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Early Finalization of the 2025 Hydrogen Vehicle Subsidy Guidelines

- Revision of subsidy guidelines to encourage the distribution of high-performance hydrogen buses and expansion of maintenance centers
- Distribution of over 1,000 hydrogen buses in 2024, a 277% growth compared to the previous year, with 721.8 billion won allocated for hydrogen vehicle distribution in 2025

The Ministry of Environment (Minister Kim Wansup) announced that it has finalized the “Guidelines for Subsidy Management for the 2025 Hydrogen Electric Vehicle Distribution Project” as of January 2 and will promote the hydrogen car distribution support project for 2025.

The Ministry of Environment has been restructuring the subsidy system every year, taking into account the budgeting for hydrogen car subsidies and social demands for subsidies.

The Ministry of Environment achieved a significant result in 2024 by distributing over 1,000 hydrogen buses (a 277% increase compared to the previous year) through a hydrogen vehicle distribution policy focused on commercial vehicles. However, the distribution of hydrogen passenger cars that year was sluggish due to expectations of new car releases, and demands for improved performance and safety of hydrogen buses were continuously raised.

In response, the Ministry of Environment has restructured the 2025 subsidy guidelines as follows to expand the distribution of hydrogen vehicles and enhance the performance and safety of hydrogen buses.

First, the confirmed budget of KRW 721.8 billion for hydrogen vehicle distribution in 2025 has been reflected in the guidelines. Accordingly, the purchase of 2,000 hydrogen buses, 11,000 hydrogen passenger cars, and 10

hydrogen cargo trucks, and 10 hydrogen cleaning vehicles will be supported. In addition, in terms of enhancing the safety and maintenance support of the hydrogen buses being prioritized for distribution, replacement costs for 118 hydrogen fuel cells (stacks) that have exceeded their warranty period will also be supported.

Second, in anticipation of diversifying hydrogen bus models, the distribution of high-performance vehicles will be encouraged. To this end, the performance evaluation criteria for hydrogen buses, which were newly established in August in 2024, will be applied in earnest. In the future, purchase subsidies will only be granted to vehicles that meet a total of 11 performance evaluation criteria for hydrogen buses, including hydrogen fuel cell (stack) output and driving range per charge.

Even if the performance evaluation criteria are met, if the hydrogen fuel cell (stack) output and driving range per charge are below certain thresholds, the subsidy will be reduced.

* (For stack output) If the low-floor bus is below 110 kW or the high-floor bus is below 160 kW, the purchase subsidy will be reduced by 600,000 won per kW.

(For driving range per charge) If the low-floor bus is below 750 km or the high-floor bus is below 960 km, the subsidy will be reduced by 60,000 won per km.

Third, to ensure prompt repairs and safety checks of hydrogen buses, hydrogen bus manufacturers will be required to expand hydrogen bus maintenance centers and provide emergency on-site services. Hydrogen bus manufacturers must establish at least one hydrogen bus maintenance center in every area where they distribute hydrogen buses. When distributing more than 100 hydrogen buses in the same area, they must have at least two centers, and when distributing more than 500 buses, they must install and operate at least three maintenance centers.

The Ministry of Environment plans to publish the subsidy guidelines containing the details of the revised hydrogen vehicle subsidy plan, which has been recently finalized, on the Zero-Emission Vehicle Integrated Website (www.ev.or.kr) starting January 2.

In addition, the Ministry of Environment will accelerate the construction of hydrogen charging stations to alleviate the inconvenience of charging hydrogen vehicles. In 2024, 86 hydrogen charging stations were established (with a cumulative total of 242 stations and 386 units), and in particular, 62 dedicated hydrogen chargers for commercial vehicles were installed (11 liquefied stations with 34 units and 11 gaseous stations with 28 units) to expand the charging infrastructure needed for the distribution of hydrogen buses. In 2025, an increased budget of KRW 196.3 billion will be invested to install more than 64 hydrogen charging stations (with a target of over 450 cumulative stations by 2025). In addition, plans will be actively considered to convert existing compressed natural gas (CNG) charging stations into hydrogen charging stations or expand hydrogen charging stations at public garages, focusing on promoting the distribution of hydrogen buses in the metropolitan area.

Oh Il-young, the Director General of Air Quality Policy Bureau at the Ministry of Environment, stated, “In 2025, we plan to continue the increasing trend in the distribution of hydrogen buses in 2025 by early finalizing the hydrogen vehicle subsidy guidelines.” He added, “We will continue our efforts to expand the hydrogen vehicle ecosystem by collaborating with local governments and the private sector to continually discover new demand for hydrogen vehicles and enhance the convenience of hydrogen vehicle charging.”