

Clerk's Office
California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, California 95814

June 16, 2026

RE: Comment Letter – Advanced Clean Fleets Regulation Amendments/Additional 15-Day Changes

Dear California Air Resources Board,

The San Diego County Water Authority (Water Authority) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) recent draft amendments to the Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF) regulation, released June 1, 2026. We support California's long-term emission-reduction goals and continue to engage constructively in CARB's rulemaking. However, we are deeply concerned with the newly introduced interpretation of contracted vehicles and the significant operational and administrative challenges it creates for public agencies.

Concerns with CARB's Interpretation of Contracted Vehicles

CARB's latest interpretation, which applies ACF requirements to all contract agreements regardless of duration, presents major implementation challenges for public fleets. Short-term rentals are frequently used to meet immediate and unplanned needs during emergencies such as fires, floods, earthquakes, and infrastructure failures. To prioritize public health, these situations require rapid deployment of any available vehicles, often for only days or weeks at a time.

Under the June 1 draft, a short-term rental of 20 heavy-duty internal-combustion engine (ICE) vehicles for two weeks to respond to an emergency could be interpreted as adding 20 ICE vehicles to the agency's fleet, effectively obligating the agency to add 20 zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) to offset them. This outcome is impractical, inconsistent with emergency-response realities, and creates a high risk that even the most proactive agencies will fall out of compliance.

The operational concerns above become more severe after 2030, when, pending approval of the amendments released by CARB on April 2, 2026, the 100-percent ZEV purchase requirement takes effect. The statewide supply of short-term ZEV rentals is currently insufficient and likely to remain constrained for the foreseeable future.

Burdens on Public Fleets and Indirect Compliance Pressure on Private Fleets

The proposed amendments also raise substantial concerns because hired vehicles are typically privately owned and therefore not subject to ACF requirements. While we understand CARB's intent to prevent circumvention of ZEV procurement requirements, applying ACF to all contracted vehicles would effectively extend compliance obligations to private contractors through public-agency contracts. This expansion of scope would significantly increase compliance burdens for public agencies and complicate project delivery, procurement, and emergency response.

Substantial Impacts Are Not Appropriate for a 15-Day Comment Period

These sweeping changes would fundamentally alter how public agencies plan, procure, and operate fleets. The implications extend across emergency operations, procurement law, reporting obligations, local budgets, and contractor relationships. Given the scale and complexity of these impacts, the proposed language is not suitable for a limited 15-day comment period. Public agencies require more time for technical review and dialogue with CARB to avoid unintended compliance failures.

Request that CARB Withdraw the Second Draft Amendments and Revisit Contracted-Vehicle Provisions

For the reasons above, we respectfully request that CARB withdraw the June 1, 2026, second draft amendments and return to the April 2, 2026, initial 15-day draft language as a more appropriate starting point for future discussions.

Conclusion

The Water Authority appreciates CARB's consideration of these comments. We urge CARB to reconsider the proposed contracted-vehicle provisions and to allow adequate time for meaningful stakeholder engagement. If you have any questions or would like to discuss these issues further, please contact Jesica Cleaver, Senior Water Resources Specialist, at JCleaver@sdewa.org.

Sincerely,



Eva Plajzer, P.E.
Director of Operations and Maintenance