



LCFS Guidance



Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) Guidance 26-01 Automatic Acceleration Mechanism (AAM) Implementation Schedule

March 2026

INTRODUCTION

The California Air Resources Board's (CARB) Low Carbon Fuel Standard regulation, which appears at sections 95480 to 95503 of title 17, California Code of Regulations, is designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with the life cycle of transportation fuels used in California. CARB staff has prepared this guidance document to describe the regulatory requirements in a user-friendly format. Unlike the regulation itself, this document does not have the force of law. It is not intended to and cannot establish new mandatory requirements beyond those that are already in the LCFS regulation, nor can it supplant, replace or amend any of the legal requirements of the regulation. Conversely, any omission or truncation of regulatory requirements does not relieve entities of their legal obligation to fully comply with all requirements of the regulation.

BACKGROUND

The AAM was introduced in section 95484(b) of the 2024 LCFS amendments to increase the flexibility of the program to adjust for potential future market overperformance when specific regulatory conditions are met. These triggered reductions in the CI benchmark would help strengthen market stability if transportation fuel decarbonization is occurring rapidly and credit generation is outpacing deficit generation in the program.

IMPLEMENTATION

Please see the figure below for hypothetical AAM implementation schedule examples. Scenarios in the figure start with the first possible trigger announcement date (Q2 of 2027) and continue through the different possible trigger announcement dates. For the first trigger announcement on May 15, 2027, called for by section 95484(b), CARB will consider data from Q1-Q4 of 2026 to determine whether the AAM has been triggered. Specific quarters and years are shown below to provide hypothetical illustrative scenarios for the triggering of the AAM. The scenarios illustrate the schedules that will be applicable to all future quarters and years as well (i.e. any AAM triggered announcement that occurs in Q1 in a future year will follow the "AAM Triggered Announcement in Q1" scenario).

The scenarios below are **hypothetical examples** that show the implementation schedule if the AAM triggers as often as possible according to the regulation.

AAM Triggered Anoument in Q2																
Q1 2026	Q2 2026	Q3 2026	Q4 2026	Q1 2027	Q2 2027	Q3 2027	Q4 2027	Q1 2028	Q2 2028	Q3 2028	Q4 2028	Q1 2029	Q2 2029	Q3 2029	Q4 2029	Q1 2030
					AAM Triggers met Determination			AAM Benchmark Advancement Effective					AAM Triggers met Determination			AAM Benchmark Advancement Effective
AAM Triggers Met Timeframe					Updated Benchmark Schedule Announcement		AAM Triggers Met Timeframe					Updated Benchmark Schedule Announcement				

AAM Triggered Anoument in Q3																
Q1 2026	Q2 2026	Q3 2026	Q4 2026	Q1 2027	Q2 2027	Q3 2027	Q4 2027	Q1 2028	Q2 2028	Q3 2028	Q4 2028	Q1 2029	Q2 2029	Q3 2029	Q4 2029	Q1 2030
						AAM Triggers met Determination						AAM Benchmark Advancement Effective				Earliest Advancement: 2031
	AAM Triggers Met Timeframe								Updated Benchmark Schedule Announcement			AAM Triggers Met Timeframe				

AAM Triggered Anoument in Q4																	
Q1 2026	Q2 2026	Q3 2026	Q4 2026	Q1 2027	Q2 2027	Q3 2027	Q4 2027	Q1 2028	Q2 2028	Q3 2028	Q4 2028	Q1 2029	Q2 2029	Q3 2029	Q4 2029	Q1 2030	
							AAM Triggers met Determination					AAM Benchmark Advancement Effective				Earliest Advancement: 2031	
		AAM Triggers Met Timeframe								Updated Benchmark Schedule Announcement			AAM Triggers Met Timeframe				

AAM Triggered Anoument in Q1																	
Q1 2026	Q2 2026	Q3 2026	Q4 2026	Q1 2027	Q2 2027	Q3 2027	Q4 2027	Q1 2028	Q2 2028	Q3 2028	Q4 2028	Q1 2029	Q2 2029	Q3 2029	Q4 2029	Q1 2030	
								AAM Triggers met Determination				AAM Benchmark Advancement Effective				Earliest Advancement: 2031	
			AAM Triggers Met Timeframe							Updated Benchmark Schedule Announcement			AAM Triggers Met Timeframe				

Appendix A - Regulation Text

§95484.

(a) The Executive Officer's credit and deficit calculations, as described in sections 95486, 95486.1, 95486.2, 95486.3, 95486.4, and 95489, will use the appropriate annual carbon intensity benchmarks set forth in Tables 1, 2, and 3 of this section.

(b) Automatic Acceleration Mechanism. Starting May 15, 2027, and every quarter after, the Executive Officer will announce on the LCFS website whether the Automatic Acceleration Mechanism has been triggered and the cumulative number of times that the Automatic Acceleration Mechanism has been triggered. This announcement will take place on February 14, May 15, August 15, and November 15 of each year, or the following business day, if the announcement date falls on a weekend or holiday.

(1) The Automatic Acceleration Mechanism cannot be triggered in the calendar year that immediately follows an announcement that the Automatic Acceleration Mechanism has been triggered.

(2) The Automatic Acceleration Mechanism is triggered when the conditions in both subsections (A) and (B) below are met, and if it was not triggered in the immediately prior four quarters.

(A) The Credit Bank to Average Quarterly Deficit Ratio exceeds 3:

$$\frac{\textit{Credit Bank}_{20xx}}{\frac{1}{4} \times \textit{Deficits}_{20xx}} > 3$$

where:

*Credit Bank*_{20xx} is the final credit bank for the program as calculated at the end of the four quarters preceding the quarterly Automatic Acceleration Mechanism announcement; and

*Deficits*_{20xx} is the total number of annual deficits generated under the program as calculated at the end of the four quarters preceding the quarterly Automatic Acceleration Mechanism announcement.

(B) Credit Generation exceeds Deficit Generation:

$$\frac{\textit{Credits}_{20xx}}{\textit{Deficits}_{20xx}} > 1$$

where:

Credits_{20xx} is the total number of credits generated under the program as calculated at the end of the four quarters preceding the quarterly Automatic Acceleration Mechanism announcement; and

Deficits_{20xx} is the total number of deficits generated under the program as calculated at the end of the four quarters preceding the quarterly Automatic Acceleration Mechanism announcement.

(c) Updating the Benchmark Schedules. Starting January 1, 2028, the compliance year for which an average carbon intensity benchmark applies will also take into account the number of times the Automatic Acceleration Mechanism has been triggered pursuant to section 95484(b).

(1) An updated benchmark schedule will be posted to the LCFS website on May 15 for any year that the Executive Officer announces that the Automatic Acceleration Mechanism has been triggered.

(2) An updated benchmark schedule posted pursuant to section 95484(c)(1) will override any prior benchmark schedules and will take effect January 1 of the calendar year after the Automatic Acceleration Mechanism was triggered.