

BOARD MEETING DATE: September 3, 2021

AGENDA NO. 4

PROPOSAL: Approve Additional Funding for the Residential Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program

SYNOPSIS: The Residential Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program provides rebates to help offset the purchase cost of new electric lawn mowers. Participants who purchase a new electric lawn mower receive their rebate after applying online and scrapping their old gasoline-powered lawnmower at a participating licensed dismantler. This action is to approve the use of a total amount not to exceed \$250,000 from the Rule 2202 Air Quality Investment Fund (27) to continue the year-round Residential Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program.

COMMITTEE: Technology, August 20, 2021; Recommended for Approval

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve the use of a total amount not to exceed \$250,000 from the Rule 2202 Air Quality Investment Fund (27) to continue the Residential Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program.

Wayne Nastri
Executive Officer

MMM:AK:WS

Background

In April 2017, the year-round Residential Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program was launched on a first-come, first-served basis. Residents living within the South Coast AQMD jurisdiction can receive a rebate check based on the purchase price of a new, cordless battery-operated electric lawn mower. Residents are required to turn in their fully functional old gasoline-powered lawn mower to a participating dismantler for

permanent destruction. The public has the flexibility of purchasing their electric mower from an extensive list of manufacturer-authorized retailers or dealers, including hardware and home improvement stores, and purchases can be made both online and in-store.

The rebates are based on retail purchase prices and do not include taxes, fees, accessories or delivery charges. The rebates are as follows:

- \$150 for a purchase price of \$250 or less;
- \$200 for a purchase price of \$251 to \$400; and
- \$250 for a purchase price of more than \$400.

Prior to the year-round Residential Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program, South Coast AQMD implemented the Electric Lawn Mower Exchange Program for 14 years, where residents within the four-county region would pre-register and attend events to exchange an operable gasoline-powered lawn mower for the new battery-electric model at a discounted price. To better meet public demand, the Residential Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program was started as a year-round rebate program in April 2017 with Board approval of an initial funding allocation of \$250,000 from the Rule 2202 Air Quality Investment Fund (27). Due to the popularity of the program, two years later in July 2019, the Board approved an additional \$250,000 from the Rule 2202 Air Quality Investment Fund (27) to continue the year-round program.

After four years of implementation, the Residential Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program continues to be a highly popular rebate program with over 30 manufacturers reflecting an ever-growing demand and market competition for cleaner technologies and an increasing public awareness of the availability of these cleaner technologies. To date, nearly 2,200 rebates have been provided with the majority of the applicants purchasing equipment in-store versus online.

Proposal

This action is to approve the use of a total amount not to exceed \$250,000 from the Rule 2202 Air Quality Investment Fund (27) to continue the year-round Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program. This year-round rebate program will continue to provide convenience and flexibility for residents in the South Coast Air Basin, saving on a broad selection of mower brands and price ranges. This rebate program will continue until all funds are expended. Staff may return to the Board to seek approval for additional funds in the future.

Outreach

When the program launched in April 2017, a number of outreach mechanisms were employed. Information was distributed through South Coast AQMD's website, including emails to over 10,000 lawn mower exchange newsletter subscribers. Fliers were printed in English, Chinese, Korean and Spanish highlighting the new rebate

program and online application form, and information was distributed at events throughout the four-county region. Also, a short video on the new online application process was highlighted on South Coast AQMD's webpage. Currently, staff is collaborating with retailers including ACE Hardware and Lowe's, and utility companies such as Southern California Edison, to showcase the benefits of the program and to expand messaging. Lists of both eligible electric lawn mower manufacturers and participating dismantlers are provided on South Coast AQMD's website for easy reference by interested residents.

Benefits to South Coast AQMD

The Residential Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program scraps older gas-powered lawn mowers and replaces them with zero-emission lawn mowers. Since inception in April 2017, the Residential Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program has provided emission reductions in the South Coast Air Basin of approximately 1.2 tons/year VOCs, 0.08 tons/year NOx and 0.05 tons/year PM10. Zero-emission lawn mowers are not required under CARB's small off-road engines regulation, so these are surplus emission reductions for the region.

Resource Impacts

There are sufficient funds in the Rule 2202 Air Quality Investment Fund (27).