

# Transport Topics **Online**

Updated:

## **CARB Approves Changes to Emissions Rules to Ease Truckers' Costs for New Equipment**

*By Eric Miller, Staff Reporter*

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California environmental regulators have approved amendments aimed at easing the financial burden facing truckers in order to comply with the state's greenhouse gas emissions regulations.

In response to complaints from truckers that the recession is making purchases of new equipment difficult, the California Air Resources Board voted to extend some compliance deadlines by up to a year, grant exemptions from some requirements and allow fleets to use averaging to meet certain deadlines.

CARB said its amendments will reduce compliance costs by about 60%, or \$3 billion, delay initial compliance dates for the retrofitting trucks and allow them to operate another eight years before they are required to use one that meets 2010 emissions standards.

CARB said it still will be able to meet its federal obligations under the Clean Air Act because the decline in freight hauling during the economic downturn reduced overall diesel emissions.

"No other state — and no other nation — has such an extensive set of rules to slash pollution from diesel engines," Mary Nichols, CARB chairman, said after the vote.

The approved amendments delay to 2014 from 2012 the requirement that heavy trucks with model-year 1998-2006 engines have particulate matter filters installed.

Another change will allow those trucks to operate another eight years, instead of four years, before fleets must replace them with trucks meeting 2010 standards.

Overall, by 2023, all trucks in California will need to have 2010 or newer engines, or be able to meet the equivalent standards.

The amendments also provide fleets more time to begin the phase-in of the trailer retrofit reporting requirements and give truckers an extra year to install low rolling-resistance tires for existing trucks and trailers.

Other changes will provide longhaul truckers more flexibility in installing aerodynamic technologies. The board also established a second compliance schedule, allowing owners of these trailers to phase in compliance from 2011 through 2015.

CARB's drayage amendments also eliminate the 2014 requirement that 2007-complaint engines be used. Instead, drayage trucks with PM filters would not need to comply until 2020.

Despite the softened regulatory requirements, CARB spent several hours at its December meeting listening to about 100 speakers, many of them small truckers who said they would still have a hard time meeting the requirements.

John Pitta, the owner of a two-truck company in Salinas, Calif., said the recession already has forced

him to cut health insurance and other benefits for his only employee.

"I cannot afford a new truck, replacement truck, or put a device on a truck," Pitta said. "We need more time. We are hurting, and we're doing better than most."

Some carriers who said they complied with the regulations early on were upset that others are now gaining a competitive advantage because they were spared a large expense.

"My company, as with many others, spent a great deal of capital to upgrade our equipment, knowing that the rule was coming into play," Chris Torres, owner of F&L Farms Trucking Inc., Princeton, Calif., told the board. "We would have continued to operate our older equipment if we knew that there would be more time to comply. Now we are being penalized for our early action."

"I would like to see the rule stay the same as originally posted by the board in 2009," Torres wrote. "This would keep the economics even for all involved."

Mike Tunnell, director of environmental affairs for American Trucking Associations, said further action is needed.

He recommended the board extend its SmartWay tire requirements by two years to 2014 for pre-2011 tractors. Currently, SmartWay retreads are not available, so an extension would eliminate the need for fleets to change out tires prematurely, Tunnell said.

He also recommended that the board expand its local-haul aerodynamic requirements exemption to a 150-mile radius, from the current 100 miles, and reward carriers who are using 2007 and newer vehicles.

CARB also voted to plug two loopholes with its drayage regulation. One ensures all trucks servicing the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, including Class 7s, will have diesel particulate filters by 2014. As many as 500 noncompliant Class 7s have been operating at the ports, officials estimated.

The other change is aimed at preventing "dray-offs," a practice in which noncompliant trucks receive cargo just outside port or rail-yard areas.

Violators face fines of up to \$1,000.