



August 19, 2025

The Honorable Buffy Wicks, Chair
Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Senate Bill 712 (Grove) – Smog Check: exemption – Oppose

Dear Chair Wicks and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the undersigned health and medical organizations, we are writing in opposition to Senate Bill 712 (SB 712, Grove) related to a significant expansion of exemptions from the life-saving California Smog Check program. For decades, the California Smog Check program has delivered meaningful benefits to all Californians. SB 712 is among the latest repeated attempts to create exemptions and loopholes to the smog-check program, prompting strong opposition from health, equity and clean air experts over the years.

Our state remains home to some of the most difficult air pollution challenges in the United States according to the American Lung Association's annual "State of the Air" report. The transportation sector is responsible for approximately 80 percent of smog-forming emissions and approximately half of climate-forcing greenhouse gases, meaning Californians depend on Smog Check and other effective clean air programs to maintain strong progress toward healthier air. Decades of peer-reviewed literature demonstrate the significant and widespread harms of air pollution broadly, and transportation pollution in particular. Breathing unhealthy air can trigger asthma attacks, heart attacks, stroke, developmental impacts on children, impacts on pregnancies and premature deaths. The Health Effects Institute's recent review of hundreds of peer-reviewed studies concluded that transportation-related air pollution is associated with premature death, deaths due to heart disease, lung cancer deaths, onset of asthma in children and adults, respiratory infections in children and other health emergencies.

This is why the California Smog Check program for light-duty vehicles is so important, and why we oppose expanding exemptions as proposed by SB 712. The program benefits the health of the public by ensuring motor vehicles – older and newer – operate within acceptable standards and maintain functional pollution controls. Older vehicles are not held to the same standard as newer vehicles, but are required to operate within stated parameters for emissions, factoring the vehicle's age and vehicle type to ensure that vehicles and emission controls are maintained and operational. The program exempts motor vehicles manufactured prior to the 1976 model year.

Under current policy, collector vehicles are required to meet the criteria for a collector car, to confirm proof of insurance as a collector car and undergo a test of tailpipe emissions for that motor vehicle's class and model year as prescribed by the department, and the motor vehicle must pass functional inspection of the fuel cap and a visual inspection for liquid fuel leaks. Instead of complying with existing age- and collectible-car insurance exemptions from the inspection program, SB 712 would simply exempt any motor vehicle before 1981 and will exempt every model year after that annually up to 1986 if the vehicle is deemed collectible by the owner to secure a special license plate.

This greatly expands the field of exemptions from a life-saving clean air standard. California Air Resources Board data shows a new 1982 passenger car has approximately 97 times higher NOx emissions than a new 2025 model year passenger car. In the current calendar year, assuming the 1982 vehicle complies with Smog Check, it would emit approximately 123 times the NOx emissions of a 2025 passenger car. For comparison, the Volkswagen "Dieselgate" vehicles produced approximately 40 times more smog-forming pollution than emissions standards allowed.

If enacted, SB 712 would undermine the state's Smog Check program and create more harm and cost to human health. Providing an avenue for such extreme levels of excess emissions will harm health, add to our regional air quality attainment challenges, and increase greenhouse gases that cause climate change. We therefore urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 712 to protect health against excess emissions from older vehicles – collectible or not. Please contact William.Barrett@Lung.org for more information.

Sincerely,

Will Barrett
Senior Director, Nationwide Advocacy, Clean Air
American Lung Association

Robert M. Gould, MD
President
San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility

Joel Ervice
Associate Director
Regional Asthma Management and Prevention (RAMP)