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The Zero-Emission Bus Purchase Requirements in 2023 and 2024 Remain in Place for Large Transit Agencies

The Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation requires all public transit agencies to gradually transition to a 100-percent zero-emission bus fleet. This regulation includes reporting provisions to provide the California Air Resources Board (CARB) information about the progress of transit agencies in achieving this goal.

One of the requirements is that all California transit agencies, regardless of size, must submit annually updated specified agency and bus fleet information, starting March 31, 2021. The Innovative Clean Transit Reporting Tool was created for this purpose and made available to transit agencies from April 28, 2021 through July 30, 2021. During this period, all large transit agencies and a large majority of small transit agencies have successfully reported the required information. Based on the reported information, California transit agencies have collectively purchased 654 zero-emission buses (ZEBs), with 336 in service and 318 on order, by December 31, 2020.

CARB applauds the agencies that have begun the transition to providing zero-emission transit. Under the ICT regulation, this shift will accelerate. The first zero-emission bus purchase requirements will begin to apply in 2023. Beginning January 1, 2023, 25% of new bus purchases by large transit agencies, as defined, in each calendar year must be zero-emission buses. Although the ICT regulation included a provision to discharge this requirement if a certain number of zero-emission buses were purchased earlier than required, too few were purchased to trigger it. (See Cal. Code Regs., tit. 13, §2023.1 (b)(1) [requiring 850 ZEB purchases by December 31, 2020, to discharge 2023 requirements].) The purchase requirement will increase over the course of the decade, and will begin to apply to small transit agencies, as defined, beginning in 2026. (See Cal. Code Regs., tit. 13, §2023.1.)

The ICT regulation includes several additional flexibilities and exemptions for transit agencies that are struggling to meet the purchase requirement. For assistance or further information about the ICT regulation, please contact our program staff at ICT@arb.ca.gov.