
UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bill No: SB 615
Author: Allen (D), et al.
Amended: 8/20/26
Vote: 21

SENATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE: 6-0, 4/2/25

AYES: Blakespear, Gonzalez, Hurtado, Menjivar, Padilla, Pérez

NO VOTE RECORDED: Valladares, Dahle

SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE: 11-2, 4/22/25

AYES: Cortese, Archuleta, Arreguín, Blakespear, Cervantes, Gonzalez, Grayson, Limón, Menjivar, Richardson, Umberg

NOES: Strickland, Seyarto

NO VOTE RECORDED: Dahle, Valladares

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 5-1, 5/23/25

AYES: Caballero, Cabaldon, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

NOES: Seyarto

NO VOTE RECORDED: Dahle

SENATE FLOOR: 28-6, 5/29/25

AYES: Allen, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Cortese, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Hurtado, Laird, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Umberg, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

NOES: Choi, Grove, Jones, Ochoa Bogh, Seyarto, Strickland

NO VOTE RECORDED: Alvarado-Gil, Dahle, Limón, Niello, Reyes, Valladares

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: Passed, 8/30/26

SUBJECT: Vehicle traction batteries

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: Requires, by July 1, 2028, a battery supplier to include on a new vehicle traction battery sold in the state a permanent label containing specified information.

Assembly Amendments create a labelling requirement for electric vehicle (EV) traction batteries and task the California Air Resources Board (CARB) with implementing this bill. Previously, this bill required responsible end-of-life management for EV traction batteries with regulations and implementation by CalRecycle.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Hazardous Waste Control Law (HWCL) and provides DTSC with responsibility for overseeing the management of hazardous waste in California. (Health and Safety Code (HSC) §§ 25100 et seq).
- 2) Establishes CARB as the air pollution control agency in California and requires CARB, among other things, to control emissions from a wide array of mobile sources and implement the Federal Clean Air Act (FCAA). (Health and Safety Code (HSC) §39500 et seq.)
- 3) Defines “battery electric vehicle” as a vehicle that operates solely by use of an electric battery or battery pack, or that is powered primarily through the use of an electric battery or battery pack but uses a flywheel or capacitor that stores energy produced by the electric motor or through regenerative braking to assist in vehicle operation (HSC § 44269)
- 4) Requires CARB, in conjunction with the State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission, to develop and administer a program to provide grants to individuals, local governments, public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses, to encourage the purchase or lease of a new zero-emission vehicle. (HSC § 44260)

This bill:

- 1) Defines:
 - a) “Vehicle traction battery” as a traction battery to propel a motor vehicle, including a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle;

- b) “Battery supplier” as
 - i) The vehicle manufacturer of a vehicle containing a vehicle traction battery;
 - ii) The manufacturer of a replacement vehicle traction battery; and
 - iii) The importer, distributor, retailer, dealer, or wholesaler who sells the vehicle traction battery if the manufacturer is not in the state.
 - c) “Remanufacturing” as a standardized industrial process through which battery cores are returned to same-as-new, or better, condition and performance; and
 - d) “Remanufacturer” as a person, other than the battery supplier regarding its own batteries, who engages in remanufacturing of vehicle traction batteries.
- 2) Requires, beginning July 1, 2028, battery suppliers to put a permanent label on vehicle traction batteries which is visible, accessible, and includes the following information:
 - a) The name of the battery supplier;
 - b) The date of manufacture;
 - c) An identification of the battery chemistry, as specified;
 - d) The rated capacity or energy, as specified;
 - e) Product safety and recall information; and
 - f) Safe disposal information.
 - 3) Requires remanufacturers to relabel the vehicle traction battery and indicate that the original label is obsolete;
 - 4) Allows battery suppliers and remanufacturers to use a quick response (QR) code linking to a data repository with the above information;
 - 5) Requires battery suppliers and remanufacturers to register with CARB no later than 90 days after this bill is chaptered;
 - 6) Requires battery suppliers to pay a fee to CARB to cover the costs associated with implementing and enforcing the bill;

7) Requires CARB:

- a) to develop regulations implementing this bill by July 1, 2031;
 - b) to determine the most cost-effective means to accept electronic submissions from battery suppliers and remanufacturers;
 - c) to revise the regulations to ensure consistency with federal regulations;
 - d) to create a tiered fee schedule to generate revenue sufficient to cover the costs associated with implementing and enforcing the bill;
 - i) the tiered fee schedule shall consider the battery supplier's share of total vehicle registrations with vehicle traction batteries in the state for the past 10 years;
 - ii) The tiered fee schedule shall be subject to public comment; and
 - iii) Moneys received from the tiered fee schedule shall be deposited into the Vehicle Traction Recovery Fund.
- 8) Allows CARB to adopt additional or differing battery labelling requirements for battery suppliers.

Background

- 1) *California's electric vehicle goals.* Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-79-20 requires all passenger vehicles sold in the state to be zero emissions by 2035.¹ The California Air Resources Board (CARB) set targets of zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) sales approaching 2035, starting with 35% of sales in 2026 to 100% of sales in 2035.² Since 2010 and as of 2026, California has sold 2.5 million ZEVs, exceeding previous goals set by Governor Brown.³ However, rapid growth of ZEVs necessitates robust waste management of the hazardous materials in ZEVs, such as lithium-ion batteries.

¹ Governor's Office (2020) *Governor Newsom Announces California Will Phase Out Gasoline-Powered Cars & Drastically Reduce Demand for Fossil Fuel in California's Fight Against Climate Change*, <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/09/23/governor-newsom-announces-california-will-phase-out-gasoline-powered-cars-drastically-reduce-demand-for-fossil-fuel-in-californias-fight-against-climate-change/>

² CARB (2022) *California moves to accelerate to 100% new zero-emission vehicle sales by 2035*, <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/news/california-moves-accelerate-100-new-zero-emission-vehicle-sales-2035>

³ Cohen-Petrow, C. (2026) *California exceeds clean car goal despite declining federal support*, Los Angeles Times. <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2026-01-20/california-exceeds-clean-car-goal-despite-declining-federal-support>

- 2) *Regulation of batteries.* The California Hazardous Waste Control Law prohibits the disposal of all batteries in the trash or household recycling collection bins intended to receive other non-hazardous waste and/or recyclable materials. Many types of batteries, regardless of size, exhibit hazardous characteristics and are considered hazardous waste when they are discarded. All batteries in California that are intended for disposal must be recycled, or taken to a household hazardous waste disposal facility, a universal waste handler (e.g., a storage facility or broker), or an authorized recycling facility.
- 3) *Lithium-ion batteries.* Lithium-ion batteries, widely used in portable electronics like laptops, smart phones, digital cameras, game consoles, and cordless power tools, are also widely used as vehicle batteries in zero emission vehicles (ZEVs). Lithium-ion batteries contain hazardous and corrosive materials, they also pose a fire risk if not stored or disposed of properly. Therefore, any program to manage used Lithium-ion batteries needs to account for this possible fire risk. According to a presentation to the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) from Occupational Knowledge International at a DTSC workshop in 2017, it is estimated by 2028, roughly eight million kilotons of waste Lithium-ion batteries from ZEVs will be generated; by 2038, the estimate is 55 million kilotons.
- 4) *Lithium-ion Car Battery Recycling Advisory Group (Advisory Group):* In 2018, AB 2832 (Dahle) Chapter 822, Statutes of 2018 required the convening of the Lithium-Ion Battery (LIB) Recycling Advisory Group. AB 2832 mandated that the LIB Recycling Advisory Group submit policy recommendations to the Legislature to ensure “that as close to 100% as possible of lithium-ion batteries in the state are reused or recycled at end-of-life.” Two policy proposals that define end-of-life (EOL) management responsibility rose to the level of majority support of the LIB Advisory Group members: core exchange with a vehicle backstop and producer take-back. Additionally, other policy proposals from the LIB Advisory Group included a labeling requirement on EV traction batteries.
- 5) *Drive Forward.* Governor Newsom’s Executive Order N-27-25 tasked CARB with developing “Advanced Clean Cars III regulation consistent with State and federal law, that reduces greenhouse gas, criteria air pollutant, and toxic emissions from passenger cars and light-duty trucks, medium- and heavy-duty vehicles, to advance progress towards the deployment of clean air vehicles and

technologies in the State.”⁴ Under this authority, CARB instituted Drive Forward which “supports the potential development of light-, medium- and heavy-duty vehicle regulations, incentive programs, outreach and education, and complementary efforts and policies that enable clean vehicle deployment.”⁵ CARB is currently undergoing rulemaking for the Drive Forward Light-duty Vehicle Program which may impact regulation pertaining to EV batteries.⁶

Comments

- 1) *Purpose of Bill.* According to the author, "California is home to the fastest growing electric vehicle (EV) market in the nation. However, as the number of EVs on the road increases and the market matures, so does the number of EV batteries reaching the end of their useful life. California is beginning to see piecemeal development of a market and infrastructure designed to capture the value imbedded in these batteries once removed from a vehicle; including high-value critical materials such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, natural graphite, and manganese. Recycling batteries to capture this material reduces demand for raw materials, thereby avoiding the negative social and environmental impacts of mining, and potentially catalyzing a domestic supply as demand for critical materials increases. However, our nascent system relies on the expectation that the value of the material will drive proper management. California lacks a policy framework to encourage reuse, repair, and repurposing, or ensure that batteries are recycled when no longer useful."
- 2) *End-of-life management.* As California achieves its ZEV sales goals, ZEVs will increasingly approach end-of-life. Therefore, ZEV traction batteries will need to be responsibly disposed of or repurposed. While labelling and tracking ZEV traction batteries is a first step to responsible end-of-life management, SB 615 does not stipulate that responsible waste management should be front-of-mind for subsequent CARB rulemaking. SB 615 may represent a first step but there is substantial work to be done to ensure responsible end-of-life management for ZEV traction batteries.
- 3) *Drive Forward Scope.* Presently, CARB’s Drive Forward program has authority over new ZEV sales. In contrast, SB 615 places requirements on

⁴ Governor Newsom (2025) Executive Order N-27-25. <https://www.library.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/GovernmentPublications/executive-order-proclamation/40-N-27-25.pdf>

⁵ CARB, Drive Forward. <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/drive-forward>

⁶ CARB, Drive Forward Light-duty Vehicle Program. <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/drive-forward-light-duty-vehicle-program>

battery suppliers, which includes manufacturers of new ZEVs, new plug-in hybrid vehicles, and replacement vehicle traction batteries. Therefore, SB 615 could expand CARB's authority on ZEVs.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

This bill has been amended substantially since it was heard in the Assembly Appropriations committee and therefore does not have a fiscal analysis.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/25/26)

California Automotive Wholesalers' Association
California Environmental Voters (formerly Clev)
Californians Against Waste
Calstart INC.
Climate Reality Project Bay Area Chapter
Climate Reality Project Riverside County Chapter
Climate Reality Project San Diego
Climate Reality Project San Fernando Valley Chapter
Climate Reality Project, Los Angeles Chapter
Climate Reality Project, Orange County
Environmental Defense Fund
Ford Motor Company
Lkq Corporation
National Stewardship Action Council
Natural Resources Defense Council
Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)
Sierra Club
Union of Concerned Scientists

OPPOSITION: (Verified 8/25/26)

1000 Grandmothers for Future Generation
California Communities Against Toxics
California Safe Schools
Communities for a Better Environment
Cudahy Alliance for Justice
Lucid
Motorcycle Industry Council
Neighbors Against Phibro-tech
Parents Against Santa Susana Field Lab

Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles
Rivian
Tesla
West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project

Prepared by: Alyssa Poletti / E.Q. / (916) 651-4108
8/30/26 14:48:28

**** **END** ****