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Assembly California Legislature



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WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

March 12, 2009

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

The California Legislative Black Caucus represents and advocates for the interests of African Americans throughout California. Among our objectives is reducing inequities, increasing employment opportunities, and increasing economic security for African Americans. It is for that reason that we are writing to share our serious concerns regarding a pending regulation by the California Air Resources Board, (CARB) which we believe could have major impacts on inner-city and minority communities.

The issue involves the looming enforcement by the CARB of the Enhanced Vapor Recovery Systems (EVR). It is our understanding that several years ago CARB adopted regulations requiring gas stations to install EVR upgrades by April 1, 2009 to help reduce air pollution levels – a goal we strongly support. However, our concern lies with the fact that, due to major bureaucratic delays by CARB in approving products for use by station owners, coupled with extremely high fees and onerous regulations by local jurisdictions, only 1 in 5 stations to date have been able to install these systems. With just 30 days until the enforcement deadline, more than 78% of California's 11,000 gas stations will not be able to meet the standard and will be forced to shut down.

The result of this action will be that minority and inner city areas will be hit especially hard. Specifically:

- **Closure of Service Stations Serving Inner City Communities:** Stations that cannot meet the deadline will be forced to shut down, creating a major void in inner city communities. This will bring dramatic price increases at a time when hard working families can least afford new costs.
- **Loss of Revenue for the State and increased unemployment:** Service station closures will further hurt our struggling economy and aggravate an already dismal budget situation by putting more individuals out of work and reducing critically needed tax revenues. This would result in less money for the State General Fund and ultimately lead to further decreases in badly needed community, health and educational programs.
- **Increased blighted areas and increased pollution:** Station closures will become community eyesores, impeding efforts to revitalize our inner city communities. Most ironically, it will also result in increased pollution as individuals drive further to find an open gas station – undermining the original intent of the regulation.
- **Hardship on Minority Owned Small Businesses:** Major oil companies have divested most of their service stations to minority, disabled veterans, women and others individuals over the last several years. Without an extension of the compliance deadline, these small business owners will be financially ruined and their dream of a better life for their families destroyed.



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It is for these reasons that we respectfully request that you intervene on this critical issue. Specifically, we request that you direct CARB to allow for a two year extension of the EVR installation mandate. This request is consistent with Senate Bill 155 ('08, Cox), which you signed. SB 155 granted rural gas stations a two year extension, postponing enforcement of EVR until April 1, 2011. Your support would allow urban gas stations the same consideration given to those in rural areas.

On behalf of the California Legislative Black Caucus, I respectfully urge you to direct the California Air Resources Board to create this extension.

Sincerely,



Sandré R. Swanson
Chair, Legislative Black Caucus

CC: Members of the Senate and Assembly Black Caucus
Ms. Susan Kennedy, Chief of Staff to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
Ms. Mary Nichols, Chairwoman of the California Air Resources Board
Honorable Gil Cedillo, Chair of the Latino Caucus
Honorable Tony Mendoza, Vice-Chair of the Latino Caucus
Honorable Ted Lieu, Chair of the Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus