



Air Resources Board



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 23, 2010

CONTACT: Dimitri Stanich (ARB)
(916) 322-2990
www.arb.ca.gov

Luis Farias (BAR)
(916) 826-6069

Smog Check program legislation aims for clean air benefits, lower costs, conveniences

SACRAMENTO: The Air Resources Board and the Bureau of Automotive Repair are jointly sponsoring legislation that is projected to save consumers money, save time and provide greater air quality from the state's Smog Check program, which is administered by BAR.

Addressing challenges raised by a recent analysis of smog check, Assembly Member Mike Eng (D-Monterey Park) introduced [AB 2289](#) that will provide faster and cheaper service to more than 70 percent of vehicles in California. The bill also directs older, high emitting vehicles to the highest performing stations.

"The Smog Check program is one of the most important air quality programs that we have to meet state and federal air quality standards," stated Assemblymember Mike Eng. "AB 2289 is designed to improve the program in reducing pollution through the use of new technologies that provide considerable time and cost savings to consumers while at the same time improving consumer protections by adopting more stringent fine structures to respond to station and technicians that perform improper and incomplete inspections."

"If signed, this bill will allow a major upgrade in the technologies used to test vehicle emissions," said BAR Chief Sherry Mehl. "It will result in cleaner air and has the potential to reduce the cost of a Smog Check for many consumers, as well as reduce the time spent by consumers getting their vehicles inspected."

"This new and improved program will have the same result as taking 800,000 old cars off the road, also resulting in a more cost effective program for California motorists," said ARB Chairman, Mary D. Nichols. "Today's announcement will add additional improvements to one of our most effective programs in our fight for clean air, capturing up to 70 tons-per-day of smog-forming emissions."

One way the program would reduce costs is by taking advantage of on-board diagnostic technology installed in all new vehicles since 1996. The program will now take better advantage of OBD technology by eliminating tailpipe testing and instead using the vehicle's own emissions monitoring system. This system has saved consumers time and money in 22 other states.

The recent statewide audit of the Smog Check program revealed that 19 percent of vehicles that initially passed testing failed subsequent roadside tests within a short period of time. The audit can be found at <http://www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/smogcheck/smogcheck.htm>.

Reacting to these findings Assembly Member Eng designed legislation that includes the following:

- Authorize the use of On Board Diagnostic II testing to expedite the process;
- Vehicles known to release large amounts of pollution must test at stations with the highest performance ratings;
- Stricter fines structure for improper inspections;
- Permit the state to contract with the private sector to manage franchise-like networks of independently owned Smog Check stations;
- Mandate an annual evaluation of station performance using roadside tests; and,
- Encourage community colleges and other training institutions to develop technician-training programs.

California's Smog Check program, administered by the Bureau of Automotive Repair, began in 1984 to identify vehicles in need of maintenance and to assure the effectiveness of their emission control systems on a biennial basis. Currently, Smog Check cuts 400 tons of smog-forming emissions from California's air each day.

The Air Resources Board is a department of the California Environmental Protection Agency. ARB's mission is to promote and protect public health, welfare, and ecological resources through effective reduction of air pollutants while recognizing and considering effects on the economy. The ARB oversees all air pollution control efforts in California to attain and maintain health based air quality standards.

The Bureau of Automotive Repair licenses auto repair facilities to protect consumers and administers the Smog Check program to reduce auto emissions that cause air pollution. Consumers who have a problem with an auto repair facility can file a complaint with the Bureau of Automotive Repair by calling 1-800-952-5210. Consumers can also file complaints online at BAR's Web site at www.autorepair.ca.gov.

#####