

BOARD MEETING DATE: June 2, 2023

AGENDA NO. 4

PROPOSAL: Approve Additional Funding for 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 can apply online for a rebate after scrapping their old gasoline-powered lawnmowers at a participating licensed dismantler. This action is to request an allocation of up to \$250,000 from the Air Quality Investment Fund (27) Rule 2202 funds to continue the year-round Residential Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program.

COMMITTEE: Technology, May 19, 2023; Recommended for Approval

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve an allocation of up to \$250,000 from the Air Quality Investment Fund (27) Rule 2202 funds to continue the Residential Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program.

Wayne Natri
Executive Officer

AK:MW:WS:JYT

Background

In April 2017, the year-round Residential Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program was launched on a first-come, first-served basis. Residents within South Coast AQMD jurisdiction can receive a rebate based on the purchase price of a new, cordless battery-operated electric lawn mower. Residents are required to turn in their fully functional gasoline-powered lawn mowers to a participating dismantler for permanent destruction. The public can purchase electric mowers from an extensive list of manufacturer-authorized retailers or dealers, including hardware and home improvement stores, and purchases can be made online and in-store.

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

The Residential Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program continues to be a highly popular rebate program with over 30 manufacturers now providing electric yard equipment. To date over 3,200 lawn mower rebates have been provided, with the majority of the applicants purchasing equipment in-store versus online. Later this year, staff will be recommending the expansion of the Residential Lawn Mower Rebate Program to include other residential-grade lawn and garden equipment (e.g., leaf blowers and hedge trimmers).

Proposal

This action is to approve the use of a total amount not to exceed \$250,000 from the Air Quality Investment Fund (27) Rule 2202 funds 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 rebate program launched in April 2017, a number of outreach mechanisms were employed. Information is distributed through South Coast AQMD's website, including emails to over 10,000 lawn mower exchange newsletter subscribers. Fliers are distributed at events throughout the region in English, Chinese, Korean and Spanish highlighting the new rebate program and online application form. Also, a short video on the new online application process was highlighted on the South Coast AQMD's webpage. Currently, staff is collaborating with retailers including ACE Hardware, Lowe's, and utility companies such as Southern California Edison, to showcase the benefits of the program and to expand messaging. Finally, a list 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 1.8 tons/year VOCs, 0.11 tons/year NOx and 0.08 tons/year PM10.

Resource Impacts

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