



Varner Bros., Inc.

Material Collection/Transportation
*Residential *Commercial *Industrial *Recycling
since 1938

State of California
Air Resources Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Comments on Modified Text on Proposed Amendments to the Heavy-Duty Engine and Vehicle Omnibus Regulation (the "Proposed Regulation")

Dear CARB:

Varner Bros., Inc. owns and operates solid waste collection vehicles in and around Kern County, California. California waste collection companies have been and continue to be strong supporters of CARB's efforts to improve environmental conditions in California, exceeding expectations in the pioneering of CNG fueling technology and infrastructure.

The modified text of the Proposed Regulation provides qualifying transit agencies with a flexibility to purchase vehicles that are compliant with existing emissions regulations, but are exempt from the NOx emission standards of the Proposed Regulation.

We request that owners of solid waste collection vehicle be granted a similar flexibility in the Proposed Regulation. The Notice of Public Availability (at p. 6-7) provides CARB's rationale for the exemption. Please note the following similarities and parallels between transit's situation and waste collection's situation, which support our request for the ability to apply for an exemption from the Executive Officer between 2021 and 2027 to purchase diesel engines that may not be certified to otherwise-applicable Low-NOx standards:

1. The 8.9-liter diesel engines for urban bus and the 8.9-liter diesel engines for waste collection vehicles are made by the same manufacturer and are nearly identical.
2. **The same engine manufacturer expressed its intent to no longer produce the 8.9-liter for waste collection vehicles in California starting in 2024, as well as the 11.9-liter diesel engine that powers many waste collection vehicles. To our knowledge, diesel engines of this size will not be available from any other manufacturer in California, because of various challenges to meeting the Low-NOx standards for these engines.**

1808 Roberts Ln * PO Box 80427 * Bakersfield CA 93380 * Office (661)399-2944 * Fax (661)399-5934

VarnerBros.com



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3. If waste collection companies are not able to purchase diesel trucks beginning in 2024, the only alternatives are CNG or ZEV. CNG fueling infrastructure may not be available at the vehicle's home base. ZEV infrastructure development is the current focus, but ZEV vehicles and charging equipment may not be widely available or affordable by 2024. Without the required equipment and infrastructure, waste haulers cannot operate CNG and ZEV vehicles.
4. Older refuse trucks will need to be replaced in compliance with the Truck & Bus Regulation. If new clean diesel trucks are not available, the unintended consequence may be waste collection companies having to continue operating older, less environmentally-friendly trucks, which may lack state-of-the-art safety features.
5. The waste industry continues to be impacted by the financial toll of COVID-19, as well as the continuing recycled commodities market plunge. Neither our company nor the waste industry has unlimited access to capital, and CARB has restricted our ability to rely on grant funds to help offset the higher costs of CNG and ZEV trucks.

The Modified Text of the Proposed Regulation is published at a time when the future of heavy-duty truck regulation is uncertain. Despite the industry's billion-dollar investment in CNG, the end of state CNG incentives and support is either looming or past. A ZEV manufacturer deadline is approaching, with no clear path forward on a fleet rule or infrastructure.

We are deeply concerned with the removal of clean diesel engines from our range of options during these critical transition years, and we encourage you to modify the present proposal to add the exemption request process for waste collection vehicles. We are committed to working with CARB Staff to craft an appropriate and fair flexibility.

Sincerely,

Jacob Panero
CEO