticks down to the final hours of the session this week.

The state Senate passed the bill in May and is expected to cast a final vote on Assembly amendments Thursday or Friday to send bill to the governor.

SB 1275 was approved by the Assembly on Wednesday on a 46-23 vote. The bill is authored by Senate President pro Tem-elect Kevin de León, D-Los Angeles.

If signed by the governor, supporters say the legislation would put California on the road to one million zero-emission cars, trucks, and buses — about ten times the current number — by 2023.

It would do that by offering cash payments for high-polluting clunkers to get them off the road.

"This bill will make electric cars and car-sharing opportunities affordable to working families," says Vien Truong, environmental equity director for the Greenlining Institute. "It will also let low-income families cash in their clunkers and use that voucher with clean car rebates or for car-sharing programs and public transportation."

SB 1275 builds on the state's successful incentive programs, securing long-term funding for vehicle rebate programs and retooling them to put electric vehicle ownership within reach for low- and moderate-income buyers.

Max Baumhefner, a clean vehicles and fuels expert with the Natural Resources Defense Council, says the bill will accelerate "the most important revolution in automotive technology since we ditched the steam engine."

Key provisions of SB 1275 include:

- An extended and improved Clean Vehicle Rebate Project (CVRP). The CVRP has been instrumental in bringing a third of the nation's plug-in cars to California. The CVRP currently provides buyers with a \$2,500 rebate for zero-emission purchases, but the program has been historically plagued by insufficient funding. SB 1275 would help secure the funding needed to ensure California is the first state in the nation with one million electric vehicles, establish an income cap to stretch valuable public dollars to incentivize clean car purchases that would not otherwise occur, and would step down rebate levels over time as technology costs decrease.
- Increases access to clean transportation in disadvantaged communities. Establishes car-sharing programs, deploys charging stations in apartment complexes, provides access to financing options that would lower combined monthly car payments and fuel costs, and offers incentives for the replacement of gas-guzzling "clunkers" with new or used electric cars or vouchers for transit and car-sharing.