



Senator Royce West
District 23

NEWS RELEASE



CAPITOL OFFICE
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, Texas 78711
512/463-0123
FAX 512/463-0299

DISTRICT OFFICE
5787 South Hampton Road, Suite 385
Dallas, Texas 75232
214/467-0123
FAX 214/467-0050

DISTRICT OFFICE
2612 Main Street, Suite 100
Dallas, Texas 75236
214/741-0123
FAX 214/749-7830

www.west.senate.state.tx.us

Friday - August 21, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kelvin Bass

214-467-0123

Still thinking about a new car? Here's a last minute deal for you!

DALLAS -- State Senator Royce West (D-Dallas), says there couldn't be a time better than now for Texans who are looking to purchase a new car. Last month, the federal government kicked off its Car Allowance Rebate System (CARS) program, called *Cash for Clunkers*. The response was phenomenal. In less than two weeks, the initial \$1 billion allocated was nearly spent and Congress had to approve another \$2 billion to meet public demand. It is estimated that nearly a half million car buyers have already taken advantage of the program. But buyers will have to move fast. Due to the overwhelming response, the CARS program will end Monday (8/24). Auto dealers must have applications submitted by 7 p.m. CDT.

"This is good news for Texas drivers who have cashed in on a similar vehicle replacement program enacted by the Texas Legislature in 2007. Since its start, more than 15,000 buyers have taken advantage of the state's program designed to take high-emission autos off the road and that's just from nine North Texas counties," said Senator West. "Statewide, another seven counties are part of the AirCheck Texas or *Drive-A-Clean-Machine* program jointly run by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG)."

Buyers may be able to qualify for both programs. According to TCEQ, "state statutes and rules do not restrict a purchaser from using both the federal CARS credit and the *Drive-A-Clean Machine* voucher in purchasing a replacement vehicle."

If you are eligible for both programs, up to \$8,000 could be available towards the purchase of a new car. Prospective buyers can qualify for \$3,000 to \$3,500 under the state's program. Under CARS, the amounts are \$3,500 or \$4,500.

Though it is possible to qualify for both, guidelines for federal and state programs differ. Texas' plan focuses on lowering emissions, particularly important considering federal air quality standards that rates much of North Texas as a non-attainment area. The federal program centers on fuel efficiency. Trade-ins must average less than 18 mpg combined fuel economy, to qualify under *Cash for Clunkers* standards.

Would-be buyers must also meet income guidelines under the state plan that are set at roughly three times the federal poverty level. For example, a single person's income cannot exceed \$30,630. Add \$10,440 for each additional family member. CARS has no income limits.

“If you're looking to qualify for both programs, your trade-in can only be used to buy a new car,” said Senator West. “While the AirCheck Texas program allows the purchase of a car up to three years old, only new autos can be bought under the federal plan.”

Both federal and state programs place caps on the value of the cars that can be purchased. Vehicles bought using the federal voucher cannot have a sticker price of more than \$45,000. The state program's cap less at \$25,000 for a new or used vehicle.

State lawmakers have appropriated \$21.5 million to TCEQ for the vehicle replacement program for fiscal years 2010 and 2011 that start in September, but new applications can be accepted using available 2009 funding. Other requirements must be met for buyers to take advantage of unprecedented state and federal car programs.

AirCheck Texas may also help you to pay for minor car repairs if the vehicle fails the emissions test, but does not qualify for the vehicle replacement program.

To fill out an application online, go to www.driveacleanmachine.org or www.nctcog.org/airchecktexas. If you have any questions or concerns please call the North Central Texas Council of Governments at 1-8000-898-9103. For more information on Cash for Clunkers, see www.cars.gov.