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GOV. RITTER SIGNS NEW ENERGY ECONOMY LEGISLATION

New Transportation Laws Help Lower Fuel Bills, Reduce Pollution

Gov. Bill Ritter today signed into law three New Energy Economy transportation bills that will help Coloradans reduce the amount of air pollution their cars release, increase fuel economy, minimize their carbon footprint and boost energy independence.

"Building on the success of the last two years, we continued this legislative session to make Colorado a national and global leader in the [New Energy Economy](#)," Gov. Ritter said at a signing ceremony at the Alliance for Sustainable Colorado Center in LoDo. "Together, we are creating jobs, strengthening communities and spurring innovation as we lead Colorado toward a strong recovery.

"These three transportation bills mark another important step for the New Energy Economy," Gov. Ritter said. "They help Colorado put cleaner-burning and more fuel-efficient vehicles on the road, reducing harmful emissions, creating economic opportunities and enhancing our energy security."

House Bill 1331, "The Innovative Auto Act," was sponsored by Rep. Sara Gagliardi and Sen. Betty Boyd. It bolsters Colorado's critically important natural gas industry by extending tax credits to those who convert their vehicles to run on cleaner-burning compressed natural gas. The bill also adds incentives for the purchase of or conversion to plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. Further, it updates tax credits and incentives targeting the most fuel-efficient hybrid vehicles and phases out tax credits for those hybrids with lower fuel economy.

"Ten years ago, we had one goal with this law: to reduce the amount of health-damaging and smog-forming air pollution. But now the existing incentive is outdated. Today, we are concerned not only about air pollution, but also about fuel economy and carbon footprint," said Rep. Gagliardi. "By recalculating the credit, we can foster new technologies and help bring important innovations to market sooner."

HB 1298, sponsored by Rep. Buffie McFadyen and Sen. Shawn Mitchell, will help drivers save thousands of dollars on fuel every year and reduce harmful emissions by putting cleaner and more fuel efficient long haul trucks on our highways. It also makes it easier to install devices that allow drivers to stay warm in their vehicles during rest periods without idling their engines.

Senate Bill 75, sponsored by Sen. Gail Schwartz and Rep. Don Marostica, opens the door for cleaner transportation options, allowing drivers to operate low-speed electric vehicles on more roads.

"Colorado has been and will continue to be a leader in the New Energy Economy," Sen. Schwartz said. "I sponsored SB 75 to promote low-speed neighborhood electric vehicles as one aspect of our larger energy goals this session. This bill will help Colorado move toward a local sustainable electric transportation system, reduce carbon emissions and support communities throughout the state."

2009 NEW ENERGY ECONOMY LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Building on the success of the last two years, Gov. Ritter and the legislature continued in the 2009 legislative session to make Colorado a national and global leader in the New Energy Economy. This year's legislation included:

SB09-039, Conserve Energy Tiered Rates Incentive, (Schwartz/Curry) -- Authorizes cooperative electric associations to charge graduated rates for high-consuming customers as an incentive to encourage big residential consumers to be more energy efficient. Also allows associations to establish a fund designed to reduce power demands by helping customers improve energy efficiency, conservation and weatherization, as well as install renewable energy.

SB09-051 (Carroll/Levy) -- Makes solar energy systems more affordable for homeowners and improves market conditions for solar energy companies. The bill creates financing models that can help homes and businesses spread out the expensive up-front costs of a system over several years, similar to purchasing and financing a car. The bill also provides treasury bonds to participating banks and lenders that will provide more financing options for solar installation.

SB09-075, Low-Speed Electric Vehicles, (Schwartz/Marostica) -- Authorizes the operation of low-speed electric vehicles on roads with a speed limit of 35 mph or less. This will allow such vehicles to access more roadways and allow drives to use the clean vehicles for more trips.

SB09-092, State Motor Vehicles Use Natural Gas, (Kopp/Marostica) -- Requires an increase in the use of alternative fuels, including compressed

natural gas, by state-owned vehicles.

SB09-098, Tax Exempt Blended Diesel Products, (Schwartz/Vigil) -- Simplifies the tax rebate structure to make blended biodiesel a more financially appealing alternative to traditional diesel.

SB09-124, Extend Ag Energy-Related Projects, (Isgar/Roberts) -- Extends funding to the Colorado Agricultural Value-Added Development Board to promote agricultural renewable energy-related projects and research, such as those involving biofuels, wind and solar.

SB09-177, New Solar Facility Property Tax Valuation, (Schwartz/Vigil) -- Standardizes the method for property value assessment of solar energy facilities and wind energy facilities.

SB09-297, Expedite Federal Stimulus Act Projects, (Sandoval/Judd) -- Allows the Governor's Energy Office to receive Recovery Act dollars into the Clean Energy Fund through a revolving loan program. This will help create a sustainable cycle of investment by allowing funds to revolve back to the state for use in additional renewable energy and efficiency projects.

HB09-1126, Encourage Solar Thermal Installations, (Hullinghorst/Shaffer) -- Allows local governments to provide the same incentives for solar thermal installations as those for solar electric installations. This bill also adds a corresponding exemption from state sales and use tax for solar thermal, similar to what's in place for solar PV and wind.

HB09-1149, Solar Home Prewire, (Merrifield/M. Carroll) -- Requires homebuilders to offer prospective homebuyers the option of having their home pre-wired for solar or having a system installed, making it easier to finance renewable energy by folding it into a home mortgage.

HB09-1298 (McFadyen/Mitchell) -- Helps drivers save thousands of dollars on fuel every year and reduce harmful emissions by putting cleaner and more fuel efficient long haul trucks on our highways. It also makes it easier to install devices that allow drivers to stay warm in their vehicles during rest periods without idling their engines.

HB09-1312, K-12 School Loans, (Kerr/Schwartz & Romer) -- Creates a loan program to help schools pay for renewable energy projects, as well as hybrid and electric buses, so that more education dollars can be in the classroom instead of on utility bills.

HB09-1331, Innovative Auto Act, (Gagliardi/Boyd) -- Bolsters Colorado's critically important natural gas industry by extending tax credits to those who convert their vehicles to run on cleaner-burning compressed natural gas. Also adds incentives for the purchase of or conversion to plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. Updates tax credits and incentives targeting the most fuel-efficient hybrid vehicles and phases out tax credits for those hybrids with lower fuel economy.

HB09-1345, Electric Utilities Integrate Transmission Infrastructure, (Solano/Schwartz) -- Directs the Public Utilities Commission to study and report on the construction plans of owners and operators of electric transmission facilities in Colorado. The work will help guide how best to ensure new transmission projects can deliver power from renewable sources to the grid.

HB09-1346, Recovery & Reinvestment Fin Act Of 2009 (Carroll/Shaffer) -- Allows the Governor's Energy Office to utilize the resources of the State Treasurer's Office to issue bonds for renewable energy projects.



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