

Pilot program opens HOV lanes to select hybrid vehicles



The Arizona Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Division launched a new pilot program in February of this year, qualifying low-emissions, energy-efficient vehicles for a special Alternative Fuel license plate affixed with a Hybrid decal, permitting the driver to use any High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) "carpool" lane in Arizona, regardless of the number of occupants. This pilot program allows specific vehicles to utilize the HOV lanes, reducing travel time for those individuals who drive eligible vehicles. The program is designed to promote energy independence and reduced fuel consumption while supporting improved air quality.

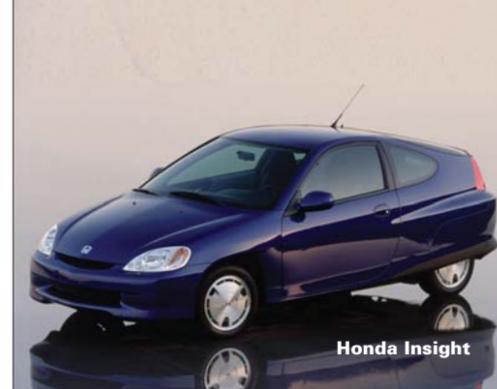
As criteria for eligibility, Arizona has elected that hybrid vehicles with at least 45% fuel efficiency in combined city-highway fuel economy, based on information provided by the US Department of Energy and US Environmental Protection Agency, will qualify for the pilot program. Additional information can be found at www.fueleconomy.gov. For now, just three vehicles (of any model year) meet the criteria: Honda Insight, Toyota Prius and Honda Civic Hybrid.

The state has limited the number of vehicles to keep the pilot program at a maximum of 10,000 participants. This pilot program could be discontinued if there are certain changes in Federal regulations or if the state detects undue degradation of the HOV lanes.

The plate can be ordered online at servicearizona.com or by mail using the Energy Efficient Plate Application (form # 96-0452). This plate is also available with the disability symbol added (to qualified applicants at no additional charge); this can not be ordered online.

Should the pilot program end, a replacement plate will be issued to existing participants and no additional fee will be charged.

For more information, visit the MVD's website, specific to this program, at www.azdot.gov/mvd/vehicle/EnergyEfficient.asp. Included are a complete list of Frequently Asked Questions, a few of which we are included here.



Honda Insight



Toyota Prius



Honda Civic Hybrid

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I participate in the Energy Efficient Plate pilot program?

You must have an eligible vehicle registered or leased in your name, have a current Arizona registration, and order online or by mail.

What vehicles are eligible?

All model years of Honda Insight, Toyota Prius, Honda Civic Hybrid.

Why is my hybrid vehicle not eligible for this pilot program?

All other hybrid vehicles did not achieve a 45% increase in combined city-highway fuel economy and/or they did not meet the Tier II emission levels established under the Clean Air Act.

What benefits do I get from participating in pilot program?

Access to the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes in Arizona, regardless of the number of occupants in the vehicle, giving you savings in gas, money and time.

Will my hybrid vehicle be eligible for the reduced vehicle license tax?

No. Only alternative fuel vehicles and bi-fuel vehicles are eligible for the reduced vehicle license tax.

How will law enforcement know I am eligible to drive in the HOV lane?

Approved applicants will receive an Energy Efficient plate, which is a special Alternative Fuel plate affixed with a Hybrid decal.

Can I personalize my Energy Efficient Plate?

No. For this pilot program, these plates may not be personalized.

If I buy an eligible vehicle, am I automatically enrolled?

No. Once your vehicle is titled and registered you may then submit your application.

What if I sell my vehicle, can I transfer my new plate?

No. You either surrender the plate to MVD within 30 days or submit a Plate Notice, form # 48-3302; your remaining credit will be refunded or transferred to another vehicle.

If I trade a vehicle with Energy Efficient Plate for another eligible vehicle will my plate and fees be transferred?

No. You will need to re-apply for the program. However, if applicable, you may request a refund or transfer your remaining plate credit to another vehicle. ■

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