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SB 1251 (Gonzalez) Zero-Emission Vehicle Equity Advocate

SUMMARY

Senate Bill (SB) 1251 creates the Office of the Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Equity Advocate to facilitate the coordination across agencies as they advance the State's ZEV goals, and ensure that State ZEV programs are equity-centered and support underserved Californians.

EXISTING LAW

In September of 2020, Governor Newsom signed Executive Order No. 79-20, which sets the following goals:

- 100% ZEV in-state sales of new passenger cars and light-duty trucks by 2035;
- 100% zero-emission medium and heavy-duty vehicles in the state by 2045 where feasible (and 100% ZEV drayage trucks by 2035); and
- 100% zero-emission off-road vehicles and equipment operations by 2035, where feasible.

SB 1275 (De León, Chapter 530, Statutes of 2014) required the California Air Resources Board to develop a plan to achieve California's then-goal of getting 1 million ZEVs on the road by 2023, while ensuring that low-income/disadvantaged communities benefit from this transition.

SB 350 (De León, Chapter 547, Statutes of 2015) directed CARB to conduct a study on the barriers for low-income Californians to access clean transportation options, including those in disadvantaged communities. In February 2018, CARB released the Final Guidance Document - Low Income Barriers Study, Part B: Overcoming Barriers to Clean Transportation Access for Low-Income Residents.¹

¹ <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/carb-barriers-report-final-guidance-document>

² <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/state/data/ca.html>

³ <https://afdc.energy.gov/data/10962>

BACKGROUND/PROBLEM

California is a world leader in the ZEV market: in 2020, ZEVs were California's number one export², and California accounted for half of all plug-in cars purchased in the United States³.

However, California is still far from its ambitious ZEV targets. As of 2020, there are 635,602 zero-emission and hybrid vehicles in California, representing just 2.2% of all the cars on the road⁴. Moreover, these ZEVs are not deployed equitably as low-income, households of color are far less likely to own ZEVs than white, higher-income households. As of 2019, fewer than six percent of California ZEVs are registered in the upper 80th percentile of CalEnviroScreen score census tracts⁵. In addition to equitably deploying passenger ZEVs, deploying more zero-emission medium- and heavy-duty vehicles also has equity benefits, since these vehicles reduce air pollution that primarily affects underserved and environmentally overburdened Californians.

There is a strong need to create an office within State government where community-based organizations and other grassroots groups can connect and voice their concerns to state agencies working to reach ZEV and infrastructure deployment targets. Furthermore, in order to efficiently advance this equity-centered ZEV deployment, the various state agencies should align their equity definitions, goals and programs.

SOLUTION

SB 1251 will address the current lack of organization in ZEV equity deployment by creating an Office of ZEV Equity Advocate within the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (go-Biz), which will facilitate

⁵ <https://innovation.luskin.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/An-Agenda-for-Equity-Centered-Clean-Transportation.pdf>

connection between community groups and agencies regarding ZEV equity. The Advocate will also create a ZEV Equity Action Plan that will help to align equity definitions, planning, and metrics across agencies and programs with an eye to funding equity prioritization across agencies in their ZEV deployment work. The Action Plan will further make recommendations on new funding streams and programs to promote an equitable ZEV deployment. The Advocate will evaluate state programs and funding for equitable ZEV deployment, and assess how well the state is achieving an equitable ZEV deployment. Through these actions SB 1251 will ensure that the State is moving towards effective community-centered ZEV equity goals in the most efficient manner possible.

SUPPORT

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Watts Clean Air and Energy Committee



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