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MOTORISTS SAFE**

California's Truck Engine Regulations Threaten Free Towing Service for Southern California Freeways truck manufacturers not building electric truck chassis

August 14, 2024 (Los Angeles): Due to California's electric engine mandate, a coalition of towing and recovery truck manufacturers and drivers are concerned that starting this year, they must start replacing their diesel trucks with electric alternatives that manufacturers are not building. The lack of electric truck chassis will impact the state's [Freeway Service Patrol](#), a state and local program that contracts with local towing companies to provide free services to motorists stranded on California freeways.

Due to the CARB's passage of the State's [Advanced Clean Truck](#) (ACT) regulation, towing and recovery trucks will no longer be assembled or sold in California once 2024 truck inventories are depleted. Truck manufacturers have not developed electric truck chassis that meet towing and recovery truck performance and safety requirements, and towing companies can't purchase diesel-powered trucks built before January 2024. This catch-22 threatens small businesses, jobs, and motorists.

"State regulators have created an insurmountable road hazard for towing and recovery truck drivers by mandating electric engine technology that can't support custom, high-performance trucks. We can't buy what truck manufacturers are not building," said Mark Baatz, president of Tow Industries, West Covina. "When our inventory of new trucks is sold, we will be out of business, and fewer tow trucks will be on the road to support stranded motorists. When California faces the country's highest unemployment rate, the governor and state legislature must come up with a solution quickly if CARB fails to act and do so before small businesses close shop and workers lose jobs."

[Tow Industries](#), is one of many small businesses throughout California that assembles tow trucks by attaching towing and recovery bodies to custom truck chassis (truck cab/frames) produced by major truck manufacturers.

As the number of trucks in service declines, Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) programs will find it increasingly difficult to contract with towing and recovery companies. FSP tow trucks roam freeways, clearing traffic accidents at no cost to motorists. State and local transportation agencies credit the program for reducing wasted time in traffic and fuel costs and lowering tons of carbon emissions. The Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) is a

joint program provided by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the California Highway Patrol (CHP), and local transportation agencies. The State finances 75% of the service, and local government 25%.

“The Newsom Administration and the California State Legislature need to recognize the urgent need to classify all towing and recovery trucks as emergency vehicles,” said Bill Salazar, owner of [Royal Coaches Towing and Recovery](#), a third-generation family-owned Riverside business and president of the Los Angeles Chapter of the California Tow Truck Association. “This is the only way our drivers can continue to provide emergency and roadside services to California motorists who depend on us to provide roadside services.”

Royal Coaches provides Freeway Service Patrol services to the [Riverside County Transportation Commission](#) and the [San Bernardino County Transportation Commission](#).

Since public safety agencies widely view towing and recovery trucks as emergency vehicles, CARB exempted government-owned towing and recovery vehicles. The exemption was not applied to privately owned tow and recovery trucks for unknown reasons. Paradoxically, the regulations allow existing trucks to be replaced by older, higher-emission diesel trucks purchased out-of-state. However, this is problematic for FSP programs requiring low-mileage trucks at enrollment.

***Benefits of [LA Metro Freeway Services Patrol](#)**

According to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro), its Metro Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) is a congestion mitigation program managed in partnership with Metro, CHP, and Caltrans on all major freeways in L.A. County. FPS towing services will jump a battery, tape leaky hoses, refill a radiator, change a flat tire, or provide a gallon of gas on the spot if needed. If they can't fix the issue, they tow cars to an approved location. All of this is free of charge. LA Metro is the largest FSP in the nation.

By clearing Los Angeles County highways of stranded motorists within an average of seven minutes, LA Metro attributes the following public benefits to its FPS program:

- 8,124,234 gallons of fuel savings
- 4,726,140 hours are saved by motorists not sitting in traffic
- 71,493,262 kg of emissions savings

Benefits of [California Freeway Patrol Services](#)

***Statewide**

- 16,576,262 gallons of fuel savings
- 9,642,968 hours motorists saved from not sitting in traffic

- 145,702,066 kg of emissions savings

**It is important to note that this data was generated in 2021 during the pandemic. Pre-pandemic data was more significant, suggesting future reports will reveal a return to pre-pandemic service levels.*

The coalition has launched a website where small businesses, truck drivers, and motorists can join a grassroots campaign to urge Governor Newsom and the State Legislature to find a legislative solution before existing inventories of new towing and recovery trucks are depleted. For more information and to view an explainer video, visit www.casaferoads.com/fsp-program/

Contact: Marko Mlikotin
River City Communications
marko@rivercitycomm.com
m 916.799.7574