

**Air Quality Improvement Program (AQIP)  
Advanced Technology Demonstration Projects:  
Advanced Hybrid Technologies in School Buses**

**Applicant Workshop October 27, 2011  
Questions and Answers**

On October 27, 2011, the Air Resources Board (ARB) held an Advanced Technology Demonstration Project Applicant Workshop to answer questions regarding the FY 2011-12 Advanced Hybrid Technologies in School Buses Grant Proposal Solicitation (solicitation). This document provides ARB responses to stakeholder questions at the workshop, and to those questions submitted by email prior to the workshop.

**Please note that the November 7, 2011 date for the release of the ARB's response to questions received at the Applicant Workshop was extended to November 18, 2011. The application submittal deadline and all other dates listed in the solicitation have not changed.**

**Match Funding and Administrative Costs**

**1) Q: Can matching funds be used to pay for infrastructure?**

A: Infrastructure that is needed for a successful demonstration of the proposed technology is an eligible expense that can be applied to the match funding requirement in the solicitation. Proposals that have an infrastructure requirement need to include those costs as part of the cost effectiveness of the technology. This solicitation is directed at on-road mobile sources, not infrastructure development and therefore if the proposal requires a significant investment in infrastructure for the purposes of demonstrating that infrastructure, the proposal may be considered non-responsive to the objectives of the solicitation.

**2) Q: Can proposals include solar collectors located on the bus itself?**

A: Solar cells located on the school bus can be an eligible expense if the proposed demonstration project conforms to the requirements in the solicitation and has a reasonable plan for gaining approval from the California Highway Patrol (CHP) for their use on a school bus.

**3) Q: Can a school bus count as match?**

A: The contribution of an advanced hybrid school bus can be considered as part of the proposals in-kind match if that school bus meets the requirements established in the solicitation as an eligible hybrid school bus.

**4) Q: Are administrative costs an eligible expense for the grantee or the technology demonstrator?**

A: Administrative costs are allowed as an eligible expense for the grantee only.

**5) Q: What is considered an administrative cost?**

A: Administrative costs include reasonable and verifiable costs associated with the administrative responsibilities of the grantee in carrying out their duties as specified in the solicitation and the applicant's submittal. Administrative cost include, but are not limited to program administration grantee staff time; printing, mailing, and travel costs; project monitoring and compliance expenses; and indirect costs such as general administrative services, office space, and telephone services.

**Eligibility**

**6) Q: Are commercially available school buses eligible to participate in a proposed demonstration project?**

A: Advanced hybrid school buses that are currently commercially available can be eligible to participate in a proposed project. However, commercially available buses will be required to participate in a school bus sharing scheme among multiple school districts or some other plan to allow multiple school districts to gain firsthand experience with advanced hybrid school buses transporting students from home to school.

**7) Q: Would the Smith Electric bus be eligible if it was shared among school districts?**

A: The commercially available Smith Electric school bus can be eligible to participate in a proposed demonstration project if it is shared among a group of willing school districts for the purpose of allowing school districts the opportunity to gain real world experience with advanced technology hybrid school buses and meets the requirements set forth in the solicitation.

**8) Q: Would a battery-electric drive system relying only on energy stored in batteries be eligible for funding under this solicitation or does the drive system have to be a hybrid using some other fuel?**

A: An advanced hybrid school bus that relies on a battery-electric drive that includes regenerative braking, for the purpose of this solicitation, is considered a hybrid system and therefore no additional fuel source would be required to meet the definition of a hybrid system under this solicitation.

**9) Q: Would a school bus available on the Hybrid Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project (HVIP) vehicle eligibility list be eligible if it was shared among school districts?**

A: A school bus that is listed as eligible for the ARB's AB 118 AQIP HVIP program is eligible to participate in the demonstration project, if the school bus is part of a school bus sharing scheme among school districts, however, HVIP funds cannot be used to buy down the cost of the school bus that is participating in the demonstration.

**10) Q: Does the vehicle have to qualify as a school bus in the state of California?**

A: Yes, the demonstration vehicle needs to meet the requirements that are established to qualify as a school bus in the State of California as defined in the California Vehicle Code section 545.

**11) Q: Can a transit bus be used as a school bus?**

A: No, a transit bus cannot be used as a school bus.

**12) Q: Can upgrades to an existing school bus with available technology be used as the demonstration?**

A; Yes, upgrades to an existing school bus can be part of an eligible demonstration project under this solicitation, if those upgrades meet the scope of work as defined in the solicitation.

**13) Q: Can infrastructure be part of the demonstration?**

A: Required infrastructure that is needed for the successful operation of the demonstration vehicle can be an eligible expense in the proposal. An example of eligible infrastructure is vehicle charging equipment for plug-in hybrid school buses. Please see Question #1 for additional detail on eligible infrastructure.

**14) Q: Can non-profit organizations (e.g. CALSTART) apply? Who else may apply?**

A: CALSTART is not an eligible applicant. Criteria for eligible applicants are listed on Page 2 of the solicitation and include California-based public agencies with a governing board and experience implementing demonstration projects and experience with school bus operations. School districts and air districts are examples of eligible applicants.

**15) Q: If a school bus original equipment manufacturer located outside of California wants to apply, would they have to partner with a school district?**

A: The solicitation requires a practical field demonstration of the technology to be part of the applicant's proposal and the demonstration school bus is required to provide home to school transportation. Therefore, a California school district is an essential partner in a project proposed under this solicitation.

**16) Q: Is there a list of school districts interested in participating in this solicitation or is it the responsibility of the applicant to find a partner?**

A: The ARB does not maintain a list of interested school districts. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify willing school districts to participate in the project.

**17) Q: Will a contact for the CHP be provided?**

A: The ARB will not provide a specific California Highway Patrol contact person.

**18) Q: Can applicants contact CHP in regards to this solicitation?**

A: The CHP cannot provide the applicant with guidance on this solicitation. Any communication with a state employee regarding this solicitation is not binding on the State and shall in no way alter the specifications, term or condition of this solicitation.

**19) Q: Can applicants contact CHP in regards to the school bus certification?**

A: Applicants may contact the CHP regarding school bus safety certification questions and issues.

**20) Q: Will an attendee list from the applicant workshop be provided?**

A: No, the ARB does not have an attendee list for all the Applicant Workshop conference call participants. However, a sign-in sheet was provided for those workshop participants that attended in person. For a copy of the applicant workshop sign-in sheet, please contact Mr. Earl Landberg (916) 323-1384 or via email [elandber@arb.ca.gov](mailto:elandber@arb.ca.gov).

## **Available Funding**

### **21) Q: Is there a possibility that more than one project will be funded?**

A: Yes, up to three independent projects can be selected under this solicitation.

### **22) Q: Is there a limit to the number of school buses that can be funded under this solicitation?**

A: There is no limit to the number of individual school buses that can participate in the demonstration project.

### **23) Q: Can partial awards be given to projects?**

A: Yes, partial awards can be offered to eligible applicants in accordance with the Evaluation and Scoring section of the solicitation.

## **Evaluation and Scoring**

### **24) Q: Will a proposal that provides more than the minimum 50% match requirement score higher?**

A: Yes, proposals that provide more than the minimum 50% applicant match will be scored higher than those applications that provide only the minimum match.

### **25) Q: Is there a preference between internal combustion engined buses or battery powered buses?**

A: No preference is given between technologies that provide motive power to the bus, however, cost effectiveness of the technology and the potential for emission reductions are considered.

**26) Q: Is there a preference on the type of bus platform?**

A: No, all school bus types are eligible and no preference is given between different styles of school buses that meet the requirements of the solicitation.

**27) Q: Would a project with more school buses score higher?**

A: Projects that field a large fleet of advanced hybrid school buses could score higher than projects that have a smaller fleet of buses depending on the composition of the demonstration project. Applicants need to balance the considerations of cost effectiveness, emission reductions and the overall cost of the project.

**28) Q: Would a proposal that includes solar power be considered a good project?**

A: Because this is a competitive solicitation, the merits of the project will be based on an overall score. Therefore, ARB cannot comment on the merits of a specific technology or project until all evaluations are completed.

**29) Q: Will project scoring be impacted for proposals that include school buses funded with other public funds?**

A: Yes, the source of project match funds, including restrictions associated with public funds, will be considered during the project scoring.

**30) Q: Will the near term commercialization aspect of the proposal be determined by the panel of reviewers?**

A: The ARB's team of application reviewers will evaluate the applicant's response to the commercialization discussion required by Scoring Criteria #6.

**31) Q: Can you explain the statement of economic benefits to California language on Page 6 of the solicitation?**

A: As an example, in the case of school districts that operate advanced hybrid school buses, there should be an economic argument for school districts to choose advanced hybrid buses over conventional school buses.

**32) Q: Is there a preference for small businesses?**

A: No preference is given to small business.

**33) Q: Is there a minimum for school bus refueling time?**

A: No specific refueling or recharging time is given for school buses under this solicitation.

**34) Q: Are specific environmental justice areas listed on the PDF referenced in Scoring Criteria #7?**

A: No specific environmental justice (EJ) areas are listed on the Policies and Actions for Environmental Justice PDF, described under Scoring Criteria #7. Applicants should consult the local air district to determine EJ designations.

**35) Q: Is there a list of eligible project expenses?**

A: The ARB does not maintain a list of eligible expenses for demonstration projects.

**36) Q: Is the cost-effectiveness only used for school buses funded with AQIP funds?**

A: Applicants should identify the cost effectiveness of the technology during the demonstration considering the full cost of the project, as well as the cost effectiveness when the technology is fully commercialized.

### **Emissions Testing and Performance**

**37) Q: Can applicants compare a battery-powered school bus with regenerative braking to a model year 2011 school bus for emission reduction claims?**

A: Yes, all comparisons of emissions used in the application should use a model year 2011 diesel-fueled school bus as the baseline bus.

**38) Q: Do we need to conduct emission performance testing if it has already been performed?**

A: Yes, an emission testing component of the advanced hybrid technology will need to be part of the demonstration project application.

**39) Q: Is there a list of people who can help with emissions testing?**

A: The ARB does not maintain a list of people or companies that can provide emission testing services for school bus demonstration projects.