

California Air Resources Board's

Low Emission Vehicle Program



Background

The Low Emission Vehicle (LEV) program was first adopted by the California Air Resources Board (ARB) in 1990. ARB amended the first set of regulations to form a new set of standards known as LEV II. LEV II strives to reduce both greenhouse gas and criteria pollutants coming from passenger vehicles. LEV I standards ran from 1994 through 2003. LEV II runs from 2004 through present.

As more cars are purchased, the population continues to grow, and consumers increasingly chose larger, heavier vehicles CARB must adopt stricter regulations in order to meet federal mandates on clean air under the Statement of Implementation Plan (SIP, 1994). According to CARB, 50% of vehicles sold today are either SUVs or pickups.

Amendments

In 1998, CARB made amendments to strengthen the Low Emission Vehicles program known as LEV II, which achieves the following:

- Including heavier sport utility and pickup vehicles in the low emission standards
- Greater restrictions on emission standards for 2004-10 new vehicle fleets
- Addition of super-ultra low emission vehicle (SULEV) to the program
- Substantial reductions in NO₂ and evaporative emissions
- Credits for near zero vehicles
- Change in smog index calculations
- Expanded in-use compliance testing that will lead to greater compliance with emission standards once new vehicles are sold and on the road

Coming next

This year, CARB will be adopting even stronger regulations called LEV III, which will aim to reduce both greenhouse gas and criteria pollutant emissions even more. LEV III will also be combined with Pavley II,

California's passenger vehicle greenhouse gas standards and will be called LEV III GHG. In 2011, LEV III for criteria pollutants will kick in. CARB plans to adopt the new regulations in late summer or early fall.

CARB LEV Program Timeframe

Abbreviations

CARB: The California Air Resources Board

LEV: Low Emission Vehicle Program

GHG: Greenhouse gasses

