



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Shirin Barfjani
Lead Staff, Innovative Clean Transit
Air Resources Board
shirin.barfjani@arb.ca.gov

Yachun Chow
Manager, Zero Emission Truck and Bus Section
Air Resources Board
yachun.chow@arb.ca.gov

Via Email

RE: Oppose - Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) Proposed Rule

Dear Madams,

Pasadena recognizes the crucial role the California Air Resources Board has in reducing air pollution and protecting the public's health. The City of Pasadena consistently has been and continues to be a steward of improving air quality and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions in the region, as evidenced by the City's numerous programs and efforts it has invested in support of these goals.

One of the City's guiding principles is that Pasadena will be a City where individuals can circulate without a car. Pasadena has heavily invested its local funds to operate as robust a transit system as its funding will support. Furthermore, Pasadena Transit's fixed route fleet is 100% CNG; any new fixed route bus purchases include near zero emission CNG engines; and the City supports converting to zero emission CNG engines when they become commercially available.

Pasadena opposes the Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) rule as currently proposed for small transit agencies. Further, Pasadena requests that the rule not apply at all to small

agencies until after the Zero Emission Bus (ZEV) technology, particularly battery electric buses, has advanced to a point where charging between manufacturers is universal; the miles provided from a single charge is exponentially higher than what is currently documented; the reliability has improved significantly, such that additional spare buses will not be required to be able to support the use of ZEBs; and the technology has been proven to be as, if not more, reliable than CNG buses when used in revenue service in the variety of geographic settings and climates in California.

Other than the designation of large or small fleet and the related timing for implementation, the proposed rule assumes that all transit agencies are otherwise the same. This is not the case for Pasadena's local transit system, the resources for which are so limited that the deployment of ZEB technology as currently proposed is not possible without having to fundamentally alter and significantly reduce the level of transit service currently provided to the public.

Pasadena's specific concerns regarding the proposed rule are the following:

1. Potential ICT creates an unfunded mandate, including the incremental increase in the cost of ZEB versus a CNG bus and cost to provide the charging infrastructure.
 - Pasadena is a locally funded transit system for which there are limited financial resources.
 - Pasadena is not eligible for most grant or dedicated funding available to other transit agencies due to its "local" funding category in Los Angeles County.
 - Pasadena is precluded from receiving formula allocation of Federal 5307 capital funds.
 - Pasadena is precluded from receiving transit allocations of State TDA, STA, or SB1 funds.
 - Pasadena is precluded from obtain certain funds as a disadvantaged community (e.g., LCTOP) unless it also receives certain of the other state funding identified above.
2. Significant investments of public funds have been made to provide and support existing CNG infrastructure to meet current CARB rules.
 - Pasadena has invested heavily in developing its existing CNG fueling infrastructure; including a recent expansion of its CNG facility.
 - Pasadena would need to reimburse the cost of this transit asset back to its original fund source, less the depreciation, for this newly expanded facility.
3. Unintended consequence will be a reduction in transit service.
 - Current funding for Pasadena's transit operations is static with no new funding sources identified for future transit expansion.

- Any increase in unfunded capital cost and additional operating cost for ZEB deployment will directly reduce the current level of transit services due to the need to reduce hours of operation and potentially eliminate routes. Not only is the increase in capital costs unfunded, Pasadena is not eligible for most grant or dedicated funding available to other transit agencies due to its “local” funding category in Los Angeles County.
4. ZEB ranges and reliability promised by manufacturers have not been achieved in day-to-day operations.
 - Current ranges would require additional infrastructure to perform in-route charging adding considerable unfunded capital cost.
 - In-route charging locations would be difficult to site and require cooperation and approval of other agencies.
 - Strong potential to incur additional unfunded capital costs for additional buses to meet existing service requirements.
 5. Increased “fueling” costs
 - There is an unknown cost to assess the local utilities’ current power grid to accommodate powering the transit fleet.
 - There is significant potential unfunded capital costs to revamp the existing power grid to support BEB infrastructure; not only is the cost unfunded, Pasadena is not eligible for most grant or dedicated funding available to other transit agencies due to its “local” funding category in Los Angeles County.
 - Pasadena would be paying the regular commercial tariff rate for electricity; its current CNG fuel rate is only \$1.72/GGE.
 6. For Pasadena’s transit services, ZEB deployment will reduce operational flexibility and violate longstanding FTA regulations.
 - Currently, if a bus needs maintenance it is able to be exchanged with any other bus in the fleet. However, a ZEB vehicle will only be able to be deployed to a ZEB enabled route.
 - Restrictions to ZEB deployment may violate FTA regulations by requiring increased spare ratio of vehicles and create service inequity due to the resulting inability to deploy vehicles among all routes.
 7. Lack of standards among ZEB manufacturers
 - There is no common vehicle design for ZEBs among manufacturers which prevents competitive bidding which significantly constrains the need for cost containment and affordability.
 - Lack of charging design standards means that once a vehicle manufacturer is chosen the agency is committed having to purchase future vehicles from the same manufacturer, regardless of cost or performance.

- There is no common/universal design yet for charging infrastructure to support the bus deployment, which means that transit agencies have no ability to share charging infrastructure.
- A truly open, competitive bid process is thereby precluded.

Some small transit agencies such as Pasadena limit their risk and expense by depending on and learning from the large transit agencies that have had ample opportunity to test new technology. It is too soon to implement the regulation statewide for all size or types of transit agencies, such that CARB is unable to obtain an accurate and complete picture of transit agencies' current experience with ZEBs and initial review of technology readiness. Currently, large agencies that are attempting to deploy ZEBs are experiencing difficulty in having operable and reliable vehicles delivered, have experienced high costs of charging infrastructure in very limited applications, and have far exceeded estimated operating expenses for utility costs. Pasadena does not have the capacity to experiment with this technology.

Local and small transit agencies such as Pasadena should be exempt from any ZEB-based CARB regulation until the requirement is proven to be technologically and economically feasible, when funding programs are available to fully fund the cost to make the transition from CNG to ZEB, and/or when all transit agencies regardless of designation are eligible for these funds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Valerie Gibson".

Valerie Gibson
Transit Manager