

# DRIVING FORCE

FALL 2019 | [semaSAN.com](http://semaSAN.com)



**FRONT PLATES  
TELL ALL!**



# Drill, Baby Drill

Single License Plates a Unifying Issue for Enthusiasts

For most of the country's automotive enthusiasts, drilling holes into the front bumper of their prized possession is both a sad and unavoidable occurrence. To them, the legal mandate to equip a license plate on their front bumper is like painting a mustache on the Mona Lisa. While many associate this dilemma with classic cars, many of their modern counterparts are also adversely impacted. The fact is, a great number of cars and trucks simply weren't designed with forward-facing license plates in mind, including the recent Mustangs, Challengers, Corvettes and even Teslas to name a few. Fortunately for fans of these models, an ever-growing legislative trend could make their bumpers whole again.

In any given year, the SEMA Action Network (SAN) seeks to impact hundreds of legislative proposals, however, no topic garners more consistent grassroots enthusiasm at the state level than single-plate license proposals. Single, rear-mounted plates are one of the rare issues that resonate with all types of enthusiasts—from antique collectors and street rodders to modern exotic and musclecar fans. These niches of the hobby are unified by a passion to protect the appearance and behavior of specialty vehicles. While influencing the legislative process may often seem unapproachable, the popularity of single plate proposals stems in part because they present a simple and easy to articulate legislative solution: 50 states with 50 single plates.

License plates—the number and types of plates issued—are regulated at the state level. As of the beginning of this year, passenger vehicles in 32 of the 50 states and the District of Columbia are required to display two license plates. Fortunately, 2019 represented the start of a new legislative session, with hundreds of

fresh faces in statehouses. This has led to a push to enact single-plate laws across the country. In fact, a record 10 states have considered legislative proposals aimed at the single-plate issue.

The biggest legislative success for removing front plates this year came in Ohio, where allies were found in the state capitol. Each year Ohio's legislature is tasked with passing an omnibus transportation budget bill that determines everything from the gas tax rate to highway infrastructure spending improvements. Despite being a long shot, the single license-plate provision was offered for inclusion in the final bill—and ultimately accepted! Starting in 2020, the around 5 million vehicles driven on the Ohio roadways will no longer need a front plate.

Ohio wasn't the only state seeking to get in on the action. A slew of bills attempted to remove the requirement to display a front plate on all passenger vehicles. Single-plate legislation in Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Texas and Utah failed to pass earlier this year. Sadly, none of these states saw their proposals gain serious traction before running out of gas. The good news? Motorists in the province of New Brunswick are no longer required to display a front plate on passenger vehicles and light trucks. The pro-hobby rule took effect July 15, 2019. With sessions winding down coast-to-coast, single-plate advocates may have to wait until next year for more legislative victories.

While many state legislatures were considering a transition from two plates to one, New Mexico was the lone state to consider going in the opposite direction. After the flooding of fierce opposition to the addition of a front plate, the bill failed to receive any consideration on the House floor and was killed as the session concluded in March. This is the second year in a row that New Mexico legislators attempted to institute a front-plate mandate



**Automotive enthusiasts overwhelmingly favor single, rear-mounted license plates that do not interfere with the performance or styling of their favorite ride.**

only to discover they had severely underestimated the popularity of the current policy.

One of the most interesting developments in the past year has been the rise in the number of states looking into a single-plate exemption for specialty vehicles. The major advantage of these compromise bills is that they drum up less opposition from detractors and thus stand a greater likelihood of becoming law. In 2016, Nebraska passed a law allowing owners of vehicles not originally equipped with a front bracket to request a single license plate. The successful implementation and widespread positive feedback from vehicle owners on this new policy has spurred similar compromise legislation this session in Connecticut and Iowa. The Iowa bill only narrowly failed to pass the legislature, and Connecticut's bill did not advance from its committee of jurisdiction. Thankfully, Rhode Island enacted a new law allowing vehicles with "year of manufacture" (YOM) tags to display a single, rear-mounted plate. All motor vehicles 25 model years old and older will be eligible.

The largest barrier to single-plate enactment is opposition from law-enforcement officials who contend front plates are a necessary part of their ability to identify vehicles. However, this need may soon be a thing of the past as the technology to create digital license plates is already here. Plus, the two-plate state governments would save administration and production costs, especially without needing to create front tags nor replace those damaged or missing. With greater technology available for vehicle identification, the future for single plate legislation and front bumpers without holes may eventually look smoother—keeping a watchful eye on proposed policies is a must.



**For off-roaders, front license plates are a nuisance when installing upgraded equipment such as brawler bars and winches.**

Photos Courtesy Shutterstock.com.



# Are Automated License Plate Readers Cause for Alarm?

By Caroline Fletcher

**Editor's note:** Special thanks to the newest member of our team for appearing as this edition's guest columnist!

If you've recently noticed a new camera or two around your neighborhood or on your commute, you're not alone. Automated License Plate Readers, or ALPRs, have been popping up on streetlights, telephone poles, and attached to police cars at an alarmingly fast rate in recent months. The number of these devices are owned and operated not by police departments or government entities but by private citizens groups, including neighborhood watch and homeowners associations, has brought the issue more publicity, both positive and negative. So, what are these devices and how will they impact your rights as an enthusiast?

On the surface, ALPRs may seem innocuous. The cameras take a picture of the license plate of every car that drives past, noting the date, time and location of the picture. The plate numbers are then put through a database that will alert police if the plate number has been flagged or is on the "hot list." The criteria which land plate numbers on the "hot list" depend on the police department, with common reasons being that the owner of the vehicle has an active arrest warrant, the plates come back as stolen or there is an AMBER alert out for the vehicle. From there, however, it gets more complex. Regulations on how the data gathered from ALPRs, which could be used to easily trace every move of innocent citizens, vary from state to state. Only 16 states have any laws addressing this issue on the books, with bills pending in six more state legislatures this year. This means that the length of time this data can be stored, which government agencies can access it, and guidelines to prevent misuse of the data are all up to each police department or private association.

The popularity of ALPRs within police departments, and more recently, private groups such as homeowners associations (HOA), has skyrocketed in recent months. Police officers rave about how the technology has made their jobs easier and how the data



**Automated License Plate Readers have gained immense popularity among police departments and HOAs, but some advocacy groups caution that the devices create privacy concerns.**

is useful to solve crimes. HOAs believe the technology keeps their neighborhoods safer and deters criminals. Kidnapping suspects, hit-and-run offenders, thieves and other dangerous criminals have been apprehended by police with the help of ALPR data. One aspect of ALPR data commonly used for crime solving is what's known as historical data. In states where laws don't limit the length of time ALPR data can be stored, police can run the plate number of a suspected criminal and track their location weeks, months or even years in the past, which can be extremely useful in crime solving.

Police officers are quick to argue ALPRs pose no threat to the general public. "Nobody has an expectation of privacy when you're in public," explained retired police officer Walk Zalisko to the *Sarasota Herald Tribune*. "There's no difference if the cop is pulling you over for that. It just makes the cop's job a lot easier." Privacy advocacy and civil liberty groups are not convinced. The American Civil Liberties Union has called for laws and regulations, including the use of ALPR technology only by law-enforcement agencies and the immediate deletion of plates scanned that do not come back as flagged. These groups argue that the sensi-

tive data collected by ALPRs should not be kept in a database, in some cases for years on end, or be shared with other government agencies, as this creates too much potential for misuse of this data. A judge in Fairfax County, Virginia, has ordered its police department to stop maintaining its ALPR database, as it violates Virginia privacy law. Clashes between privacy rights and technology are not new, and as technology continues to become

an integral part of daily life, they are sure to continue.

Another concern with ALPRs is that there is evidence that the technology is more effective when vehicles have two license plates, as opposed to vehicles with only a single rear plate. This issue is a popular one among car enthusiasts, as being able to go without a front license plate protects the aesthetic look of cars and relieves vehicle owners of the burden of having to create mounting holes on bumpers. A Texas A&M Transportation Institute study of both single and dual plate states found that "lack of front plates has significant impact on the generation of photographic evidence." This could be used as yet another attack on the freedom to drive with only a single plate.

Opponents of ALPRs also argue that while the data they collect may be able to help solve crimes, they're overall impact is miniscule. A study looking at 2.5 billion license plate scans in 2016 and 2017 throughout the country found that on average, 99.5% of plates scanned were not flagged as being associated with a suspected crime. Is it worth the looming threat to single plate laws when the return is so small?



# Auto Hobby's Holiday Celebrates One Decade

Automotive Legacy Recognized on Collector Car Appreciation Day's 10th Anniversary

On July 12, thousands paid tribute to the automobile in honor of the tenth annual Collector Car Appreciation Day (CCAD). Intended to honor the classics of the past and the future, a wide range of official events (numbering more than 140) were held throughout July in the United States and Canada to commemorate the day.

The celebration was designated with SEMA-requested companion resolutions introduced in the U.S. Congress by the co-chairs of the SEMA-supported Congressional Automotive Performance and Motorsports Caucus. These resolutions recognize "that the collection and restoration of historic and classic cars is an important part of preserving the technological achievements and cultural heritage of the United States."

With our hobby's holiday continuing to grow, lawmakers in states, provinces, counties and cities all over the United States and Canada are issuing their own resolutions to mark the day's significance in raising

awareness of the vital role the automotive pastime plays in our society. In fact, the states of Louisiana, West Virginia and Wisconsin, as well as the Canadian Provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan adopted their own recognitions honoring the occasion.

A summary and online photo gallery of CCAD festivities is available on the SAN website at [semaSAN.com/CCAD](http://semaSAN.com/CCAD). Special thanks to everyone who made this year's celebration a memorable one. Stay tuned for the announcement of next year's CCAD!



Huntsville, AL, hosted by North Alabama Region of the Antique Automobile Club of America



Clemmons, NC, hosted by Old Salem Chapter AACA



Ukiah, CA, hosted by Early Iron Car Club of Ukiah



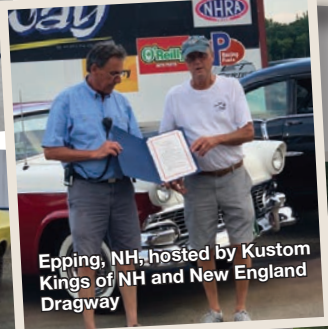
Buena Park, CA, hosted by Gary's Classic Car Fridays



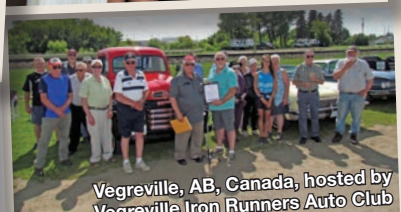
NL, Canada, hosted by NAACC



Lutherville, MD, hosted by Chesapeake Region Antique Automobile Club of America



Epping, NH, hosted by Kustom Kings of NH and New England Dragway



Vegreville, AB, Canada, hosted by Vegreville Iron Runners Auto Club



Alamogordo, NM, hosted by Golden Gears



Yerrington, NV, hosted by Huntley Motor World

City of Las Vegas, NV



North Attleboro, MA, hosted by Doug Reinbold



Altoona, PA, hosted by Blair County Antique Auto Club



Foxborough, MA, hosted by Mass Cruisers Auto Club



Dallas, TX, hosted by Dallas Area Classic Chevys



Regina, SK, Canada, in front of the SK Legislative Building



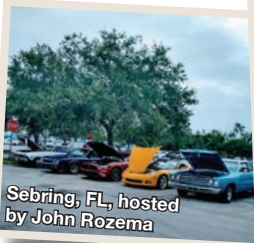
Gimli, MB, Canada, hosted by Manitoba Association of Auto Clubs and Gimli Car Club



Spokane, WA, hosted by Inland Northwest Car Club Council







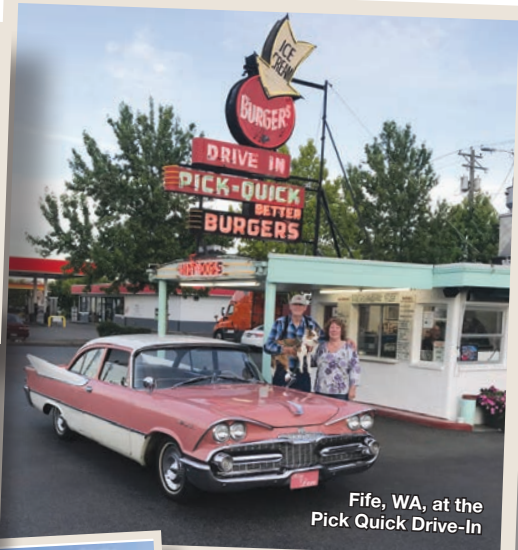
Sebring, FL, hosted by John Rozema



Summerland, BC, hosted by the Specialty Vehicle Association of British Columbia



Simi Valley, CA, hosted by Coachmen Car Club



Fife, WA, at the Pick Quick Drive-In



Millsboro, DE hosted by George 'Rusty' Rust



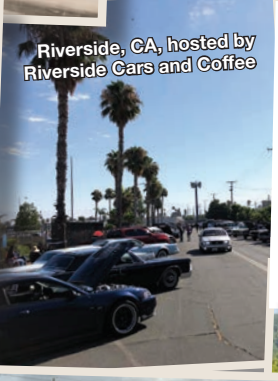
Charlotte, NC, hosted by RK Motors



Hayward, CA, hosted by Tri-Valley Classic CHEVY Club



Los Angeles, CA, hosted by AACA SoCal Region



Riverside, CA, hosted by Riverside Cars and Coffee



Hershey, PA, hosted by AACA Museum



Rosemount, MN, hosted by Corvettes of Minnesota



Bartlett, TN, hosted by Memphis Classic Chevy Club



Lake City, FL, hosted by Suwannee River Region AACA



Keyser, WV, hosted by Knobley Mountain Auto Club



Portales, NM, hosted by Roosevelt County Chamber & Desert Cruzers Car Club



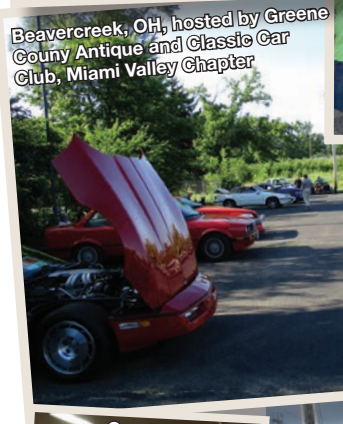
Annapolis, MD, hosted by Annapolis Car Enthusiasts



Glen Burnie, MD, hosted by Lost in the '50s Custom Car Club of MD



Goldsboro, NC, hosted by Wayne County Cruisers



Beavercreek, OH, hosted by Greene County Antique and Classic Car Club, Miami Valley Chapter



Lola, WA, hosted by the Lola Car Show



Auburn, CA, hosted by Association of California Car Clubs Inc.



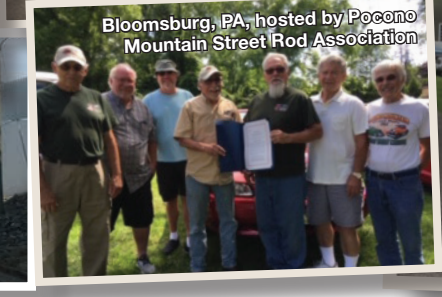
Jamestown, TN, hosted by Push Rods Car Club



Overland, MO, hosted by St. Louis Car Museum



Canadian NCRS Road Tour to NCRS National Convention



Bloomsburg, PA, hosted by Pocono Mountain Street Rod Association



Rochester, NY, hosted by Genesee Valley AACA





# California's "Blue Oval" Congressman

U.S. Representative Doug LaMalfa Keeps a Stable of Prized Fords

By Eric Snyder

**W**hile there are more than a few automotive enthusiasts in Congress, U.S. Representative Doug LaMalfa's (R-CA) enthusiasm for the hobby and collection of classic vehicles puts him in a class by himself. LaMalfa started wrenching on cars during his formative years and his passion for buying and personalizing vehicles continued to grow during the ensuing decades. His fleet includes Ford trucks from '34 and '50, Mustangs ('65, '68, '03 and '13), a '69 Torino Talladega, a '72 Pantera, and '55 and '56 Thunderbirds he maintains for his parents. SEMA and its members are fortunate to have a strong ally in Rep. LaMalfa, who has led the charge on pro-automotive hobby policies during his time as a California state legislator and member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Rep. LaMalfa grew up working on his family's rice farm, which is located not far from Sacramento, California, and dates to 1931. When he wasn't working or studying, you could find LaMalfa tinkering with vehicles. He credits his father and especially his grandfather's influence for shaping him into a gearhead.

By the age of 16, he took out a loan from the bank and purchased a pickup, which he tinkered with and drove for a few years. While in junior college, he took a job at a local mill and saved up to buy a Competition Orange '69 Mercury Cougar Eliminator, which has a 351 engine and a ram air hood. LaMalfa also put a four-speed top-loader in place of the car's automatic transmission.

LaMalfa went on to study agriculture and business at California Polytechnic State Uni-

versity in San Luis Obispo, graduating with a bachelor's degree. He put his education to work managing the family farm, which he and his family still call home. Rep. LaMalfa is a fourth-generation owner of the LaMalfa Family Partnership, which owns and operates the farm.

As a result of his experience running the farm in a state that is not known for being friendly to farmers or business, LaMalfa ran for public office for the first time in 2002, winning a seat in the California State Assembly. He went on to serve in the Assembly until 2008, then in 2010 he was elected to the California State Senate.

During his time in Sacramento, LaMalfa proved himself an ally of automotive enthusiasts, private property owners and taxpay-



*This '51 Ford F1 pickup was on the LaMalfa family's original South Bay ranch. The truck originally had an inline six-cylinder Flathead engine. Rep. LaMalfa removed the rust from the exterior, put some primer on it and painted it a satin red. He sourced a '40s Lincoln V12 Flathead engine with electric fans and dual exhaust pipes. In place of the original three-speed is a T5 transmission from Speedway Motors using a bell housing adapter.*





## Latest in Law & Order



**Outdoor Recreation:** The U.S. House Natural Resources Committee passed SEMA-supported legislation to help address a \$16 billion maintenance backlog on America's public lands. The "Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act" would create a public lands fund spending up to \$1.3 billion a year between 2020–2024. Deferred maintenance projects include rebuilding roadways, bridges, buildings, campgrounds, trails and other vital infrastructure that support outdoor recreation.

**E15 Gasoline:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a final rulemaking to allow gas stations around the country to sell E15 (gasoline that's 15% ethanol) year-round. Previously, the EPA prohibited the sale of E15 between June 1 and September 15 due to fuel-volatility concerns that higher blends of ethanol combined with warmer temperatures may lead to increased ground-level ozone formation and smog. It is unclear if the EPA's rulemaking will be implemented immediately since it will likely face court challenges. SEMA opposes an expansion of E15 sales, which the EPA is pursuing in order to achieve the Renewable Fuel Standard's artificial mandates to blend large volumes of ethanol into gasoline sold in the United States. Ethanol, especially in higher concentrations such as E15, can cause damage to high-performance parts and vehicles manufactured prior to 2001.



**Route 66 Centennial:** The U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee passed a bill to create a commission to recommend ways to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Route 66, which was completed in 1926 as the first all-paved U.S. highway. The "Route 66 Centennial Commission Act" creates a 19-person board, including governors of states through which the highway passed from Illinois to California. The Commission will recommend ways to celebrate the anniversary, such as through writings, films and documentaries, education programs, artistic works and commemorative memorabilia.

**California—Off Highway Vehicles:** The California Coastal Commission voted to make no changes to its permit which allows off highway vehicle (OHV) use at the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA). The Commission voted against a prohibition on night riding, additional fencing to restrict OHV use, eliminating unlimited OHV use on holidays, and increased enforcement efforts focused on vehicle use and speed limit. The Commission also voted down a proposal to provide year-round protection to a 300-acre endangered species area, which is currently protected on a seasonal basis, and future closures for the purpose of dust control. Oceano Dunes encompasses nearly 3,600 acres along the Pacific Ocean, of which OHV use is now limited to 1,500 acres or less. It became a state OHV park in the '80s and is the only such park on California's coast.



Photos Courtesy Shutterstock.com

ers. As a member of the State Automotive Enthusiast Leadership Caucus, LaMalfa was a frequent collaborator with SEMA on issues of importance to automotive enthusiasts. Most notably, he attempted to expand the smog-check testing exemption to include vehicles produced from 1976–1980.

When U.S. Rep. Wally Herger (R-CA) decided to retire from Congress after representing inland Northern California for more than 25 years, he endorsed LaMalfa to be his successor. LaMalfa handily won the primary election against six other candidates and went on to win the general election by a margin of 57%–42% during an otherwise difficult 2012 election cycle for Republicans. Rep. LaMalfa's relationship with SEMA has continued to flourish during his time in Congress, where he is a member of the House Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and Agriculture.

Fresh off his first re-election to Congress, Rep. LaMalfa attended the 2014 SEMA Show the following day. While it wasn't his first time at the Show, it was a memorable one as Rep. LaMalfa had the opportunity to meet Richard Petty. His conversation with "The King" was particularly special for LaMalfa, who owns a "Petty Blue" '69 Ford Torino Talladega with a #43 on the roof. The vehicle has a 428 big-block Ford engine and was one of only 745 originally built.

Rep. LaMalfa has also been a staunch supporter of the RPM Act, serving as a leading voice on Capitol Hill for protecting racing and the motorsports parts industry. Shortly after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a 2015 draft regulation stating that it is illegal to modify a street-legal vehicle into a race car, Rep. LaMalfa led the charge to stop the agency in its tracks. The Congressman questioned then-EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy about why the EPA was trying to shut down racing during a January 2016 House Agriculture Committee hearing. Rep. LaMalfa's aggressive questioning led the administrator to backtrack and confirm that it is legal to convert a motor vehicle into a race car, which ultimately led to the agency removing the provision from the final regulation.

Special thanks to Congressman LaMalfa for his dedication to our hobby and sharing insight into his collection of beloved "Blue Ovals!" View the full list of his fellow members of the SEMA-supported Congressional Automotive Performance and Motorsports Caucus on the SAN website at [semaSAN.com/FederalCaucus](http://semaSAN.com/FederalCaucus).

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### PUBLICATION STAFF

Editor Colby Martin

Editorial Director John Stewart

Group Operations Manager Janet Francisco Lee

Managing Editor Douglas McColloch

Senior Graphic Designer Mariciel Basallo Fuller

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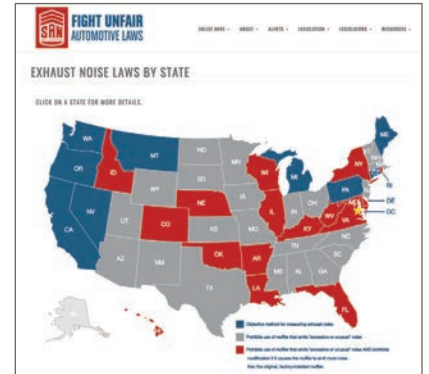
## WEB RESERVES

# Offseason Tune-Up for Online Arsenal

The legislative “off season” has arrived. As the summertime wanes, so do the state legislative sessions. While the good fight for our hobby is never finished, most legislatures have adjourned by now. The business of proposing and enacting tomorrow’s laws will largely be at rest for the remainder of 2019. Lawmakers nationwide leave the capital behind in favor of their home districts.

For the SAN, the moment is being seized. Dedicated followers know each legislative session is focused on influencing the course of bills impacting cars and trucks. As the sessions conclude, the SAN leverages

other energies behind the scenes. Portions of the revitalized website are receiving greater attention, such as the state-by-state online resource guides. Recently, a full update was made to the compilation of exhaust noise laws found online at [semaSAN.com/Noise](http://semaSAN.com/Noise). The mobile-friendly page contains a comprehensive list of exhaust-noise statutes organized by state. A fully interactive map of the nation is now featured for quick reference anywhere. The ever-popular Tag & Title Toolbox—where one can learn how to title and register vehicles in their state—is undergoing refurbishment as well. Additional revisions and improvements to the digital platform will continue to be launched as completed—stay tuned! Check out these tools and share with others. Make sure to ask for their commitment in the coming year by enlisting now at [semaSAN.com/Join](http://semaSAN.com/Join).



1575 S. Valley Vista Dr.  
Diamond Bar, CA 91765

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