



The Cleaner Air Partnership

April 8, 2007

The Cleaner Air Partnership is a joint project of Breathe California of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails, the Sacramento Metro Chamber and Valley Vision to help the Sacramento Region meet clean air standards that protect health and promote economic growth.

The Honorable Pedro Nava  
Chair, Assembly Transportation Committee  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

By fax to 916.319.2193

**Re: Support for AB 616 (Jones) Annual Smog Check for Older Vehicles**

Dear Assemblymember Nava:

The business-health Cleaner Air Partnership supports Assembly Bill 616 (Jones), common-sense legislation with significant benefits for air quality, public health and the business climate in the Sacramento Region and California.

AB 616 would create an annual smog check for vehicles 15 years old or older, while exempting autos not currently required to participate in the existing biennial program. This concept is supported by our partnership between the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Breathe California of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails, which has worked for 20 years to help the six-county Sacramento region (El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yuba and Yolo counties) meet air standards that protect health and promote economic growth.

Smog Check is one of California's key environmental and public health programs. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) estimates that an annual smog check for older vehicle would reduce statewide emissions of hydrocarbons and NOx by 20.6 tons per day in 2014. Creating an annual smog check for older vehicles is a longstanding recommendation of the Inspection and Maintenance Review Committee, the official state body that advises CARB and the Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) regarding Smog Check program improvements. Fourteen other states such as Texas and New York already have some form of annual smog check.

Some benefits to the state's businesses and residents from this bill:

- **Protects public health.** Thousands of Californians die prematurely each year due to cancer, respiratory diseases and other ailments related to breathing air contaminated by automobile emissions. In some areas of the state, automobiles cause up to 50 percent of air pollution. Reducing auto emissions by strengthening Smog Check is important to protect public health.
- **Helps boost capacity for doing business.** By affecting vehicles that disproportionately contribute to state air pollution, AB 616 can help ensure crucial air quality capacity is available for goods movement and job-creating stationary sources.

1900 S Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
phone: (916) 325-1630  
fax: (916) 325-1635  
[www.cleanerairpartnership.org](http://www.cleanerairpartnership.org)

- **Helps ensure California, and the Capital region, receive funding crucial to the movement of goods and workers.** Large portions of our region and the state do not meet federal standards for ozone pollution and do not or are not expected to meet them for fine particle (PM 2.5) pollution. As you know, regional transportation plans in polluted areas must meet air quality conformity requirements, and crucial federal transportation funding can be delayed with “lapses” in conformity.
- **Improves business attraction/retention.** Cleaner air helps improve our state’s overall quality of life, which is increasingly a major factor in decisions by companies, innovators and talented workers about where to work and live. A recent comparison among 11 competing U.S. regions by the Sacramento Area Trade and Commerce Organization placed our region near the bottom of the list in the “place” indicator category. Poor air quality was a strong factor. Yet, Sacramento’s air quality is better than that in Los Angeles, Bakersfield and Fresno.
- **Consumer protections.** The older vehicles targeted by AB 616 are known to fail Smog Check in disproportionate numbers. To protect consumers, under AB 616 the Bureau of Automotive Repair would be required to exempt from the annual inspection requirement those vehicles or classes of vehicles with historically high pass rates. AB 616 also directs proceeds generated by annual smog check certificates to the Consumer Assistance Program to provide repair assistance to low-income Californians. Consumers whose cars are repaired to pass a smog check inspection can expect to enjoy 10 percent improved fuel efficiency (and an estimated \$200 in gas purchase savings per year). The increased fuel efficiency resulting from smog check repairs also directly reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

In closing, our economic and physical health is dependent upon wise decisions that balance public and environmental health and the need for a strong, resilient economy. AB 616 is a win-win for the environment, public health and consumers.

We appreciate your consideration and support of this important measure. Please feel free to contact us at (916) 325-1630 if you have any questions about our position. Thank you for your time and efforts.

Sincerely,



Bill Mueller  
Manager, Cleaner Air Partnership