



State of New Jersey

Department of the Treasury

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New Jersey Gets Federal Approval for Hybrid Vehicle Purchases

Replacement of Retired Vehicles Will Help Improve Fuel Efficiency and Reduce Costs

TRENTON – Acting State Treasurer David Rousseau and New Jersey Energy Savings Director John Rhodes today announced that New Jersey has received special approval from the U.S. Department of Energy to purchase high efficiency and low emission Hybrid-Electric Vehicles (HEVs) for the State fleet instead of Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFVs) which are currently mandated by the Federal Energy Policy Act for regulated fleets.

Replacing retired state vehicles at the end of their life-span with HEVs will result in a significant increase in fuel efficiency, an important step with oil prices at record highs. The move will also result in a reduction of emissions by more than 50 percent.

“This special approval is expected to yield a significant increase in fleet fuel efficiency since the purchase of Alternative Fuel Vehicles to date has not produced the benefits anticipated by the federal government,” Rousseau said.

Director Rhodes explained that under the federal mandate, New Jersey has been required in the past to allocate 75 percent of vehicle purchases to AFVs, also known as “flex-fuel” vehicles. These purchases have not been successful in New Jersey because of the limited availability of certain alternate fuels. He pointed out that ethanol (at the 85% concentration), is not available in the state, meaning that New Jersey has no choice but to fuel its AFVs with the lower concentration gasoline blend, which contains 10% ethanol. In contrast, Hybrids run on conventional gasoline and require no special charging.

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“Being able to buy an electric hybrid, instead of an E85 flex fuel vehicle, will move us from 22 to 46 mpg for a mid-size passenger car,” Rhodes said. “That is more than double the fuel efficiency, which will reduce our fuel consumption, emissions, and fuel cost by more than half.”

The use of hybrid vehicle will provide a fuel cost savings of about \$7,500 over the life of the vehicle. It will also reduce New Jersey’s dependence on foreign oil while utilizing the state’s existing fueling infrastructure, Rhodes said. Currently there are 174 HEVs in the State fleet.

New Jersey has 2,200 Flex Fuel Vehicles (FFVs) in the state fleet and is poised to take advantage of sustainable, alternate fuels like cellulosic ethanol, once they become available within the state, he said.

Replacing retired vehicles with more fuel efficient cars is one part of the State's program to reduce fleet petroleum consumption and emissions. State agencies also face new scrutiny and restrictions that require justifying all vehicle purchases and explaining what steps will be taken to promote fuel efficiency. All purchase requests now come through a special committee in Treasury’s Division of Administration to ensure each department is purchasing the most efficient vehicles that are available for the intended use. To avoid unnecessary delays, departments are being asked to reconsider vehicle requests that may not be that efficient, such as SUVs in particular, to see if a more efficient vehicle could serve the same purpose. To the extent that the State will make future SUV purchases, the Purchase Bureau also recently approved a contract to add several Hybrid SUV’s to the list of vehicles available under contract

Other program components include requiring more stringent vehicle maintenance, mandating the use of clean fuels when available, and educating drivers about green driving practices and how their driving behavior can have a significant impact on fuel efficiency and the environment. This includes measures like keeping tires inflated to proper levels, avoiding rapid acceleration, and removing excess weight from the passenger compartment and trunk.

New Jersey’s success has been made possible through Governor Corzine's Executive Order 11, which created the Office of Energy Savings and the mandate to increase energy efficiency across of all State agencies.

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