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July 10, 2026

Hon. Steven S. Cliff, Ph.D.
Executive Officer
California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Via Email: OLA@arb.ca.gov

Re: Inquiry Regarding Transition Eligibility for First-Time ZEV Buyers Under Proposed New ZEV Incentive Program

Dear Dr. Cliff:

Our office has received an inquiry from a constituent in Huntington Beach regarding the California Air Resources Board's implementation of the Governor's proposed new Zero-Emission Vehicle incentive program for first-time ZEV buyers.

As we understand from CARB's public workshop materials, the proposed program would provide point-of-sale incentives for eligible first-time buyers or lessees of new or used zero-emission vehicles, with program launch anticipated after enactment of the state budget and finalization of grant agreements. The May 20, 2026, workshop materials further indicate that, under the current proposal, an eligible vehicle must be ordered or purchased/leased on or after the launch date of the program.

The constituent raises a potential transition issue affecting first-time ZEV buyers who purchased an eligible vehicle after expiration of the federal EV tax credit but before California's replacement incentive became available. These consumers may be the type of first-time ZEV purchasers the program is intended to encourage but end up excluded solely because their purchase occurred during the gap between the federal incentive's expiration and the state program's launch.

Accordingly, we respectfully request clarification on the following:

1. Has CARB considered whether the proposed program should include a transition eligibility provision for first-time ZEV buyers who purchased or ordered an otherwise eligible vehicle after expiration of the federal EV tax credit but before the state program launch date?

2. If such a transition provision has been considered, what policy, fiscal, administrative, or statutory factors informed CARB's current approach?
3. If it has not yet been considered, would CARB be willing to evaluate whether a limited transition window is legally and administratively feasible before finalizing program rules?
4. Would CARB accept constituent or stakeholder comments on this specific implementation issue, and if so, what is the appropriate process and deadline for submitting them?

We recognize that CARB is responsible for program implementation and that funding, budget authority, grant agreements, manufacturer participation, and administrative feasibility may affect final eligibility criteria. Our purpose is to ensure that this transition issue which is likely to impact many California residents is considered before the program rules are finalized.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We would appreciate any information CARB can provide regarding this issue and the status of final program eligibility rules.

Sincerely,

Tony Strickland

Cc:
CleanTransportationIncentives@arb.ca.gov; driveforward@arb.ca.gov