



Reining In California

In recent years, California has implemented policies that require rapid growth in market share for electric vehicles and threaten the survival of the internal combustion engine. These plans and others threatening older and classic cars have begun to face increased pushbacks in Washington, D.C. and Sacramento.

Lawmakers in Congress have set their sights on revoking many regulations approved at the end of the last presidential administration, some of which have allowed California to shape custom emission standards. Using the Congressional Review Act (CRA), Congress has the power to overturn rules and regulations issued by agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) if they fall within a specific “lookback window” for review. To do this requires a simple majority in both the House and Senate, so the Senate filibuster rule does not come into play.

While the CRA process deals with rolling back regulations already in place, there is growing talk of revoking the unique power the State of California wields to set its own standards to begin with. Increasingly, lawmakers are discussing options that would revoke the ability of the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to seek waivers from the EPA permitting them to craft their own emission rules outside of federal guidelines. Revoking this waiver process would mean California must comply with the same rules as the other 49 states.

California state lawmakers are also looking at rolling back some of the state rules regarding emissions. Under current law, vehicles manufactured before 1976 are exempt from biennial smog checks. Cars at least 35 years old may also be exempt, provided they are insured as

collector motor vehicles, comply with emissions standards for their time and pass a functional inspection of the fuel cap and a visual inspection for liquid fuel leaks. The proposed legislation would expand the exemption to all vehicles at least 35 years old, so long as they are insured as collector motor vehicles, no fuel cap or leak inspection required.

Senate Bill 712, as it is known, has gained some national headlines due to support from comedian Jay Leno, a lifelong car collector with a collection of more than 180 cars and 160 motorcycles. Leno said of this issue, "California's smog check laws for classic cars need to be updated - they vary too much from state to state, and California's rules don't match up with neighboring ones."

There is no question the discussion surrounding the survival of the internal combustion engine is evolving. Both federal and state officials are starting to rethink the rapid electrification of our transportation network and the need to preserve the internal combustion engine. The Motorcycle Riders Foundation is pleased to see the debate on this topic change and will fight for your right to ride whatever type of motorcycle you want.