



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Valley CAN and the State of California issue  
preloaded, reloadable contactless debit cards for  
low-income EV owners to use at any charging station**

August 1, 2022, Sacramento, CA — One hundred low-income electric vehicle (EV) owners in the San Joaquin Valley are receiving reloadable contactless debit cards to use at EV charging stations as part of a demonstration project launched today by Valley Clean Air Now (Valley CAN) and the State of California.

Funded by the California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz), this nine-month Universal ZEV (Zero-Emission Vehicle) Equity Charging Card demonstration project plans to increase equitable access to EV charging stations and help remove barriers to EV ownership while building off the efforts of Valley CAN, a non-profit organization that works to improve air quality and quality of life in disadvantaged communities in the San Joaquin Valley, stretching from Lodi to Bakersfield.

"Valley CAN is committed to reducing carbon emissions in our region, which has some of the worst air quality in the United States," says Tom Knox, Executive Director of Valley CAN. "We know the average EV driver saves money by driving electric, from lower fuel costs to lower repair and maintenance costs. But not everyone can install a charging station at home. Helping our EV-owning low-income residents access the public EV charging infrastructure with a prepaid

contactless debit card is an equitable way to ensure the success of Drive Clean in the San Joaquin and Clean Cars 4 All.”

The initial participants purchased their EV through the Valley Air District’s [Drive Clean in the San Joaquin](#) vehicle replacement program and qualify for the state’s \$1,000 EV public charging credit—funds that could be used for installing a residential charger or for using public charging stations, but only if a participant has a contactless bank card that works at any charging station. Valley CAN is sending each participant a Mastercard debit card—preloaded with \$50 in charging credit—issued by Prepaid Technologies. Each card is reloaded with an additional \$50 per week, up to a total of \$1,000 in benefits, and carries a maximum balance of \$250 at any time.

“The Universal ZEV Equity Charging Card demonstration project bridges the equity gap, enabling participants to have more choice and convenience in how they receive their state benefits as an EV owner,” says Gia Vacin, Assistant Deputy Director of ZEV Market Development with GO-Biz. “Each EV helps us reach the state’s goals of 5 million ZEVs on California roads by 2030 and 100% of new cars sales by 2035; a healthy, equitable used ZEV market is also key to achieving these.”

As the implementing agency of the California Air Resources Board’s (CARB’s) successful Clean Cars 4 All initiative to take older gas-powered vehicles off the road, the Valley Air District works with program administrator Valley CAN to match low-income residents with up to \$9,500 toward the purchase of a used plug-in battery electric vehicle (BEV) or plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV). To qualify for Clean Cars for All, an applicant’s household income must be at or below 400% of federal poverty level.

Drive Clean in the San Joaquin is one program under the state’s Clean Cars 4 All program. Clean Cars 4 All is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide initiative that puts billions of cap-and-trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy and improving public health and the environment, and providing meaningful benefits to the most disadvantaged communities, low-income communities, and low-income households.

Caltrans’ California Integrated Travel Project (Cal-ITP)—a statewide initiative to ensure that all Californians have access to mobility options and a contactless open-loop way to pay for them using a credit or debit card or mobile wallet—serves as project manager for this demonstration, having successfully led contactless open-loop payment demonstrations with public transit agencies in Monterey-Salinas, Sacramento, and Santa Barbara County.

The contactless debit cards help fill a gap for the more than a quarter of Californians who do not have a bank account (unbanked) or do not regularly use checks, debit, or credit cards for purchases (underbanked)—and would have no easy way to pay at EV charging stations. In 2019, 7% of California residents were estimated to be unbanked and 19% were estimated to be underbanked, statistics that mirror the national average of 25% of U.S. residents being unbanked or underbanked. Cal-ITP has been developing an approach to providing payment accounts to underbanked and unbanked Californians, effectively using the need to pay for EV charging as well as public transit as a catalyst for addressing financial inclusion in low-income and other target communities.

“As the state transitions to more secure contactless payment technologies, it is important that access and support during this transition is equitable. Our goal is to unlock this market, helping set the standard that contactless bank cards can be the payment method for all, including 10.3 million unbanked and underbanked California residents,” says Caltrans California Integrated Mobility Program Manager Gillian Gillett, who leads Cal-ITP. “The demand and the need are evident, and we’re excited to be working with payment solutions program managers and financial services companies to meet these needs for all Californians.”

“At Prepaid Technologies, we’re focused on helping our customers solve their payments challenges,” said Stephen Faust, CEO, Prepaid Technologies. “We’re proud to partner with Mastercard to provide Valley CAN a financially inclusive, contactless payment solution for these EV owners.”

Funding for this project is a part of the state’s \$5 million investment from the 2021–’22 budget meant to accelerate implementation of the ZEV Market Development Strategy, which focuses on increasing awareness and access to ZEVs in the hardest to reach communities and expanding tools that help convert this awareness into decisions to drive or ride in ZEVs. In total, California is investing more than \$10 billion to expand ZEV access and affordability and support the build-out of infrastructure across the state.

For more information about this demonstration project, contact [Alexander.Guendulain@valleycan.org](mailto:Alexander.Guendulain@valleycan.org).

## **About this demonstration project’s stakeholders**

### **Valley CAN**

Valley Clean Air Now (Valley CAN), is a 501(c)(3) public charity committed to quantifiably reducing air emissions in California’s San Joaquin Valley, an eight-county region with the worst air quality in the United States. Valley CAN seeks to improve public health and quality of life in disadvantaged communities by qualifying low-income residents for multiple incentive-based programs, including vehicle repair and replacement programs that aim to reduce air pollution, address climate issues, and reduce transportation costs. In 10 years, Valley CAN has helped 110,000 valley families repair and replace cars. [valleycan.org](http://valleycan.org)

### **GO-Biz**

The Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) serves as the State of California’s leader for job growth, economic development, and business assistance efforts. GO-Biz has a team dedicated to cultivating opportunities that accelerate zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) market growth to meet the state’s ambitious climate goals and deliver benefits to all Californians. You can follow the GO-Biz ZEV team’s efforts by [subscribing to their newsletter](#), following [@CAGoBiz](#) on Twitter, and searching for #GOBiz across social media platforms. [business.ca.gov/zev](http://business.ca.gov/zev)

### **CARB**

The mission of the California Air Resources Board (CARB) is to promote and protect public health, welfare, and ecological resources through effective reduction of air pollutants while recognizing and considering effects on the economy. CARB is the lead agency for climate change programs and oversees all air pollution control efforts in California to attain and maintain

health-based air quality standards. Learn more about [Clean Cars 4 All](#) and [California Climate Investments](#).

### **Cal-ITP**

The California Integrated Travel Project (Cal-ITP) was established by the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to both improve and encourage the use of multimodal travel throughout California—by enabling contactless open-loop payments, automating customer discounts, and standardizing information for easy multimodal trip planning. Learn more at [calitp.org](http://calitp.org) and on [@California\\_ITP](#) on Twitter, or by subscribing to the [Caltrans Mobility Newsletter](#). And visit Cal-ITP's [CAMobilityMarketplace.org](http://CAMobilityMarketplace.org) for a catalog of code-compliant products and services for public mobility providers, including contactless payment acceptance hardware and software.

### **Prepaid Technologies**

Founded and based in Birmingham, Alabama, Prepaid Technologies is a fintech solution and payments program manager with thousands of customers, providing innovative digital payment solutions, driven by a proprietary technology stack, including payroll, expense, gift, reward, and incentive card products to employers, financial institutions, and government agencies. Prepaid Technologies goes to market under the product suite name of Dash. Learn more at [in-prepaid.com](http://in-prepaid.com).

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