

California to approve 2035 ban on gas-powered car sales

By Rachel Frazin

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California is expected on Thursday to approve a ban on the sale of new gas-powered cars that would begin in 2035.

The state's Air Resources Board on Thursday will vote on the ban, which would also ratchet up the percentage of vehicles sold in the state that are electric leading up to the 2035 date.

California's clean car standards are also often adopted by other states, so the impact of this rule could stretch far beyond its borders.

Gas powered cars are a major source of climate-warming emissions and other air pollutants, and the measure has been touted as an attempt to both tackle climate change and improve public health.

In 2020, California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) issued an executive order seeking to phase out the sale of gasoline-powered cars by 2035, but Thursday's action will actually put that goal in motion.

The California plan is more ambitious than federal goals. President Biden said last year that he hoped that half of new vehicle sales would be electric by 2030. That year, California's regulations would mandate 68 percent of vehicle sales in the state are electric.

Automakers in recent months have moved toward increasing electric vehicle sales, with several making pledges to increase the proportion of vehicles they sell that are electric.

Nevertheless, this week, some in the industry criticized California's forthcoming regulation as difficult for companies to comply with.

John Bozzella, president of the Alliance for Automotive Innovation trade group, told The New York Times that the requirement would be "extremely challenging" to meet.

California poised to phase out sale of new gas-powered cars

By Kathleen Ronayne, Associated Press

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California is poised to set a 2035 deadline for all new cars, trucks and SUVs sold in the state to be powered by electricity or hydrogen, an ambitious step that will reshape the U.S. car market by speeding the transition to more climate-friendly vehicles.

The California Air Resources Board will vote Thursday on the policy, which sets the most aggressive roadmap in the nation for moving away from gas-powered cars. It doesn't eliminate such vehicles, however.

People can continue driving gas-fueled vehicles and purchasing used ones after 2035. The plan also allows for one-fifth of sales after 2035 to be plug-in hybrids that can run on batteries and gas.

But it sets a course for ultimately ending the era of filling up at the local gas station. The switch from gas to electric cars will drastically reduce emissions and air pollutants. The transition may be painful in parts of the state that are still dominated by oil; California remains the seventh-largest oil producing state, though its output is falling as the state pushes forward with its climate goals.

"The climate crisis is solvable if we focus on the big, bold steps necessary to stem the tide of carbon pollution," Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom said Wednesday. He announced the 2035 goal two years ago and regulators have spent the time since then working out the details of what Newsom termed "the action we must take if we're serious about leaving this planet better off for future generations."

There are practical hurdles to overcome to reach the goal, notably enough reliable power and charging stations. California now has about 80,000 stations in public places, far short of the 250,000 it wants by 2025. The Alliance for Automotive Innovation, which represents many major car makers, flagged the lack of infrastructure, access to materials needed to make batteries, and supply chain issues among the challenges to meeting the state's timeline.

"These are complex, intertwined and global issues well beyond the control of either (the California Air Resources Board) or the auto industry," John Bozzella, the group's president, said in a statement.

Though the state makes up 10% of the U.S. car market, it's home to 43% of the nation's 2.6 million registered plug-in vehicles, according to the air board.

California climate officials say the state's new policy will be the world's most ambitious because it sets clear benchmarks for ramping up electric vehicle sales over the next dozen years. By 2026, for example, one-third of new cars sold must be electric. About 16% of cars sold in California in the first three months of this year were electric.

The European Parliament in June backed a plan to effectively prohibit the sale of gas and diesel cars in the 27-nation bloc by 2035, and Canada has mandated the sale of zero-emission cars by the same year. The Chinese province of Hainan said this week it would do the same by 2030.

In the U.S., Massachusetts, Washington and New York are among states that have set goals to transform their car markets or have already committed to following California's new rules.

California has historically been granted permission by the U.S. Environmental Protection agency to set its own tailpipe emissions rules for cars, and 17 other states follow some or all of its policies.

The new electric vehicle rules will also require federal approval, which is considered likely with President Joe Biden in the White House. A future Republican president, though, could challenge California's authority to set its own car standards, as the Trump administration did.

Indeed, the new commitment comes as California works to maintain reliable electricity while it moves away from gas-fired power plants in favor of solar, wind and other cleaner sources of energy. Earlier this year, top energy officials warned the state could run out of power during the hottest days of summer, which happened briefly in August 2020.

That hasn't happened yet this year. But Newsom is pushing to keep open the state's last-remaining nuclear plant beyond its planned closer in 2025, and the state may turn to diesel generators or natural gas plants as a backup when the grid is strained.

Adding more car chargers will put a higher demand on the energy grid.

Ensuring access to charging stations is also key to ramping up electric vehicle sales. The infrastructure bill passed by Congress last year provides \$5 billion for states to build charges every 50 miles (80 kilometers) along interstate highways. Newsom, meanwhile, has pledged to spend billions to boost zero-emission vehicle sales, including by adding chargers in low-income neighborhoods.

Driving an electric vehicle long distances today, even in California, requires careful planning about where to stop and charge, said Mary Nichols, former chair of the California Air Resources Board. The money from the state and federal government will go along way to boosting that infrastructure and making electric cars a more convenient option, she said. "This is going to be a transformative process and the mandate for vehicle sales is only one piece of it," she said.

Though hydrogen is a fuel option under the new regulations, cars that run on fuel-cells have made up less than 1% of car sales in recent years.

Both the state and government have rebates for thousands of dollars to offset the cost of buying electric cars, and the rules have incentives for car makers to make used electric vehicles available to low- and middle-income people. Over the past 12 years, California has provided more than \$1 billion in rebates for the sale of 478,000 electric, plug-in or hybrid vehicles, according to the air board.

Valley receives \$12.9M in new state funding for clean trucks

The Ceres Courier, Wednesday, Aug. 24, 2022

The Valley Air District Governing Board unanimously voted on Thursday to accept \$12.9 million in additional California Air Resources Board (CARB) funding to replace heavy-duty trucks through the Valley Air District's highly successful grant program.

"Grant funds such as these recognize the importance of partnerships to expedite emission reductions in the San Joaquin Valley," said Samir Sheikh, Executive Director and Air Pollution Control Officer of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. "With these funds the state is acknowledging the Valley's unique challenges, and we appreciate these much-needed resources."

Reducing emissions from mobile sources is key to the Valley meeting federal ambient air quality standards. Heavy-duty trucks, like the ones targeted under this funding, are the single largest source of NOx and diesel PM in the Valley, and are critical to ensuring that goods are moved throughout the state and nation. Emissions from heavy-duty vehicles are primarily under the regulatory jurisdiction of state and federal government, and voluntary incentive programs are critical to transitioning fleets to the next generation of cleaner technologies and achieving reductions needed to meet air quality standards.

The District's successful truck incentive programs have repowered, retrofitted, or replaced over 7,300 heavy-duty trucks with cleaner alternatives.

Through advocacy efforts, the 2021-22 California state budget included new funding designated for the replacement of heavy-duty trucks with zero or near-zero emission trucks in severe or extreme nonattainment areas, with \$12.9 million of that funding allocated for the Valley. These new funds will be utilized within the District's existing Truck Replacement Program that provides funding for new, clean truck technologies.

A complete list of program requirements may be found at www.valleyair.org/grants or by calling program staff at (559) 230-5800.

Regional Transit District Gets Hybrid Electric Buses Grant

Escalon Times, Wednesday, Aug. 24, 2022

San Joaquin Regional Transit District (RTD) was awarded \$3.9 million in competitive grant funding by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to expand its hybrid electric bus fleet. This expansion will allow RTD to enhance its service in underserved and marginalized neighborhoods.

RTD is one of 12 local agencies to receive a share of more than \$1.175 billion from the FTA's Low or No Emission Vehicle (Low-No) Program, designed to help transit agencies modernize their fleets with advanced technologies to improve air quality by reducing greenhouse gases. Projects are selected using a competitive process based on several factors including air quality benefits, economic competitiveness, financial leverage, transformational impact, and readiness to implement.

"It is important we continue to invest not only in cleaner vehicles but also in the infrastructure needed to support them," said Senator Alex Padilla. "That is why I will continue to advocate for more funding to transition to buses that are better for our environment and public health."

"We are grateful to the FTA, Senator Padilla, and California congressional delegation for securing this funding," said RTD CEO Alex Clifford. "RTD is committed to providing equitable transportation to the residents of our community while also being good stewards of the environment, and this grant allows us to do both. Our goal is to increase service levels and frequency, providing better access to employment, education, healthcare, and shopping offering more opportunities and impacting the lives of many (area) residents."

The Low-No grant will fund the purchase of five new Gillig hybrid electric buses allowing RTD to expand and increase the service frequency of Local Routes 525 and 576. These routes currently serve areas identified by the United States Department of Transportation San Joaquin County Census Tract as Historically Disadvantaged Communities. Investments in these communities align with President Biden's Justice40 Initiative and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution District's mission of improving Central Valley residents' health and quality of life.

San Joaquin Regional Transit District (RTD) is the regional transit provider for San Joaquin County. RTD's mission is to provide a safe, reliable, and efficient transportation system for the region. For more information visit sjRTD.com, follow RTD on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, or call (209) 943-1111.

Community Clean Air Funds Approved By Valley District

Oakdale Leader, Wednesday, Aug. 24, 2022

Members of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Governing Board have approved plans to launch new incentive programs within the AB 617 communities of Shafter and Stockton. The District will partner with the Housing Authority of the County of San Joaquin (SJ Housing Authority) to launch a car share program in the community of Stockton, and with the City of Shafter and Kern County to support road, sidewalk and bike lane improvements and transit vehicle replacement program in the community of Shafter.

The communities of Shafter and Stockton are two of four Valley communities prioritized by the District and subsequently selected by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) as communities in the San Joaquin Valley to receive clean air resources available under AB 617. The Governing Board-approved Community Emissions Reduction Programs (CERP) for each of these communities include dedicated AB 617 funding for a variety of innovative incentive measures aimed at reducing air pollution and exposure to harmful pollutants. The development and implementation of these CERPs are guided by local community members and partner agencies through their input and involvement on Community Steering Committees (CSC).

In the Stockton AB 617 community, the District's additional \$1,000,000 of funding will leverage existing San Joaquin County Jobs Plus grant awarded to the SJ Housing Authority to implement a new car sharing program for the community. The funding will be used to purchase nine electric vehicles and 13 electric vehicle charging stations, to be placed at affordable housing sites in the Stockton AB 617 community, and available to residents at a discounted cost.

"The rideshare program will also greatly benefit the community members with an opportunity to advance local green career pathways...the rideshare program will work with the EV technicians program at San Joaquin Delta College," stated Esperanza Vielma, Stockton CSC member and Executive Director of the Environmental Coalition for Water. "The program is a win-win for all those involved, especially our residents."

In the Shafter AB 617 community, CSC members identified opportunities to reduce dust from paved and unpaved roads and worked closely with the District, City of Shafter and Kern County to prioritize two road paving and sidewalk improvement projects within the community. These projects, one along State Route 43 in the City of Shafter and the other in the unincorporated community of Mexican Colony, will significantly reduce road dust emissions and reduce exposure to residents while facilitating safe, alternate modes of transportation with the construction of dedicated bicycle lanes and new sidewalks. The District will enter into agreements with the City of Shafter and Kern County for the work and provide up to \$2,500,000 in funding.

The AB 617 Community Air Protection Program is designed to improve quality of life for the state's most disadvantaged communities through community-led efforts to identify and address local air pollution concerns. This program, funded through California Climate Investments, brings more resources to the District's longstanding efforts to develop and implement regulatory and incentive-based clean air and exposure reduction strategies throughout the San Joaquin Valley. The program is guided by a steering committee in each community, comprised of residents, local environmental justice organizations, local business representatives, local and regional agencies, and other community stakeholders.

The CSC meets regularly with the District and CARB to help identify ways to implement actions outlined in the community-developed and state-approved CERPs. Through community programs approved to date, over \$140 million of funding has been allocated for clean air investments in AB 617 communities.

The Valley Air District covers eight counties including San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and San Joaquin Valley air basin portions of Kern. For additional information about the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, visit www.valleyair.org or call 559-230-6000.