

February 20, 2020

Mail-Out #MSC 20-03

To: All Interested Parties

Subject: LOWER-EMISSION SCHOOL BUS PROGRAM MAIL-OUT #MSC 20-03 –
FLEXIBILITY WHEN USING ASSEMBLY BILL 923 TO FUND REPLACEMENT
SCHOOL BUSES

This mail-out provides guidance to air districts and public school districts following the Lower Emission School Bus Program (LESBP) guidelines and using Assembly Bill 923 (AB 923) funds for replacing school buses. Currently, the LESBP allows for replacement of 1993 and older model year buses. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has determined that AB 923 funds can be used to replace school buses with a model year that is a minimum of 20 years old.

AB 923 Funds Background

AB 923 (AB 923; Stats. 2004, Ch. 707) funds are a source of school bus purchasing funds. This legislation provides a mechanism for local air districts to increase the motor vehicle registration fee surcharge by \$2 dollars to fund projects in different clean air categories, including the purchase of school buses pursuant to the LESBP adopted by the state board.¹ AB 923 funds used to purchase school buses must be pursuant to the LESBP Guidelines. The primary goal of the LESBP is to reduce schoolchildren's exposure to smog-forming and cancer-causing pollution by upgrading California's aging school bus fleet. This is especially important in those heavily burdened communities where cumulative impacts from air pollution are the greatest. CARB has provided LESBP flexibility to air districts replacing school buses with AB 923 funding by revising replacement eligibility requirements as necessary; Mail-Out #MSC 08-003 from October 2010, allowed AB 923 funds to pay for MY 1987-1993 school buses powered by two-stroke engines and Mail-Out #MSC 10-45 from August 2008, increased eligibility to 1993 and older model year school buses. All LESBP mail outs can be found on the LESBP webpage at: [Guidelines and Advisories for the Lower-Emission School Bus Program](#).

¹ Assembly Bill 923, Firebaugh, Chapter 707, Statutes of 2004. Available at [AB 923 Assembly Bill](#)

Additional Flexibility for Spending AB 923 Funds to Purchase New School Buses

CARB is increasing flexibility for spending AB 923 funds to purchase new school buses by revising the model year thresholds specified in Mail-Out #MSC 10-45. The majority of 1993 and older model year school buses in California have been replaced. California school bus data, compiled from multiple sources, indicates that out of approximately 25,000 school buses in California, approximately 2,000 school buses are registered as 1993 and older model year school buses. This equates to about 8 percent of the State school bus population. Multiple air districts have requested that CARB adjust the eligible school bus model year under the LESBP because those air districts no longer have eligible 1993 and older model year buses in their districts to replace. In order to enable air districts to continue to turn over the older school buses operating in California and allow flexibility in which buses are replaced, CARB has expanded school bus eligibility as follows:

- Increase model year eligibility to include buses that are a minimum of 20 years old or older;
- Allow buses with a model year that is 20 years old or older, that have been repowered with newer engines to be replaced; and
- Give air districts discretion in determining the order in which buses are replaced. The oldest buses do not need to be funded for replacement first but districts are encouraged to replace school buses that have the greatest air quality impact.

If you have questions regarding this mail out or the LESBP, please contact Danielle Lawrence, Air Pollution Specialist, at (916) 323-0027 or by email at danielle.lawrence@arb.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Jack Kitowski, Chief
Mobile Source Control Division

cc: Danielle Lawrence
Air Pollution Specialist
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