

ENERGY IN FOCUS

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California Governor Bans Gasoline Cars, State to Go All-Electric in 2035

California Governor Gavin Newsom has called for a ban on the sale of new gasoline-fueled vehicles beginning in 2035. Via Executive Order, Newsom said he is directing the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to establish regulations requiring new cars and passenger trucks sold in California beginning in 2035 be zero-emission vehicles. Newsom also called on the Legislature to implement a fracking ban by 2024.

Newsom's direction comes in response to ongoing criticism from environmentalists that California isn't doing enough to stop the use and production of fossil fuels.

During a press conference announcing the bans, Newsom said: "This is the most impactful step our state can take to fight climate change."

CARB will be tasked with writing these rules, which the Newsom administration estimates would slash greenhouse gas emissions by 35 percent and nitrogen oxide emissions by 80 percent. Other agencies will be directed to support the development of zero-emission vehicle charging stations, and medium- and heavy-duty trucks will be mandated to be zero-emission by 2045 where feasible.

As soon as the order was issued, many business organizations quickly questioned the logistics and equity of the transition from internal combustion engines in car-dependent California. Newsom said that California would join 15 other countries that are already phasing out gas-fueled vehicles.

CAN NEWSOM'S ORDER BE IMPLEMENTED?

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The Trump Administration quickly reacted via White House spokesman Judd Deere: “This is yet another example of how extreme the left has become. They want the government to dictate every aspect of every Americans’ life, and the lengths to which they will go to destroy jobs and raise costs on the consumer is alarming. President Trump won’t stand for it.”

LEGISLATURE READY TO ACT ON FRACKING

A day after Newsom called on the Legislature to pass a bill banning hydraulic fracturing by 2024, three legislators said they would do just that.

In a joint statement, Senator Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco) and Assembly members Monique Limón (D-Santa Barbara) and Robert Rivas (D-Hollister) said they “*will be introducing a ban on fracking come December, when the next legislative session starts,*” but did not disclose further details.

Rivas invoked his experience as a supervisor in San Benito County, where voters passed a ballot initiative in 2014 to prohibit fracking — one of the first local bans in the country. Wiener has been a consistent advocate for a sharp transition away from oil and gas. Limón wrote a law signed last year that reformed California’s fossil fuel agency. She has another bill on Newsom’s desk that would increase penalties tied to oil spills.

From the Joint Statement, Assemblywoman Limón: “This bill will continue robust policy conversations on fossil fuels and alternative energy production that have been going on for decades. There is support from the Governor and the people of California, and as this bill moves forward, we must consider all costs, including health and safety costs to consumers, workers, and communities that have been most impacted. I applaud the recent actions by the Governor and stand ready to work with him on the next phase to support our environment.”

Wiener, Limón and Rivas say they will announce more details about their bill in the coming months.

Business groups, the oil industry and its union members, as well as Republican members and moderate Democrats, will surely have a lot to say about the effort. It will certainly lead to animated hearings and intense lobbying.

BUT NOT EVERYONE IS THRILLED

It will be a massive lift to get the infrastructure in place – assuming that car prices can come down enough for all Californians to afford them. As it stands, the average all-electric vehicle with a range of over 200 miles between charges is priced well over \$50,000.00. The more economically priced all-electric vehicles can go 80 miles to just over 100 miles between charges, and cost around \$30,000.00.

According to the [Census ACS](#) 1-year survey, California's median household income was \$75,277 in 2018, the latest figures available. The problem here is that a new all-electric vehicle, for those who fall into the "average income" range, would be a massive part of their annual income. Worse, the majority of low and moderate income households, likely travel the furthest and would need the longer- range vehicle, which at present is cost prohibitive. Assembly member Jim Cooper (D-Elk Grove) pointed out that the *"... electric vehicles pictured in today's signing of the executive order cost more than \$50k each. How will my constituents afford an electric vehicle? They can't. They currently drive 11-year-old vehicles. This doesn't even take into account the strain an all electric vehicle fleet will have on our state electric grid."*

Senator Shannon Grove (R-Bakersfield) accused Newsom of *"chasing headlines instead of focusing on the immediate and real problems,"* adding that *"There is no real charging*

infrastructure in place statewide. What happens when one of my constituents in Rural Kern aims to travel to Rural Modoc County? How will this trip be feasible??”

THE CHALLENGE

Californians love their cars. Are we ready to give them up? According to the California Department of Motor Vehicles, nearly 33 million vehicles are currently registered in the State.

In 2018, then-Governor Jerry Brown called for 5 million electric zero-emission cars on the state’s roads by 2030, and signed an executive order committing the state to that plan. Brown outlined the ambitious target, while California was already struggling to hit the previous goal of 1.5 million electric vehicles by 2025 due to a significant lack of charging infrastructure (California currently has about 750,000 electric vehicles on the road, the most in the nation).

However, the big problem with scaling up so fast is finding a place for so many electric vehicles to charge. California currently has roughly 12,000 charging stations. That’s good compared to the rest of the country, but woefully inadequate for reaching the new goals in 2035 goals.

But the other problem is one of timing. There are around 10,000 gas stations in California, but trips to these stations are usually quick. It doesn’t take long to top off the tank, and if there are persistent lines, drivers start to get annoyed. Current technology means that it takes longer to charge cars than fill them with gas even in ideal conditions. With a single charger connected to a 240-volt outlet, getting a full Tesla charge takes around 9 hours to charge all the way.

Nine hours is more than a full day of work. At best, it will be hard for Californians to give up their cars – for working families and single parents, it could be impossible.

The text of Newsom’s Executive Order can be found [here](#) and a copy can be found [here](#).

<https://energyinfocus.org/california-governor-bans-gasoline-cars-state-to-go-all-electric-in-2035/>