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CLEAN CAR STANDARD FACT SHEET

What is the Clean Car standard?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regulates the air pollution from passenger cars and trucks through the federal Clean Air Act. Individual states have the option to go beyond the federal requirements and adopt a “Clean Car” standard for new vehicles.

The Clean Car standard has several components, including the following:

- (1) Tailpipe emissions standards for air pollution;
- (2) Requirements for sale of some Zero Emission Vehicles within Albuquerque and Bernalillo County and the state including; and
- (3) Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions overall from vehicles sold within Albuquerque and Bernalillo County and the state.

Specifically, the Clean Car standard regulates emissions of:

- Non-methane organic gases
- Carbon monoxide
- Oxides of nitrogen
- Particulate matter
- Greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and air conditioning refrigerants)

Eleven states have already adopted Clean Car standards. Several states, including the state of New Mexico, in cooperation with the City of Albuquerque, are pursuing adoption of Clean Car standards.

Why are Albuquerque-Bernalillo County and New Mexico proposing adoption of the Clean Car standard?

Vehicles in New Mexico account for about 58% of the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, vehicle usage results in the emissions of air pollutants that negatively affect our air quality and visibility at our scenic vistas. The Clean Car standard is being proposed in support of Mayor Chavez’ Albuquerque Green environmental initiatives, which include climate protection, and in accordance with Governor Richardson’s Executive Order 2006-69. Adopting the Clean Car standard throughout New Mexico will result in cleaner air, health benefits, and reduced emissions of greenhouse gases.

When will the Clean Car standard take effect?

The City of Albuquerque and the state of New Mexico are proposing to adopt the Clean Car standard in 2008, but the regulation delays implementation until Model Year 2011 (calendar year 2010). This required 2-year delay will provide car manufacturers and dealerships time to comply with the new regulations.

How will the Clean Car standard affect me?

The Clean Car standard will require some automobile manufacturers to produce and deliver to New Mexico vehicles that have been certified to meet the Clean Car standard. Car dealerships will be required to sell new vehicles that have been certified. Customers purchasing a new vehicle will be required to purchase a certified vehicle. The standard affects manufacturers differently depending on their size; smaller manufacturers do not have to comply at the same level as larger manufacturers. Used vehicles will not be affected by this rule. A wide selection of new vehicles will still be available, including sport-utility vehicles, trucks, and cars.

Clean new vehicles may cost several hundred to several thousand dollars more per vehicle for manufacturers to produce, which may translate into slightly higher vehicle prices for some new cars and trucks. However, these clean vehicles will be more fuel-efficient and will be covered by comprehensive warranties, resulting in fuel savings and lower maintenance costs for the consumer. Some analyses have estimated that the increased vehicle cost would be recouped in approximately 3 years due to the lower operating costs. Initial vehicle costs may be further offset by federal and local financial and tax incentives.

How is a “Clean Car” different than a normal car?

Technologies to produce “clean cars” are readily available to manufacturers right now. Clean cars already are being manufactured and sold in several states including New Mexico. Technology can be applied to conventional vehicles or may include battery hybrid vehicles or vehicles that run on alternative fuels. Examples of available technologies that could specifically address greenhouse gas emissions includes variable valve timing, cylinder deactivation, engine downsizing combined with turbo-charging, improved aerodynamics, and changes to air conditioning systems. Some examples of Clean Cars currently on the market include the Toyota Prius, Toyota Highlander Hybrid, Ford Escape Hybrid, and the Honda Civic Hybrid.

Where can I find more information?

Go online to: <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/aqb/ghg/CleanNewCars.html> or <http://www.environmentnewmexico.org/clean-air/clean-cars>

How can I comment on the Clean Car standard in New Mexico?

We welcome your comments on the Clean Car standard. Comments are accepted by e-mail at: jamend@cabq.gov or, contact Janice Amend at the Air Quality Division:

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