



Southwest Energy Efficiency Project

March 11, 2003

TO: Colorado House of Representatives Finance Committee Members
FR: Howard Geller, Executive Director, Southwest Energy Efficiency Project
RE: Senate Bill 03-091, Hybrid Vehicles Use HOV Lanes

Dear House Finance Committee Members:

I am writing to express the support of the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEEP) for SB 91, introduced by Senator Ron Tupa, and scheduled for hearing in front of the House Finance Committee on Wednesday, March 12, 2003. SWEEP is a public interest organization working to promote the more efficient use of energy and natural resources, and we see SB 91 as a forward-thinking approach designed to move Colorado toward achieving this goal.

Hybrid-electric vehicles are now at the forefront of personal vehicle technology development. Three hybrid models are currently available for purchase, and as many as eight new models, including hybrid pickup trucks and sport utility vehicles, are expected to hit showroom floors by 2006. Hybrid-electric vehicles get up to twice the fuel economy (MPG) of equivalent conventional vehicles, and are a viable transportation option today, unlike fuel cell vehicles which while promising are still many years away.

Though hybrid-electric vehicle technology is advancing, a January *New York Times* article reported that only 150,000 hybrids have been sold worldwide since their introduction in the late 1990s. By comparison, 17.8 million new vehicles (cars and light-trucks) were purchased in the United States alone in 2000 (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis). While automakers and the buying public have begun to recognize the value of hybrid technology, we still have a ways to go, and legislation like SB 91 will help get us there.

In addition, SB 91 supports the state's efforts to increase its use of alternative fuels in the state fleet, and meets the intentions of the federal mandate requiring Colorado and all states to purchase alternative fuel vehicles. These vehicles help the state do its part in reducing the impacts automobile emissions have on Colorado's air quality.

SB 91 is a common sense approach to supporting hybrid-electric vehicles. It provides an additional perk for purchasers of hybrid technology, and builds nicely upon the state's tax credit incentive program for hybrid vehicles. We urge your support for SB 91.

About SWEEP: The Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEEP) is a public interest organization dedicated to advancing energy efficiency as a means of promoting both economic prosperity and environmental protection in the states of Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. For more information, visit the SWEEP website at www.swenergy.org.