

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**New Law Limits HOV Use in I-95/395 Corridor
*Clean Special Fuel Vehicles Registered After June 30 Will Not Be Exempt from
HOV Requirements in I-95/395 Corridor; Fees to Increase***

RICHMOND – Consumers need to be aware of changes to the law before purchasing hybrid and other clean special fuel vehicles with the intention of using HOV lanes in the I-95/395 Corridor.

“The most important change affects hybrid purchasers,” said DMV Commissioner D. B. Smit. “They will not be exempt from occupancy requirements in the I-95/395 HOV lanes unless they are registered with DMV on or before June 30, 2006.”

Vehicles registered for clean special fuel license plates on July 1, 2006 or after will not be exempt from the occupancy requirements for the I-95/395 HOV lanes. However, all qualifying vehicles with clean special fuel plates will continue to have access to all other HOV lanes throughout the state, until the general exemption expires on July 1, 2007.

To distinguish between the HOV eligible vehicles, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is creating a new clean special fuel license plate for qualifying vehicles registered July 1, 2006 and after. The new plate, still in development, will bear a distinctly different design to assist Virginia State Police and local authorities with enforcement of the HOV restrictions.



This clean special fuel plate is currently available and will be issued to qualifying vehicles that are registered with clean special fuel plates prior to July 1, 2006. Virginia law exempts qualifying vehicles registered with this plate from the occupancy requirements for all HOV lanes in Virginia.

Vehicles for which application for registration with clean special fuels license plates was made and received by DMV on or before June 30, 2006 will receive the current clean special fuel plate. Those applications made and received July 1, 2006 and after will be issued the new plate,

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regardless of the date the vehicle was purchased or special ordered. Vehicle owners with clean special fuel license plates registered before July 1, 2006 may renew or transfer their plates to a newly purchased qualifying vehicle after the new law takes effect and continue to be exempt from HOV requirements.

Also effective July 1, 2006, the annual fee for all clean special fuel license plates will increase from \$10 to \$25. After registration of the first 1,000 plates, DMV will distribute \$15 of each plate sale to Virginia State Police for HOV enforcement.

The following hybrids qualify for a clean special fuel license plate: Toyota Prius, Honda Insight, Honda Civic, 2005 Ford Escape, 2006 Ford Escape, 2006 Toyota Highlander, 2006 Lexus RX400, 2006 Mercury Mariner, 2007 Camry Hybrid and the 2007 Lexus GS450h. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality certifies clean special fuel vehicles.

Only DMV staff in the Richmond headquarters office can issue, reissue or transfer clean special fuel plates. These transactions cannot be conducted at DMV customer service centers, DMV Select locations, motor vehicle dealerships, or on the Internet.

Applications are available on the DMV web site, <http://www.dmv.virginia.gov/webdoc/citizen/vehicles/cleanspecialfuel.asp>. For more information, call 1-866-DMV-LINE (1-866-368-5463).

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A news conference will be held at the VDOT Smart Traffic Center in Arlington in mid-June. Details coming soon.