

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE
45 Fremont Street, 21st Floor
San Francisco, California 94105**

REG-2011-00003

March 15, 2011

**NOTICE OF PROPOSED ACTION AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
REGARDING LOW COST AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE RATES**

SUBJECT OF HEARING

California Insurance Commissioner Dave Jones will hold a public hearing to consider an adjustment to rates for the California Low Cost Automobile Insurance program.

Insurance Code Section 11629.72(c) provides that, annually, the California Automobile Assigned Risk Plan ("CAARP") shall submit to the Commissioner a proposed Low Cost Automobile rate and surcharge schedule for approval. Accordingly, CAARP submitted its 2011 rate recommendation on January 6, 2011, proposing an overall average rate decrease of 6.2%.

Currently, the annual premiums for the liability policy, by county, are \$314 for Alameda, \$264 for Alpine, \$264 for Amador, \$277 for Butte, \$264 for Calaveras, \$277 for Colusa, \$314 for Contra Costa, \$277 for Del Norte, \$264 for El Dorado, \$248 for Fresno, \$277 for Glenn, \$277 for Humboldt, \$264 for Imperial, \$264 for Inyo, \$264 for Kern, \$248 for Kings, \$277 for Lake, \$277 for Lassen, \$358 for Los Angeles, \$248 for Madera, \$314 for Marin, \$264 for Mariposa, \$277 for Mendocino, \$248 for Merced, \$277 for Modoc, \$264 for Mono, \$248 for Monterey, \$277 for Napa, \$264 for Nevada, \$358 for Orange, \$264 for Placer, \$277 for Plumas, \$264 for Riverside, \$314 for Sacramento, \$248 for San Benito, \$264 for San Bernardino, \$264 for San Diego, \$314 for San Francisco, \$314 for San Joaquin, \$248 for San Luis Obispo, \$314 for San Mateo, \$248 for Santa Barbara, \$314 for Santa Clara, \$248 for Santa Cruz, \$277 for Shasta, \$264 for Sierra, \$277 for Siskiyou, \$277 for Solano, \$277 for Sonoma, \$314 for Stanislaus, \$314 for Sutter, \$277 for Tehama, \$277 for Trinity, \$248 for Tulare, \$264 for Tuolumne, \$264 for Ventura, \$277 for Yolo and \$264 for Yuba. A 25 percent surcharge is added to the base rate for unmarried male drivers ages 19 through 24 years of age.

Annual premiums for optional uninsured motorists coverage, by county, are currently \$36 for Alameda, \$37 for Alpine, \$37 for Amador, \$21 for Butte, \$37 for Calaveras, \$21 for Colusa, \$36 for Contra Costa, \$21 for Del Norte, \$37 for El Dorado, \$33 for Fresno, \$21 for Glenn, \$21 for Humboldt, \$37 for Imperial, \$37 for Inyo, \$37 for Kern, \$33 for Kings, \$21 for Lake, \$21 for Lassen, \$67 for Los Angeles, \$33 for Madera, \$36 for Marin, \$37 for Mariposa, \$21 for Mendocino, \$33 for Merced, \$21 for Modoc, \$37 for Mono, \$33 for Monterey, \$21 for Napa, \$37 for Nevada, \$67 for Orange, \$37 for Placer,

\$21 for Plumas, \$37 for Riverside, \$36 for Sacramento, \$33 for San Benito, \$37 for San Bernardino, \$37 for San Diego, \$36 for San Francisco, \$36 for San Joaquin, \$33 for San Luis Obispo, \$36 for San Mateo, \$33 for Santa Barbara, \$36 for Santa Clara, \$33 for Santa Cruz, \$21 for Shasta, \$37 for Sierra, \$21 for Siskiyou, \$21 for Solano, \$21 for Sonoma, \$36 for Stanislaus, \$36 for Sutter, \$21 for Tehama, \$21 for Trinity, \$33 for Tulare, \$37 for Tuolumne, \$37 for Ventura, \$21 for Yolo and \$37 for Yuba.

For optional medical payments coverage, by county, premiums are currently \$35 for Alameda, \$25 for Alpine, \$25 for Amador, \$27 for Butte, \$25 for Calaveras, \$27 for Colusa, \$35 for Contra Costa, \$27 for Del Norte, \$25 for El Dorado, \$27 for Fresno, \$27 for Glenn, \$27 for Humboldt, \$25 for Imperial, \$25 for Inyo, \$25 for Kern, \$27 for Kings, \$27 for Lake, \$27 for Lassen, \$42 for Los Angeles, \$27 for Madera, \$35 for Marin, \$25 for Mariposa, \$27 for Mendocino, \$27 for Merced, \$27 for Modoc, \$25 for Mono, \$27 for Monterey, \$27 for Napa, \$25 for Nevada, \$42 for Orange, \$25 for Placer, \$27 for Plumas, \$25 for Riverside, \$35 for Sacramento, \$27 for San Benito, \$25 for San Bernardino, \$25 for San Diego, \$35 for San Francisco, \$35 for San Joaquin, \$27 for San Luis Obispo, \$35 for San Mateo, \$27 for Santa Barbara, \$35 for Santa Clara, \$27 for Santa Cruz, \$27 for Shasta, \$25 for Sierra, \$27 for Siskiyou, \$27 for Solano, \$27 for Sonoma, \$35 for Stanislaus, \$35 for Sutter, \$27 for Tehama, \$27 for Trinity, \$27 for Tulare, \$25 for Tuolumne, \$25 for Ventura, \$27 for Yolo and \$25 for Yuba.

In its rate recommendation for 2011, CAARP has proposed to decrease rates for the liability, optional uninsured motorist and medical payments coverages referenced above. On average, CAARP's proposal would lower rates by 6.2%. The Commissioner will consider the current rates and CAARP's rate proposal and hereby invites public input regarding CAARP's proposal. Premium rates are specified in the program's Plan of Operations, approved by the Commissioner. California Code of Regulations, Title 10, Chapter 5, Section 2498.6 references this plan.

AUTHORITY TO ADOPT RATES AND REFERENCE

Authority for the promulgation of rates is vested in the Insurance Commissioner pursuant to California Insurance Code Sections 11620, 11624, 11629.7, 11629.72, and 11629.79. Premium rates are referenced in Section 27 and Exhibit E of the Program's Plan of Operations. The proposed regulation implements, interprets, and makes specific Insurance Code sections 11629.72 and 11629.79. Government Code Section 11340.9(g) applies to this proceeding.

HEARING DATE AND LOCATION

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held to permit all interested persons the opportunity to present statements or arguments, orally or in writing, with respect to the proposed rates at the following date, time, and place:

Date and Time: **May 11, 2011**
 10:00 a.m.

Location: **45 Fremont Street**
 22nd Floor Hearing Room
 San Francisco, California 94105

ACCESS TO HEARING ROOM

The facilities to be used for the public hearing are accessible to persons with mobility impairments. Persons with sight or hearing impairments are requested to notify the contact person (listed below) for this hearing in order to make special arrangements, if necessary.

WRITTEN AND/OR ORAL COMMENTS: AGENCY CONTACT PERSON

All persons are invited to submit written comments to the Insurance Commissioner on the proposed rates prior to the public comment deadline. Comments should be addressed to the contact person for this proceeding:

Bryant Henley, Senior Staff Counsel
California Department of Insurance
Legal Division
300 Capitol Mall, 17th floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
Bryant.Henley@insurance.ca.gov
Telephone: (916) 492-3558
Facsimile: (916) 324-1883

The backup agency contact person for this proceeding will be:

Mike Riordan, Staff Counsel
California Department of Insurance
Legal Division
45 Fremont Street, 21st Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
Mike.Riordan@insurance.ca.gov
Telephone: (415) 538-4226
Facsimile: (415) 904-5490

All persons are invited to present oral and/or written testimony at the scheduled public hearing.

DEADLINE FOR WRITTEN COMMENTS

All written materials, unless submitted at the hearing, must be **received** by the Insurance Commissioner at the address listed above **no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 11, 2011**. Any written materials received after that time will not be considered. Written comments may also be submitted to the contact person by e-mail and facsimile transmission. Written comments shall be submitted by one method only.

ADVOCACY OR WITNESS FEES

Persons or groups representing the interest of consumers may be entitled to reasonable advocacy fees, witness fees, and other reasonable expenses, in accordance with the provisions of California Code of Regulations, Title 10, Sections 2662.1-2662.6 in connection with their participation in this matter. Interested persons must submit a Petition to Participate, as specified in California Code of Regulations, Title 10, Section 2661.4. The Petition to Participate must be submitted to the Commissioner at the Office of the Public Advisor at the following address:

California Department of Insurance
Office of the Public Advisor
45 Fremont Street, 21st Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
Telephone: (415) 538-4190

A copy of the Petition to Participate must also be submitted to the contact person for this hearing (listed above). For further information, please contact the Office of the Public Advisor.

INFORMATIVE DIGEST/POLICY STATEMENT OVERVIEW

California Insurance Code Sections 11629.7 through 11629.85 establish, within the California Automobile Assigned Risk Plan, authorized by Section 11620 of the Insurance Code, a statewide Low Cost Automobile Insurance Program.

Because the program is established and administered through the California Automobile Assigned Risk Plan ("CAARP"), CAARP procedures are applied where appropriate and consistent with the low cost automobile insurance statutes. Insurance Code Sections 11620 and 11624 require the Commissioner to hold a public hearing before amending assigned risk plan rates.

Section 11629.7 of the Insurance Code requires that, after a public hearing, the Commissioner shall approve or issue a reasonable plan for the equitable apportionment, among insurers, of eligible consumers. The plan also contains rules and rates. This plan,

approved by the Commissioner, is referenced in Title 10, Section 2498.6 of the California Code of Regulations.

Under the program, the low-cost auto policy satisfies financial responsibility laws and provides coverage of \$10,000 for liability for bodily injury or death to one person, subject to a cumulative limit of \$20,000 for all persons in one accident, and \$3,000 for liability for damage to property. In addition to eligibility and other requirements, the statute sets forth the annual premium rates. In certain cases, surcharges are added to the base rate. The statute also provides procedures for adjusting the rates.

Insurance Code Section 11629.72(c) provides that, annually, CAARP shall submit to the Commissioner a proposed rate and surcharge for approval. Accordingly, CAARP has submitted a proposal to reduce overall the current rates for the liability policy and optional coverages and further proposes to maintain the 25 percent surcharge rate. Further details appear in the application on file with the Commissioner, which is available for review as set forth below.

COMPARABLE FEDERAL LAW

There are no comparable existing federal regulations or statutes.

LOCAL MANDATE DETERMINATION

The Insurance Commissioner has initially determined that the proposal will not result in any new program mandates on local agencies or school districts.

COST OR SAVINGS TO STATE OR LOCAL AGENCIES/SCHOOL DISTRICTS /FEDERAL FUNDING

The Insurance Commissioner has initially determined that the proposal will not result in any cost or significant savings to any state agency or to any local agency or school district for which Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of the Government Code would require reimbursement, or in other nondiscretionary costs or savings to local agencies. Nor will the proposal affect federal funding to the state.

SIGNIFICANT STATEWIDE ADVERSE ECONOMIC IMPACT ON BUSINESSES AND THE ABILITY OF CALIFORNIA BUSINESSES TO COMPETE

Because the proposal involves rates for private passenger automobiles, the Insurance Commissioner has initially determined that the proposal will not have a significant statewide adverse economic impact directly affecting businesses, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states. This proposal will have no effect on the creation or elimination of jobs in California, the creation of new businesses, the elimination of existing businesses in California, or the expansion of businesses in California.

COST IMPACT ON PRIVATE PERSONS OR ENTITIES

The Insurance Commissioner has initially determined that the proposal will not impact businesses, but will have a potential cost impact on private persons directly affected.

IMPACT ON HOUSING COSTS

The Insurance Commissioner has initially determined that the proposal will not affect housing costs.

EFFECT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

The Insurance Commissioner has initially determined that the proposal will have minimal, if any, effect on small businesses and invites comments.

SPECIFIC TECHNOLOGIES OR EQUIPMENT

The proposal would not mandate the use of specific technologies or equipment.

ALTERNATIVES

The Insurance Commissioner must determine that no reasonable alternative considered by the agency, or that has otherwise been identified and brought to the attention of the agency, would be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the action is proposed or would be as effective as and less burdensome to affected private persons than the proposed action.

The agency invites interested persons to present statements or arguments with respect to the proposed rate, or other alternatives, at the scheduled hearing or during the written comment period.

PLAIN ENGLISH

The rate application describing the proposal is in plain English. However, the application itself is based on technical actuarial principles.

TEXT AND INITIAL STATEMENT OF REASONS

The Department has prepared an Initial Statement of Reasons addressing the rate proposal, in addition to the Informative Digest included in this notice. The Initial Statement of Reasons, the text of regulations, and all the information upon which this proposal is based are available for inspection or copying, and will be provided at no charge upon request to a contact person listed above. Further details of CAARP's rate application are on file with the Commissioner and available for review as set forth below.

QUESTIONS REGARDING REGULATIONS / ACCESS TO RULEMAKING FILE

Any interested person may inspect a copy of the proposed rate application. **By prior appointment**, CAARP's Low Cost Automobile rate application is available for inspection at the public viewing rooms at 45 Fremont Street, 22nd Floor, San Francisco, California 94105 by calling (415) 538-4300, and at the Ronald Reagan State Building, 300 South Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013 by calling (213) 346-6707 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Interested persons may direct questions about the proposed rate application, the statement of reasons, and any supplemental information contained in the rulemaking file by contacting the contact person listed above. **By prior appointment**, the rulemaking file is available for inspection at 45 Fremont, 21st Floor, San Francisco, California 94105 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

AVAILABILITY OF MODIFIED TEXT OF REGULATION

In response to public comment, the Commissioner may determine that changes to the proposal are appropriate. If those changes are sufficiently related to the original text that the public had adequate notice of the proposal, as amended, copies of the amended text will be sent to all persons who testified or presented comments at the public hearing or submitted written comments during the comment period, and to anyone who requested information regarding the proposal. Thereafter, the Commissioner will accept written comments, arguments, evidence and testimony, concerning the changes only, for a period of at least 15 days prior to adoption.

FINAL STATEMENT OF REASONS

Once prepared, the Final Statement of Reasons will be made available through the contact persons listed above.

AUTOMATIC MAILING

A copy of this Notice, including the Informative Digest, is being sent to all persons on the Insurance Commissioner's mailing list.

AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS ON THE INTERNET

Documents concerning this proceeding are available on the Department's website. To access them, go to <http://www.insurance.ca.gov>. On the right-hand column of the page, click the drop-down menu under the heading 'For Insurers.' In this section, scroll down until you see the subheading 'Regulations.' Below this subheading, click on the 'Proposed Regulations' link and then click on the 'Search for Proposed Regulations' link. When the 'Search or Browse for Documents for Proposed Regulations' screen appears, you may choose to find the documents either by conducting a search or by browsing for them by name.

To search, enter "REG-2011-00003" (the Department's regulation file number for these regulations) in the 'Search for' field. Alternatively, search using as your search term the California Insurance Code number of a code section that the regulations implement (for instance, "11624"), or search by keyword ("low cost," for example). Then, click on the 'Submit' button to display links to the various filing documents.

To browse, click on the 'Browse All Regulations' button near the bottom of the screen. A list of the names of regulations for which documents are posted will appear. Find in the list the 'California Low Cost Auto. Insurance Rates: 2011' link, and click it. Links to the documents associated with these regulations will then be displayed.

DAVE JONES
Insurance Commissioner

Dated: March 15, 2011

By: 

Bryant Henley
Senior Staff Counsel