

# State of California Air Resources Board

## Board Item Summary

### Item # 22-2-1: Public Meeting to Consider Assembly Bill 617 Community Air Protection Program – Fourth Annual Selection of Communities

#### **Staff Recommendation:**

In February 2022, the California Air Resources Board (CARB or Board) will consider staff's fourth annual Community Air Protection Program (Program) recommendations for the selection of new communities for the deployment of air monitoring systems and/or development of community emissions reduction programs.

#### **Discussion:**

California's air quality programs continue to significantly improve public health statewide through various measures such as regional air quality planning, advancements in technology-based solutions, and risk reduction efforts near industrial facilities. However, despite these efforts across the State, certain communities, particularly low-income and communities of color, continue to experience environmental and health inequities from air and other forms of pollution. For example, 91 percent of the population that makes up the 10 percent most impacted census tracts, as ranked by the State's "California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool" (CalEnviroScreen 4.0), are people of color.

Communities near ports, rail yards, warehouses, and freeways continue to experience a higher burden of air pollution than other areas due to emissions from mobile sources such as cars, trucks, locomotives, and ships, while many also experience pollution impacts from stationary facilities such as oil refineries, oil and gas operations, chrome platers, and metal recycling facilities. Many rural communities contend with similar impacts, as well as agricultural burning, fugitive dust and high pesticide use. Residents in these communities are also more vulnerable to the effects of cumulative exposure, as indicated by disparities in health and socio-economic indicators.

Assembly Bill 617 (C. Garcia, Stats. of 2017) requires that the Board "shall adopt a statewide strategy to reduce emissions of toxic air contaminants and criteria air pollutants in communities affected by a high cumulative exposure burden." (HSC 44391.2(b).). The statute also requires CARB to annually consider selection of communities for the development and implementation of community air monitoring systems and/or community emissions reduction programs. In response to this statutory charge, CARB established the Program. Fifteen communities have been selected by the CARB Board and are currently implementing the Program. Although annual consideration and selection of communities has been a constant since the initial 10 communities were selected in 2018, funding to operate the program has remained flat. Two of the three largest air districts opted not to recommend additional communities this year. Two other air districts' recommendations were either contingent on increased operations funding or were withdrawn because of funding constraints. CARB staff

are preparing for a transition year in 2022 to develop strategies that can better serve more over-burdened communities in the State.

Air districts and community members, often in coordination, submitted recommended communities for consideration in 2021. Staff released a webinar in August 2021 to describe the community recommendation and selection process. In December 2021, staff held a virtual meeting to discuss draft community recommendations. On January 19, 2022 Staff released the Fourth Annual Community Air Protection Program Recommendations Staff Report for Board consideration. CARB staff’s fourth annual community recommendations are based on statutory requirements, the Board’s prior direction, community nominations received to date, lessons learned from communities in the program, and funding levels provided by the Legislature for Program implementation. Table 1 provides staff’s recommendations, key sources, and rationale for selection.

**Table 1. Community Recommendations from CARB Staff – In Alphabetical Order by Air District**

Community (Air District)	Action	Key Emission Sources	Rationale
East Oakland (Bay Area)	Develop a Community Emissions Reduction Program	Power plants, foundries, waste processing facilities, airport, large distribution centers, freeways and roadways, trucks, transit buses, industrial equipment, freight, and passenger rail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent with CARB Board direction to prioritize communities recommended by community-based organizations in previous years but not selected yet.</li> <li>• East Oakland is a priority community for the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, supported by the community in every year of the Program.</li> <li>• The air district received support from Communities for a Better Environment and East Oakland Collective, as well as New Voices are Rising.</li> </ul>
International Border Community- San Ysidro, Otay Mesa (San Diego)	Develop a Community Air Monitoring Plan and Emissions Reduction Program	Two international Port of Entries – at San Ysidro and Otay Mesa; truck traffic, freeways,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent with CARB Board direction to prioritize communities recommended by community-based organizations in previous years but not selected yet.</li> <li>• Nominated this year and in 2019 by San Diego Air Pollution Control District.</li> </ul>

The Fourth Annual Community Recommendations Staff Report is available at: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-01/Fourth%20Annual%20CAPP%20Recommendations%20Staff%20Report.pdf>

**Summary and Impacts:**

New communities selected by the Board will see additional focused action through the development and implementation of community emissions reduction programs and/or community air monitoring. The communities that are selected by the Board will have the boundaries refined by the community steering committee convened to develop the community-specific plans. In addition, broader Program implementation will result in new strategies and resources to help reduce the cumulative air pollution exposure burden in communities throughout the State. Future Board items will focus on an update to the statewide strategy, including plans for developing actions to expand program benefits to more communities.