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Information About...

Background Information

Under the AB 32 Scoping Plan, the Board identified the Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) as one of the nine discrete early action measures to reduce California's greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. This program will help put California on the path to meet its goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020. The LCFS is a key part of a comprehensive set of programs in California to cut greenhouse gas emission and other smog-forming and toxic air pollutants by improving vehicle technology, reducing fuel consumption, and increasing transportation mobility options. The LCFS is designed to decrease the carbon intensity of California's transportation fuel pool and provide an increasing range of low-carbon and renewable alternatives. Executive Order S-1-07, the Low Carbon Fuel Standard (issued on January 18, 2007), calls for a reduction of at least 10 percent in the carbon intensity of California's transportation fuels by 2020.

The Board approved the LCFS regulation in 2009 and began implementation on January 1, 2011. ARB



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approved some amendments to the LCFS in December 2011, which were implemented on January 1, 2013. In September 2015, the Board approved the re-adoption of the LCFS, which became effective on January 1, 2016, to address procedural deficiencies in the way the original regulation was adopted.

Other jurisdictions are following California's footsteps, which is evident in the Pacific Coast Collaborative, a regional agreement between California, Oregon, and British Columbia, to strategically align policies to reduce greenhouse gases and promote clean energy. ARB has been routinely working with these jurisdictions. Over time, these LCFS programs will build an integrated West Coast market for low-carbon fuels that will create greater market pull, increased confidence for investors of low carbon alternative fuels, and synergistic implementation and enforcement programs.

What is LCFS?

The Low Carbon Fuel Standard is designed to encourage the use of cleaner low-carbon fuels in California, encourage the production of those fuels, and therefore, reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The LCFS standards are expressed in terms of the "carbon intensity" (CI) of gasoline and diesel fuel and their respective substitutes. The LCFS is performance-based and fuel-neutral, allowing the market to determine how the carbon intensity of California's transportation fuels will be reduced. This program is based on the principle that each fuel has "lifecycle" greenhouse gas emissions that include CO₂, N₂O, and other greenhouse gas contributors. This lifecycle assessment examines the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the production, transportation, and use of a given fuel. The lifecycle

assessment includes direct emissions associated with producing, transporting, and using the fuels, as well as significant indirect effects on greenhouse gas emissions, such as changes in land use for some biofuels. Subjecting this lifecycle greenhouse gas rating to a declining standard for the transportation fuel pool in California would result in a decrease in the total lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions from fuels used in California.

Contact Us

(800) 242-4450 | helpline@arb.ca.gov
 1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
 P.O. Box 2815, Sacramento, CA 95812



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