

8 states vow 3.3M zero-emission vehicles by 2025

By Jason Dearen, Associated Press

San Diego United-Tribune, Thursday, Oct. 24, 2013

SAN FRANCISCO — The governors of eight states including California and New York pledged Thursday to get 3.3 million zero-emission vehicles on roadways by 2025 in an effort to curb greenhouse gas pollution.

Representatives from all eight states were scheduled to gather in Sacramento at 8:30 a.m. to sign a memorandum of understanding that would increase infrastructure and make other changes to help increase market share for electric cars, hydrogen fuel-cell electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids. By 2015, there are expected to be more than 200,000 zero emissions vehicles on the road.

"This agreement is a major step forward to reducing the emissions that are causing our climate to change and unleashing the extreme weather that we are experiencing with increased frequency," New York Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo said in a statement.

The other states involved are Massachusetts, Maryland, Oregon, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Vermont. The eight states together represent about 23 percent of the U.S. auto market.

Each state has already, separately adopted rules to require a percentage of new vehicles sold to be zero emission by 2025. California's mandate alone of 15.4 percent calls for a total of 1.5 million zero-emission vehicles to be on the state's roads by that time.

It's a steep curve. In California, plug-in-hybrids and electric vehicles currently make up less than 2 percent of the auto market.

Under terms of the memorandum, the states will first establish a taskforce to share ideas that will help expand the network of charging and fueling stations needed to make electric and hydrogen-fueled vehicles more attractive to consumers.

"The idea is to broaden the pool of people talking about this and working their way through the challenges that come up in setting up this kind of infrastructure, and growing this kind of a market," said Dave Clegern, a spokesman for California's Air Resources Board, which regulates auto emissions.

There are now 16 zero-emission vehicles from eight manufacturers on the market; nine that run on batteries alone, two hydrogen fuel cell cars and five plug-in hybrid models, which can run on battery alone or gasoline.

Officials say that every automaker will have a zero-emission model by 2015.

Car dealers, who are under pressure to help meet these 2025 goals, say getting fueling infrastructure like charging stations in place quickly is the only way to get average consumers used to a new product that requires new driving habits.

"We think that is going to be necessary for some of the range anxiety and other acceptance barriers that need to be broken down," said Brian Maas, president of the California New Car Dealers Association.

"The cars are coming - they're here already - but if you don't have a place to charge them, there's not going to be the level of consumer acceptance."

Governors signing the memorandum all hailed the cooperative effort as a way to more quickly solve the inevitable problems that arise when making such far-reaching changes in people's everyday lives.

And some see future economic benefits from the switch to new vehicles.

Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick said more electric vehicles are key to his state's efforts grow the region's economy.

"Diversifying transportation fuels and providing drivers with options will help reduce vulnerability to price swings in imported oil that hurt consumers and our economy," Patrick said in a statement.

Stagnant air to stay in central San Joaquin Valley

By Diana Aguilera, staff writer

The Fresno Bee, Modesto Bee and other papers, Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2013

Local air officials have forecast air quality as unhealthy for sensitive groups for a second day in a row on Wednesday in Fresno and Madera counties.

"The air isn't moving, nothing is dispersing whether it's ozone or particulates in Fresno County," said Ana Reyes, spokeswoman for San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

Although air quality was moderate on Tuesday in many Valley counties, the air district is predicting air quality to deteriorate today from Merced County south to Kern County.

Health officials encourage residents with respiratory illnesses to stay indoors due to an increase in ozone in Fresno County.

Sierra National Forest officials started a prescribed fire Friday southwest of Wishon Reservoir in eastern Fresno County that is expected to burn about 820 acres in the next few days, officials said.

Carlos Molina, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Hanford, said the prescribed fire did not have a significant effect on Fresno County's air quality.

"The light smoke stays in the mountains but doesn't reach the Valley," Molina said.

He said the stagnant air is expected to stick around until possibly the end of the weekend.

"The pollution in the Valley is staying in the Valley," Molina said.

Calif. officials conduct smoke inspections of big rigs in Fresno

Staff reports

The Fresno Bee, Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2013

Inspectors from the California Air Resources Board and the California Highway Patrol conducted a heavy-duty truck inspection Tuesday along Jensen Avenue between highways 41 and 99.

The inspections, which measure the smoke coming out of a truck's exhaust pipes and check for proper engine labeling, are part of efforts to enforce state air-pollution laws governing emissions from trucks. Of 66 trucks inspected at two locations Tuesday, CARB spokeswoman Karen Caesar said, 10 drivers were cited. Penalties can start at \$300 and range to \$1,800 for repeat citations.

Inspectors will be at two different sites in the Fresno area on Wednesday.

Heavy-duty trucks represent 2% of vehicles on California's roads, the ARB reports, but they are responsible for 30% of smog-forming nitrogen oxides and 65% of soot from vehicles.

[Bakersfield Californian Commentary, Wednesday, Oct. 23, 2013:](#)

Enforcing smog rules this way is bad for business

By Lois Henry

I've been saying for years, to no avail, that new rules requiring drastically reduced emissions from trucks, buses and heavy equipment were going to cost far more than they would ever benefit the public in terms of better health.

Now, those rules are coming home to roost.

As predicted, the costs are already staggering.

One local company was fined \$38,625 last April and another was recently fined \$230,250, both for, essentially, not filtering up fast enough to suit the California Air Resources Board (CARB).

That is a lot of money for any local company to try and absorb. Especially as they continue to lay out ever more cash to try and comply with these draconian CARB rules.

For background, CARB adopted new rules back in 2008 and 2009 requiring truckers and equipment operators to either scrap their vehicles if they are past a certain age or install expensive filters to reduce emissions, specifically PM2.5 emissions. PM2.5 is particulate matter, or tiny bits of soot and ash.

Companies had until 2012 or 2013, depending on fleet size and other factors, to comply.

I know, I know, you're thinking, hey, its rules like these that keep us from having to shut down entire cities because of pollution, as China recently did in the city of Harbin. (Google it, nasty stuff!)

Yes, rules forcing emission reductions have cleaned the air.

But for these particular rules, CARB strayed from its tried and true method of requiring lower emissions on new equipment, which becomes the norm through attrition. Instead, these rules affect nearly all existing trucks and heavy equipment. The rules have made some equipment uneconomical to operate and, in some cases, even to resell.

For companies that can, and have, begun retrofitting, they still have to deal with the specter of government regulators who want it done faster.

Or, in the case of Mountainside Disposal, which operates under Price Environmental Services, regulators actually got in the way of retrofitting.

Mountainside is a refuse hauling company located in Bakersfield that was fined \$38,000 for not installing filtration devices on one of its 60 trucks within CARB's timeframe.

But for the past several years, Mountainside has been installing the proper devices and sending reports to CARB with no response, said manager Ray Scott.

"They never responded so we thought we were in compliance," Scott said. "It's not like regulators came here and found numerous trucks without filters. There was one."

On top of that, he said, CARB regulators delayed approving some devices so that manufacturers could release them to Mountainside.

"In many ways, CARB held up the installation process," Scott said.

Scott personally went to Sacramento to point out how Mountainside had tried to comply with the new rules.

"We point blank showed them where CARB had made errors and they still fined us."

The company has so far, spent \$150,000 retrofitting its older trucks with top-of-the-line devices. That amount doesn't include installation and maintenance costs the company will also have to foot.

So, \$38,000 on top of all that (plus the year it took wrangling with CARB over the fine) was a bitter pill.

The other local company that was fined took an even bigger hit.

KS Industries (KSI), owned by Ken Small, was fined more than \$230,000 for not complying with the new filter rule on 49 of its vehicles, according to the settlement agreement with CARB.

The amount was arrived at through "confidential settlement communications," according to CARB.

KSI declined to comment.

Others in the trucking world are already taking note of the KSI fine.

"These companies like KSI have a huge problem because it will take them years to get into compliance buying new trucks and retrofitting their older trucks," said Lee Brown, spokesman for California Construction Trucking Association in an email. "We think that there are at least 700,000 heavy-duty trucks out of compliance come the end of 2014.

"Make no mistake, KSI is just one of thousands of businesses with diesel trucks that will be, or is, in this same predicament."

The fear, of course, is that some of those companies won't be able to keep up with costs and jobs will be lost.

I mentioned earlier that all this cost isn't actually buying us better health.

I've done numerous stories on studies showing that PM2.5 isn't killing Californians. And, in fact, a growing number of studies are showing PM2.5 has zero effect on premature deaths.

But even if you believed PM2.5 was pure cyanide, CARB's own estimates show we would be very near the 2023 goal for diesel PM2.5 without these rules. That's because old diesel equipment would be phased out naturally as operators bought new stuff.

In fact, we'd be within four or five tons per day of the 2023 goal. And that was based on old estimates done prior to the economic meltdown, which all but decimated the construction industry.

Like I said, these new CARB rules are inflicting way more economic pain on Californians than we will ever reap in public health.