



CALIFORNIA TOW TRUCK ASSOCIATION

"Developing Professionalism in the Towing Industry"

October 22, 2024

California Air Resources Board (CARB)
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: CTTA/ERSCA Comments on CARB's Proposed 15-Day Modifications to Proposed Amendments to the Advanced Clean Trucks Regulation and the Zero-Emission Powertrain Certification Test Procedure – Released October 7, 2024

Dear Chair Randolph and CARB Board Members:

The California Tow Truck Association (CTTA), known nationally as the Emergency Road Service Coalition of America (ERSCA), submits the following comments on CARB's "Proposed 15-Day Modifications to the Proposed Amendments to the Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT) Regulation and the Zero-Emission Powertrain Certification Test Procedure" released on October 7, 2024. In light of ongoing concerns about the availability of tow trucks for sale in California as a result of CARB's actions, CTTA respectfully requests additional relief from the ACT Regulation for towing and recovery equipment. Such relief will ultimately reduce emissions and increase safety for first responders and the motoring public.

CTTA is the largest towing-based non-profit association in the world, representing nearly 1,000 emergency roadside responders and towing companies within the State of California and throughout the country, which was established in 1969 to increase the professionalism in the towing industry and safety of the motoring public.

Unfortunately, CARB staff's recent "California Truck Availability Analysis" from September 25, 2024, does not reflect the current reality for California towing companies, who are still being notified about the upcoming unavailability of combustion towing and recovery equipment in California. CTTA continues to share the concerns about the ACT Regulation that have been expressed by Miller Industries, which manufactures much of the towing and recovery equipment used by CTTA's members. According to Miller Industries, as Original Engine Manufacturers (OEMs) are limiting the sales of traditional internal combustion engines (ICE) for sale in California due to the ACT rule, the availability of ICE chassis to support the over 1,500 orders

for new tow trucks in the state could be disastrously compromised. And in some cases, as acknowledged by CARB in its Analysis, OEMs have indicated that an ICE chassis will only be available if a zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) chassis is also purchased.

As previously communicated to CARB, currently there are no known commercially available electric tow trucks for sale capable of performing the same work done by traditional tow trucks, with no clear indications that any of the major tow truck manufacturers have any plans to develop any such ZEV tow trucks anytime in the future. This is due to the unique complexities of building and operating a ZEV tow truck, as it is a highly specialized, weight-sensitive vehicle that must idle for long periods of time, typically on the side of a busy road, utilizing a Power Take-Off (PTO) to divert power from the engine of the truck to the various tow mechanisms, including cranes, winches, wheel lifts, flatbeds, booms, etc. As can be imagined, designing a ZEV tow truck to incorporate a massively heavier battery (thus dramatically limiting additional towing capacity and increasing driver licensing requirements) with sufficient battery life to drive to the scene of an accident, successfully remove the vehicle from the scene – which depending on the severity and complexity of the accident can take up to 6-8 hours while the tow truck is idling and operating various tow mechanisms – drop-off the vehicle at a safe location, and return the tow truck for recharging, is perhaps infeasibly difficult for the foreseeable future.

Thus, as these zero-emission chassis cannot yet be equipped to support the towing industry, any manufacturer or dealer mandates requiring the purchase of a ZEV chassis/truck with the purchase of an ICE chassis or truck would serve no purpose other than to exclude the purchase of any tow truck chassis or truck.

Essentially, the Advanced Clean Truck rule's requirements upon manufacturers will mean that there will be fewer new traditional ICE tow trucks for sale in California, thus inevitably increasing their price, if you're even able to locate or purchase one. The lack of commercially available ICE tow trucks for sale in the state will have far-reaching negative impacts on not just towing companies, but the motoring public and Californians as a whole.

The emissions reductions from the continued sale of new, lower emission vehicles and the general and specific Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) program services that reduce congestion in the transportation system provide ample justification for CARB to accommodate relief for towing and recovery vehicles. Further, there are also demonstratable economic benefits for California small businesses, their employees, and the state for supporting relief for tow and recovery equipment. And finally, such relief helps to protect the safety of first responders and motorists by ensuring that a sufficient number of tow vehicles remain on California's roads to promptly address disabled and impounded vehicles. How will traffic keep flowing if we don't have a sufficient number of tow trucks to clear California's roads?

Additionally, consistent with CARB's September 2024 Analysis, the cost of ZEVs in California continues to grow. If an electric tow truck is ever available and towing companies are forced to purchase such a vehicle – either because of ZEV purchase mandates from dealers/manufacturers as a result of the ACT regulation or due to requirements imposed upon towing companies by CARB's related Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF) Regulation – the towing industry is particularly ill-suited to handle these massive cost increases. Typically, law enforcement agencies throughout California, including the California Highway Patrol (CHP), contract out their towing-related responsibilities, including vehicle impounds and vehicle accident clearance, to individual towing companies. All fees are pre-approved by the law enforcement agency, and it is the vehicle owner that has had their vehicle towed that is ultimately responsible for the related tow and storage fees. As such, towing companies are not

simply able to “pass on” these increased costs to their “customers.” Government entities would need to approve rate increases, which will ultimately be shouldered by the vehicle owners, who are oftentimes low-income individuals.

Due to the reasons cited above, CTTA urges the Board to dutifully consider providing the necessary and warranted relief for towing and recovery vehicles in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Craig Baker', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Craig Baker
President
California Tow Truck Association
Emergency Road Service Coalition of America