



CALIFORNIA EMISSIONS TESTING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION



~ Media Statement ~

For Immediate Release
February 25, 2010

Contact: Jennifer Zins (919) 871.0603
Chris Walker (916) 442.8888

Collective Industry Statement in Response to Comments by Air Resources Board Relative to California's Smog Check Program

The California Automotive Service and Repair Industry Call on CARB to Retract Erroneous and Misleading Statements Alleging "Widespread Fraud" in the State's Smog Check Program

SACRAMENTO, Ca – Six statewide trade organizations representing California's automotive service and repair industry have called on the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to issue a retraction over misleading statements made to the media relative to "widespread fraud" in the state's smog check program and have issued the following joint statement.

"The automotive service and repair industry representing 33,000 registered automotive repair businesses in California, including those that perform smog-related repairs, are highly trained and ethical in their care and service of our state's 26 million registered vehicles.

These businesses and their employees are the solution - not the problem - to proper maintenance and reduced emissions from our state's fleet of vehicles by keeping California's cars well serviced and maintained which leads to lower tailpipe emissions and contributes to the state's overall climate change goals.

The unfortunate comments made by CARB officials alleging 'widespread fraud' in California's Smog Check Program callously disregard the character and contributions of these employers and their employees to the health and well-being of California including their efforts to reduce pollution and improve the state's air quality.

The undersigned trade organizations find it extremely frustrating that they must defend the automotive industry from baseless accusations and attempts to create sensational headlines about fraudulent activities. We want to be very clear – the industry does not condone or defend fraud.

However, for CARB to conclude that these smog check failures were due to fraud without specific facts amounts to pure speculation and irresponsibly paints a negative picture of the entire automotive industry.

According to the Bureau of Automotive Repair, approximately 200 Smog Check facilities are suspected of being engaged in routine illegal conduct statewide. While these facilities only account for 3% of the 7,253 licensed Smog Check facilities, it is still too much and will not be tolerated by the remaining 97%. However, it is difficult for the industry to believe that these numbers could or should be characterized by governmental officials as evidence of "widespread fraud."

Governmental agencies have an inherent responsibility to use their authority in a responsible manner and to not misinform or prejudice public opinion or public policy. The comments made by the California Air Resources Board representatives to the media alleging widespread fraud in California's Smog Check industry were inflammatory and injurious to the hard-working men and women in California's automotive repair industry and the future success of the program."

Signed,

Automotive Aftermarket Industry Association - AAIA

Automotive Service Councils of California - ASCCA

California Autobody Association - CAA

California Automotive Business Coalition - CalABC

California Automotive Wholesalers' Association - CAWA

California Emissions Testing Industries Association - CETIA

####