



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH – GOVERNOR

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Governor Blagojevich signs legislation to increase environmental performance of state's vehicle fleet

Bill requires state agencies to purchase hybrids and vehicles that run on cleaner-burning biofuels

New law complements Governor's effort to boost energy independence

SPRINGFIELD – Building on his efforts to support Illinois farmers and expand the use of clean and renewable energy, Governor Rod R. Blagojevich today signed legislation requiring state agencies to purchase Flexible Fuel Vehicles (FFVs) that can run on E-85, an 85 percent blend of ethanol and gasoline, and diesel-powered vehicles that run on B-5, a blend of 5 percent biodiesel and regular diesel fuel.

House Bill 4137 will increase the number of fleet vehicles that can run on environmentally friendly fuels so that Illinois government will continue to serve as a national model for “green” fleet operations. The bill also encourages state agencies to purchase fuel-efficient hybrid vehicles.

“This bill will help further the progress we’ve made in recent years in building one of the largest green fleets in the nation. By using biofuels to fuel state cars and trucks, we’re helping the environment and supporting our farmers,” said Gov. Blagojevich.

To increase the number of large vehicles on Illinois roads powered by biofuels, this bill also allows consumers to purchase large alternative fuel vehicles out of state, if not available in-state, and be able to qualify for a rebate program administered by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. The rebate program offers up to \$4,000 per vehicle to convert a conventional vehicle to a vehicle using alternative fuels, such as natural gas or propane. Current law requires that vehicles over 8,500 pounds must be purchased in Illinois to be eligible. Details on this rebate program can be found at www.illinoisgreenfleets.org.

In recent years, both the availability of biofuels and vehicles that operate on biofuels has risen markedly, as new ethanol and biodiesel plants begin production and auto manufacturers produce

additional models of cars and trucks that operate on these environmentally-friendly fuels. The state will purchase E-85 flex fueled or biodiesel compatible vehicles and hybrids whenever they are available to fit the business use; only certain exemptions will be granted for special agency needs.

“Renewable fuels help reduce our dependence on foreign oil while decreasing the pollutants in our air,” said Lt. Governor Pat Quinn, chairman of the Illinois Green Government Coordinating Council and the Biofuels Working Group. “I salute Rep. Mike Boland and Sen. Deanna Demuzio for helping the State of Illinois take the lead in promoting vehicles that run on All-American fuels derived from homegrown crops.”

“The state’s fleet is the perfect incubator for fostering our state’s biofuels market, and I appreciate Governor Blagojevich’s efforts to build a fleet that increasingly runs on E-85 and biodiesel. This bill will continue to spur markets for Illinois corn and soybean farmers as demand for these fuels continue to increase,” said State Rep. Mike Boland (D-Moline).

“Agriculture and biofuels are important components of our state’s economy, and it’s fortunate when you can reach unanimous consensus in the General Assembly and have a governor who will sign legislation that will positively impact both. It’s just common sense that state government be a leader in purchasing Flexible Fuel Vehicles and thereby purchasing E-85, so we can continue to support this growing industry,” said State Sen. Deanna Demuzio (D-Carlinville).

HB 4137 is intended to further increase environmental performance of the state fleet; in recent years, the state’s fleet managers have purchased FFVs “whenever possible” as a result of Governor Blagojevich’s Executive Order 7 (2004). Last September, Gov. Blagojevich announced that the state’s fleet had used an unprecedented 1 million gallons of biofuels. Between April 2005, when the state started tracking use of renewable fuels, and August 2006:

- State agencies used 122,441 gallons of E-85, with a monthly average of more than 8,100 gallons.
- State agencies used 906,341 gallons of biodiesel fuel, or more than 60,000 gallons per month.

Since the Executive Order was signed, state government has prioritized the purchase of FFVs:

- More than 400 of the 700 passenger vehicles state agencies purchased in FY06 were FFVs.
- As a result, 1,944 vehicles – a full 16 percent of the State’s 12,100-vehicle fleet – can now run on E-85.

The Governor’s action helped spur new consumer markets for the fuels as exhibited by the rapid spread of E-85 fueling stations across the state. When the Executive Order was signed, there were 25 stations; today there are more than 140. A statewide listing of stations offering E-85 is available at www.illinoisgreenfleets.org.

“By signing this bill, Governor Blagojevich continues to make Illinois a national leader in demonstrating the flex-fuel vehicles available today can meet the state’s fleet needs while helping the environment and our agricultural economy. By buying state vehicles that can run with energy

made from corn and soybeans, we're creating new markets for renewable fuels and giving private fleet operators an example to follow," said Central Management Services Director Paul Campbell.

The Illinois Department of Central Management Services purchases both vehicles and fuel for Illinois government agencies. In addition to purchasing more flex-fuel vehicles, state agencies will soon acquire hybrid vehicles, which use an average of 45 percent less fuel than traditional models.

Illinois' government is a national leader for its fleet efforts: in 2006 the state ranked 14th in Ford Motor Company's "Top 100 Alternative-Fuel Fleets" among both the public and private sectors. Illinois was also the winner of the 2005 National Conference of State Fleet Administrators, Honda Environmental Leadership Award for the promotion and development of biofuels in fleet.

Last August, Gov. Blagojevich unveiled a comprehensive long-term energy plan to replace Illinois' dependence on foreign oil with homegrown alternatives. The plan will help free consumers from the grip of foreign oil and gas interests by giving drivers and homeowners alternatives to the high cost of gasoline. The plan will stabilize energy prices, give Illinois farmers new markets for their crops, and create 30,000 new jobs. The Governor's plan sets a goal of meeting 50 percent of the state's transportation fuel needs with homegrown fuels by 2017. Illinois would be the first state in the nation to reach this level of energy independence; the legislation the Governor signed today will help further this goal.