

HVIP and Tesla Semi-Truck Facts



In February, the Los Angeles Times published a [story](#) on Tesla's participation in the [Clean Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project](#) (HVIP) that lacked important context surrounding some of the claims. This is intended to provide that context and correct inaccuracies.

As a first-come, first-served and market-based program, flexibility and simplicity are key factors for HVIP, ultimately incentivizing fleets and owner-operators to choose a zero-emission vehicle that meets their operational needs. Through the request for, and ultimate deployment of, every vehicle, HVIP reduces costs and improves air quality and health for Californians.

FAQ

Q: Did the recent demand for Tesla HVIP vouchers from California trucking fleets result in other vehicles or manufacturers not receiving funding?

A: No. As of April 2026, funding remains available for fleets wishing to purchase any eligible truck or bus. Manufacturers and dealerships are encouraged to continue working with customers to submit new voucher requests and put more zero-emission trucks and buses on California roads.

Q: Did the 2024 model year Tesla Semi-Truck have CARB certification before vouchers were redeemed in the HVIP program?

A: Yes. All vehicles in HVIP are required to be certified by CARB. The 2024 Tesla Semi-Truck was certified prior to funds being redeemed. [The applicable Executive Orders](#) confirming certification are [A-374-0070](#), [A-374-0079](#), and [A-374-0069](#).

Q: Is a vehicle required to have CARB certification before it is available in the HVIP program?

A: Yes, HVIP guidelines require a vehicle to obtain CARB certification to meet vehicle eligibility requirements before availability in HVIP. No HVIP voucher can be redeemed without CARB certification. HVIP requires a manufacturer to update vehicle certification for subsequent model years. Vouchers can be redeemed for new model year vehicles by obtaining the new model year CARB certification and passing HVIP manufacturer eligibility review for the subsequent MY.

Q: What happens if a vehicle fails to obtain CARB certification as part of the HVIP program?

A: If a vehicle fails to obtain CARB certification, it cannot be legally introduced into commerce in California. Thus, it becomes ineligible for funding in the HVIP program. Voucher allocation for that vehicle will be returned to the HVIP funding pool to be reallocated.

Q: Did CARB change data on the HVIP website after the Los Angeles Times inquired for their story to reflect lower funding amounts for Tesla?

A: The HVIP website data is constantly being updated by CARB's program administrator, [CALSTART](#), to reflect the current numbers and status of the program. The LA Times story suggested officials initially reserved the maximum eligible incentive amount for Tesla voucher requests — higher than the retail price — and later revised the data to exclude local port funding, thereby creating the appearance that Tesla received significantly less funding. HVIP guidelines actually prohibit total combined incentives from exceeding 90% of the vehicle's base price.

Far from representing something drastic, the changing HVIP incentive amounts on the website are an example of the careful CARB oversight administered on a daily basis. HVIP operates through a standardized, automated voucher reservation system. When a dealer submits a voucher request, the system automatically assigns the maximum eligible incentive amount for that vehicle category. This is not a final award; it serves as a placeholder while the application undergoes administrative review. This is essential to reserve sufficient funding to support the voucher until a detailed review is complete.

During the review, staff verify eligibility, confirm supporting documentation, and ensure compliance with all program requirements. If the amount that was automatically reserved, plus identified additional incentive co-funding, exceeds 90% of the vehicle's base price, it is adjusted downward. The difference is immediately returned to the available funding pool.

Since reopening in September 2025, HVIP has received approximately 2,000 voucher requests, which are being reviewed sequentially. As reviews are completed and adjustments are made, the publicly available voucher map and funding tracker update accordingly. Any changes in displayed totals reflect routine administrative reconciliation and compliance verification — not retroactive reductions or discretionary revisions.

Q: Why did CARB introduce a “soft cap” for manufacturers in the HVIP program?

A: The Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) “soft cap” was originally established in 2020 as a rolling limit on the number of vouchers that can be assigned to any single manufacturer, with the goal of improving funding availability across manufacturers and encouraging timely vehicle delivery. The soft cap ended up unintentionally limiting vehicle choices for trucking companies. After several public meetings, CARB eliminated the soft cap in 2023 to allow market forces to determine adoption and enable fleets to select the vehicles that best meet their operational needs without artificial constraints. Rather than relying on a rigid funding ceiling, the program shifted to an ad hoc manufacturer performance review process, developed through the public workgroup process, using measurable delivery metrics — such as vehicle delivery percentages — and identifying corrective actions if necessary.

In place of the former OEM soft cap, CARB implemented a fleet-based cap to ensure equitable access to limited HVIP funds and encourage fast delivery. Specifically, HVIP established a rolling limit of 20 open vouchers per fleet; as vouchers are redeemed, fleets may reserve additional vouchers within that cap.

Q: Does CARB determine how much HVIP funding will be allocated to each manufacturer or to specific vehicle models?

A: The HVIP allocation process is driven by the fleets, not by CARB, manufacturers or dealers. Fleets independently select the manufacturer and product that best meet their operational needs. Manufacturers and dealers cannot request vouchers for speculative or future sales; vouchers are only available for bona fide transactions supported by a signed purchase order. The process begins when a fleet customer, working with an authorized HVIP dealer to place an order, executes a purchase agreement. Only then may the dealer submit a voucher request on the fleet's behalf.

Q: How many HVIP vouchers have been requested for the Tesla Semi-Truck in the current funding window?

A. From the September 2025 HVIP reopening through March 31, 2026, 89 fleets have submitted purchase orders through HVIP for 1,095 Tesla Semi-Trucks. HVIP remains open to any authorized dealer with a valid purchase order seeking to submit a voucher request.

Q: What vehicle factors are most important to fleets applying for HVIP vouchers?

A: Fleets have indicated that cost and range are top considerations when choosing an HVIP-eligible fleet vehicle.

Q: Is there a process in place that ensures HVIP funds are allocated responsibly and according to program guidelines?

A: HVIP funds are only disbursed after full verification that both the vehicle and the fleet meet all program requirements. Voucher funds are not paid at the time of reservation. Funds are only released after a comprehensive review confirming vehicle eligibility, proper certification, compliance with incentive limits, proof of purchase, vehicle delivery and registration, and fleet eligibility documentation. HVIP staff verify that the vehicle delivered matches the approved configuration and that all program conditions — including price caps and fund stacking limitations — are satisfied. If documentation is incomplete or requirements are not met, payment is withheld until deficiencies are resolved. This structured verification process ensures fiscal accountability, program integrity, and compliance with statutory and funding guidelines before any public funds are disbursed.