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Air Resources Board

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Gray Davis
Governor

June 14, 2001

Mail Out #MSC 01-10

TO: ALL PASSENGER CAR MANUFACTURERS
ALL LIGHT-DUTY/MEDIUM-DUTY VEHICLE MANUFACTURERS
ALL OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

SUBJECT: ON-BOARD DIAGNOSTICS II (OBD II) REGULATORY REVIEW

On September 14, 1989, the Board originally adopted section 1968.1 of Title 13, California Code of Regulations that contains the malfunction detection and diagnostic system requirements known as OBD II. On September 12, 1991, the Board adopted amendments to the regulation to promote consistency with the federal OBD requirements proposed at that time, to address manufacturers' concerns regarding OBD II implementation, and to improve the effectiveness of certain requirements. The regulation was also modified through amendments adopted July 9, 1993, to provide limited relief from the OBD II requirements during the 1994 and 1995 model year phase-in period for the regulation. On December 8, 1994, the Board adopted amendments to the regulation to address manufacturers' implementation concerns, to improve the monitoring requirements where necessary, and to clarify specific sections of the regulation. The Board last adopted amendments to the regulation on December 12, 1996, to improve and clarify the monitoring requirements where needed, to add new monitoring requirements, to improve the availability of service information, and to address some issues associated with the implementation of OBD II into Inspection and Maintenance (I/M) programs.

At the December 1996 hearing, the Board again directed the staff to continue to follow manufacturers' progress towards meeting the OBD II requirements, and to report back should modifications to the requirements be deemed appropriate. Since then, staff has developed amendments to California's current OBD II regulations that will be brought before the Board at a public hearing scheduled for November 2001. These amendments address several technical monitoring issues, I/M testing concerns, and real world monitoring performance issues. First, increased use of certain new or existing emission control technologies has necessitated the addition of specific monitoring requirements for variable valve timing systems, cold start emission reduction strategies, and direct ozone reduction systems. Secondly, new requirements are being proposed regarding monitoring of emission controls on diesel vehicles. Moreover, existing catalyst monitoring requirements are being modified to include monitoring of oxides of nitrogen (NOx) conversion efficiency in addition to hydrocarbon (HC) conversion efficiency. In

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California Environmental Protection Agency

addition, proposals for improvement in the availability of diagnostic and service information, for issues relative to the incorporation of OBD II systems into California's I/M program, and for adoption of enforcement provisions specific to OBD II systems will also be discussed. Further, a standardized methodology for determining the frequency of monitor operation during in-use driving and a minimum operating frequency will be proposed.

The staff requests comments from industry in an effort to refine the proposed requirements and implementation schedules in a manner that will allow for efficient and effective use of developmental resources. ARB staff has scheduled a workshop to discuss its current position and proposals regarding these issues (attached), and obtain information to further formulate specific proposals prior to the release of the Staff Report and documents relating to the November 2001 Board. The workshop will be held at the date, time, and location below:

Date: Wednesday, July 18, 2001
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Location: Air Resources Board
Annex IV Auditorium
9530 Telstar Avenue
El Monte, California

Manufacturers unable to participate in the workshop or those wishing to supply additional information are encouraged to submit written comments by July 11, 2001. Written comments should be sent to Mr. Steve Albu, Chief, Engineering Studies Branch, Air Resources Board, 9528 Telstar Avenue, El Monte, CA 91731.

This workshop notice, the draft preliminary staff report, and all proposed regulatory documents relating to this item are available on the ARB web site at <http://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/obdprog/obdregs.htm>.

If any party wishes the information submitted to be treated as confidential by ARB staff, it should be clearly marked as "confidential" and should be on pages that are easily detachable from other, non-confidential, information. California guidelines (Sections 91000-91002, Title 17, California Code of Regulations, and Health and Safety Code Section 39660 (e)) will be followed in the handling of confidential information.

To request special accommodations for persons with disabilities, please contact Mr. Michael McCarthy at (626) 575-6615 no later than July 11, 2001. Additionally, to obtain this document in an alternative format, please contact the Air Resources ADA Coordinator at (916) 323-4916 or (800) 700-8326 (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf or TDD).

Workshop participants wishing to discuss unresolved technical issues or confidential data may schedule individual meetings with staff. Please contact Mr. Michael McCarthy, Manager, Advanced Engineering Section, at (626) 575-6615 to schedule an individual meeting time and date.

Sincerely,

R. H. Cross, Chief
Mobile Source Control Division

Attachment