



**California Special
Districts Association**
Districts Stronger Together



September 12, 2025

Clerk of the Board
California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

To the Members of the California Air Resources Board:

RE: Proposed Amendments to the Advanced Clean Fleets Regulation, 45-day comments.

The California Special Districts Association (CSDA), representing over 1,000 independent special districts, the League of California Cities representing the 438 cities across the state, and California State Association of Counties, representing all 58 counties in the state, appreciate the opportunity to provide comments to the proposed amendments to the Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF) regulatory language. Collectively we represent the thousands of local public agencies providing essential government services vital to life in California.

The ACF sets ambitious compliance deadlines for fleets to transition to an increasing proportion of zero emission vehicles (ZEVs). The ACF's ZEV transition requires access to adequate utility infrastructure for alternative fueling such as electric vehicle (EV) charging, as well as access to ZEVs that operationally can deliver the full spectrum of important and highly specialized services that local government fleets provide.

Earlier this year, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) withdrew its request for a federal Clean Air Act waiver for the ACF regulation, which would have been required for the rule to apply to the state's high-priority and drayage fleets. As a result of this withdrawal, CARB is exclusively enforcing the ACF on state and local fleets. Additionally, President Donald Trump has signed three Congressional Review Act resolutions to terminate the State of California's waivers for Advanced Clean Trucks, Advanced Clean Cars II, and Heavy-Duty Omnibus. As a result of these and other unanticipated events, the ZEV manufacturing and sales marketplace will be unquestionably disrupted beyond any level that could have been anticipated when the regulation was approved in April of 2023.

Due to the inherent challenges occurring within the industry and frustrating compliance, we respectfully request that CARB consider expanding the scope of amendments to ACF to help facilitate successful implementation of the regulations.

On the 45-day draft proposal generally:

We are generally supportive of, and encouraged by, the direction that CARB is taking with proposed amendments and respectfully request continued further dialogue with stakeholders in consideration of further amendments to reshape the regulations with an eye towards achieving

broad compliance while also recognizing the challenges local agencies face and ensuring the essential services they provide are not interrupted.

Waivers and Extensions

With mounting challenges and a disrupted ZEV marketplace, we respectfully request CARB remove the prohibition on requesting a waiver or extension before purchasing a ZEV. This necessary change will help local agencies avert the costly acquisition of unusable ZEVs before it is possible to install the infrastructure required to deploy them. We can and should encourage agencies to procure the right vehicles at the right time to meet the needs of their constituents and remain prepared to provide emergency response and mutual aid.

Examples include:

- *Infrastructure Delay:*
 - The requirement to show a purchase agreement for a vehicle that cannot be fueled or charged due to an infrastructure delay in order to apply for the infrastructure delay exemption should be removed. The infrastructure needs to be in place *before* the vehicles can be purchased.
 - The requirement to show documentation of an executed contract for the ZEV fueling infrastructure installation, including a construction permit indicating the permit issuance date is at least one year prior to the next applicable compliance deadline, should be revisited as it can put agencies on an unreasonable timeline to benefit from the exemption.
- *Mutual Aid:* Current regulations for mutual aid internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle owners restrict the exemption until after the first 25 percent of the fleet are ZEVs and cap the number of ICE vehicles in the fleet per this exemption. This prerequisite for the exemption should be removed as these agencies will be required to respond to emergency situations no matter what percentage of their fleet is comprised of ZEV's.

An emergency vehicle is always an emergency vehicle no matter how much of the fleet is comprised of ZEV.

Mutual Aid, Declared Emergencies and Emergency Vehicles

In addition to updating the mutual aid exemptions as noted above, we respectfully request CARB update and expand the emergency vehicle exemption, *to exclude from the regulations*, those vehicles that respond to and support critical operations related to emergencies and disasters, often under austere conditions, to continue to protect our communities. Our front-line workers and the communities they serve rely on vehicles that must be able to do the job the emergency dictates, even when the power is out.

Not all emergencies are “declared” or occur outside of the agency’s jurisdiction or benefit from mutual aid.

In light of the rising toll of natural disasters in our state, we must prioritize the safety of our communities and the public servants that work around the clock through these unprecedented events. The most likely current and anticipated future ZEV options depend upon a consistently accessible source of electricity. The risk of electricity disruption, whether due to an earthquake, public safety power shutoff, rolling brownout, wildfire, flood, or other emergency is too great to risk the operability of these vehicles when they are most desperately needed and, with it, imperil the health and safety of Californians.

Some examples of vehicles called upon to preserve public health and safety beyond those currently defined in the California Vehicle Code include:

- Vehicles used by regional parks and open space agencies for purposes of fire prevention/mitigation, public safety, hiker rescue, medical response, and poacher prevention should be excluded.
- Vehicles that are essential to the delivery, repair, and maintenance of electricity, water, and wastewater should be excluded.
- Vehicles used by mosquito abatement districts to prevent the spread of dangerous vector outbreaks should be excluded.
- The exemption for vehicles operated under contracts to support a declared emergency event should be revisited.

Purchase Exemptions and Procurement

We respectfully request that CARB re-evaluate the ZEV exemptions related to purchase to more accurately reflect the actual needs of local agencies and actual availability of ZEVs analogous in performance to ICE vehicles. True availability of vehicles should be evaluated with criteria reflecting the history and solvency of the manufacturer(s), warranty, related parts and service availability.

Vehicles, including heavy equipment, need to be available in sufficient quantities from multiple reputable vehicle manufacturers to provide for a competitive bidding environment and to acquire the correct vehicles in a timely manner.

Additionally, we submit that the performance characteristics of the vehicles are paramount and must consider such things as ability to perform at different temperatures and elevations, payload, towing capacity and operations while on a grade when towing or hauling.

Finally, we respectfully request that CARB include affordability protections in the event that ZEV pricing and total ownership costs decline at a slower rate than projected. While there have been significant price improvements for some Class 2b-3 vehicles, many public agencies continue to face steep premiums for heavier-duty or specialized vehicles. Local governments have limited options to absorb major capital budget increases, particularly ones that are not offset by operational savings, and ultimately the impacts must be borne by local taxpayers or ratepayers. For this reason, we suggest that CARB consider adopting either an agency-specific ZEV cost limitation or a reasonable cap on the price differential between ZEVs and ICE vehicles.

In closing

Local agencies provide vital government services which span across the state in urban, suburban, and rural areas. We are proud to highlight that our members are already pursuing environmentally sound and robust strategies to be part of the solution to our state's climate

goals. However, the existing framework has challenges that need to be addressed, and we look forward to partnering with CARB and other stakeholders to address those challenges.

Thank you for your consideration of our written responses to the proposed Advanced Clean Fleets 45-day draft amendments. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact us.

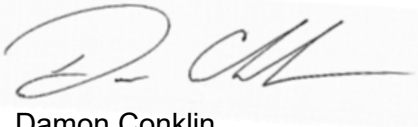
Sincerely,



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