

California Air Resources Board
Community Air Protection Program

Southeast Los Angeles Community Emissions Reduction Program Staff Report

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Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the California Air Resources Board (CARB or Board) approve the Southeast Los Angeles community emissions reduction program developed pursuant to Assembly Bill (AB) 617¹ and direct CARB staff to work with the South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD or District) and the Southeast Los Angeles Community Steering Committee to take additional actions to strengthen implementation.

Background

CARB established the Community Air Protection Program (Program) to implement AB 617, which requires new community-focused action to reduce air pollution. On September 27, 2018, the Board approved the *Community Air Protection Blueprint*² (Blueprint), which, among other things, establishes criteria for developing and implementing community emissions reduction programs, contained in the *Blueprint Appendix C* and summarized in the *Checklist for Community Emissions Reduction Program Evaluation*³. At the same meeting, the Board also approved 10 initial communities to develop and implement community emissions reductions programs, community air monitoring or both. On December 13, 2019, the Board selected an additional three communities, including the community of Southeast Los Angeles in South Coast AQMD to develop a community emissions reduction program and a community air monitoring plan.

Subsequently, on December 4, 2020, the South Coast AQMD Governing Board adopted the Community Emissions Reduction Plan for Southeast Los Angeles (Plan)⁴. CARB staff reviewed the adopted Plan and this staff report summarizes the results of CARB staff's review and evaluation of the Plan to determine if it meets the criteria established in AB 617⁵ and the Blueprint, reflects community priorities, and is likely to reduce emissions and exposure to air pollution in the community.

Plan Overview

In accordance with the Blueprint, South Coast AQMD convened a community steering committee to develop the Plan. The steering committee is made up of 39 primary members, 21 of which are residents, and held 9 meetings between January and November 2020. South

¹ Assembly Bill 617, Garcia, C., Chapter 136, Statutes of 2017.

² The Blueprint is available at: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/capp-blueprint>.

³ The Checklist for the Community Emissions Reduction Program Evaluation begins on page C-41.

⁴ To review the Plan and associated documents, visit <http://www.aqmd.gov/nav/about/initiatives/environmental-justice/ab617-134/southeast-los-angeles/cecp-archive>.

⁵ California Health and Safety Code §44391.2.

Coast AQMD also hosted a public Question and Answer Session for the Plan to get additional feedback on the Plan in November 2020.

The Plan focuses on reducing emissions and exposure to diesel particulate matter, oxides of nitrogen, and toxic air contaminants from sources such as: truck traffic and freeways; rendering facilities; metal processing facilities; railyards and locomotives; general industrial facilities. Also included in the plan are actions to reduce exposure to air pollution by increasing green space in the community. Figure 1 lists examples of the actions and strategies to reduce emissions and exposure for each air quality priority in the Plan. For the full list of strategies, see Chapter 5 of the Plan.

Figure 1. Examples of Actions in the Southeast Los Angeles Community Emissions Reduction Plan.



Trucks and Freeways

- Continue development of South Coast AQMD Warehouse Indirect Source Rule
- CARB's Community Pollution Enforcement Workgroup
- Encourage deployment of zero-emission trucks in the community and outreach to small businesses
- Prioritize schools exposed to truck emissions for air filtration systems



Rendering Facilities

- Conduct air monitoring for VOCs and odorous compounds near rendering facilities
- Community complaint tracking; continue Rule 415 compliance inspections. After Rule 415 is fully implemented work with steering committee members to identify remaining odor concerns
- Explore development of odor event notification system for schools and sensitive receptors



Green Spaces

- Collaborate with nonprofits, local and regional agencies to identify suitable trees, provide support letters for urban greening funding opportunities, and identify potential metrics to measure progress
- Work with steering committee, state and local non-profits to identify and prioritize locations for installing vegetative buffers near freeways



Metal Processing Facilities

- South Coast AQMD rule development and best management practices for reducing fugitive emissions at metal recycling plants
- Identify all metal processing facilities in the community and steering committee prioritization
- Air monitoring to identify elevated levels of air toxic metals



Railyards and Locomotives

- Continue development of South Coast AQMD Railyard Indirect Source Rule
- Focused enforcement of CARB Rules: Transport Refrigeration Unit and Cargo Handling Equipment
- CARB regulatory actions for cleaner operations and technologies for: locomotives; transport refrigeration units; cargo handling equipment; drayage trucks; and facility infrastructure requirements at railyards



General Industrial Facilities

- Identify types of industrial facilities for prioritization of emissions sources by the steering committee
- Develop emissions and exposure reduction measures based on community prioritization
- Conduct an annual community workshop with CARB to educate the community on the Criteria Pollutant and Toxics Emissions Reporting

Summary of CARB's Evaluation

CARB staff's review of the Plan follows the framework established in the Blueprint. In addition to the Plan itself, staff also reviewed meeting materials including a record of public comments and responses to those comments by South Coast AQMD, included in the Plan. During the Plan development process, CARB staff attended every Southeast Los Angeles, community steering committee meeting and met regularly with South Coast AQMD staff. Finally, CARB staff also hosted a virtual community workshop on April 6, 2021 to solicit additional community perspectives to help inform CARB staff's recommendations. The virtual workshop was attended by over 45 members of the public, many of whom appeared mostly interested in understanding the development and review process of the Plan, as well as, the priorities and commitments in the Plan. When polled, nine attendees indicated they previously or currently live or work in the Southeast Los Angeles community. Of all attendees that responded to the poll, most chose truck traffic/freeways and general industrial sources as the priority concerns for the community.

State law gives communities and air districts 12 months to develop a community emissions reduction program following CARB community selection. One year is a very short amount of time to convene a community steering committee, develop a process for operation of the community steering committee, develop relationships within the steering committee and with regulatory agencies, establish the technical foundation for understanding the community's air quality status, and develop the strategies to reduce air pollution emissions and exposure. Additionally, the Southeast Los Angeles community concurrently developed a community air monitoring plan. The Statewide stay-at-home orders further exacerbated the already short timeline.

The Plan meets the criteria established in AB 617 and the Blueprint, and reflects the community's priorities, and is likely to reduce community emissions and exposure to air pollution. However, to ensure that the Plan successfully delivers on the identified actions, there are elements of the Plan that need additional clarification and detail as the Plan moves from the short time frame provided for development into the implementation phase. As each of the selected communities and their community emissions reduction programs are approved by the air districts and CARB, the need to focus on strengthening the plans during implementation is a theme that applies to all communities.

Therefore, CARB staff is recommending approval of the Plan with additional Board direction to CARB staff, South Coast AQMD, and the community steering committee to begin Plan implementation immediately, while taking steps to strengthen implementation of the Plan. These recommendations draw directly from the core principles of the Board-adopted Blueprint.

Staff has organized the results of this review into two categories:

- Key strengths of the Plan, which highlights areas staff found particularly noteworthy; and
- Recommended actions to strengthen implementation, including areas where additional discussion, information, clarification and detail will help ensure the Plan is successful and achieves emissions reductions in the Southeast Los Angeles community.

Key Strengths

The key strengths of the Plan for the Southeast Los Angeles community highlighted below are a direct result of the community steering committee's commitment to working in partnership with South Coast AQMD and CARB. Prior to the stay-at-home orders enacted by the Governor in March 2020, the South Coast AQMD was able to hold one in-person Community Steering Committee Meeting in February 2020. South Coast AQMD worked with the community steering committee to continue community engagement virtually, including Zoom meetings for direct participation and Facebook Live for streaming video. South Coast AQMD also provided Spanish specific Meeting IDs for Zoom meetings. Additionally, the District had over 40 individual calls with members of the community steering committee to discuss the community steering committee process, provide feedback on the Plan development process and address concerns directly with South Coast AQMD staff.

South Coast AQMD worked with the steering committee to identify key air quality priorities and developed a concerted set of strategies designed to work together to address each priority. For example, actions to address metal processing facilities include regulatory actions, incentives, public outreach on best management practices, and employing air monitoring to identify emission sources. The Plan also includes many collaborative actions with local land use and transportation agencies, local non-profits, and state agencies for air quality concerns that are outside of South Coast AQMD's jurisdiction such as lack of green spaces and freeway expansion projects.

The Plan also includes robust commitments for CARB enforcement activities in the community, which resulted from a meeting CARB held with a group of interested steering committee members and South Coast AQMD on October 22, 2020. The purpose of the meeting was to review and understand the steering committee members' ideas for enforcement and enforcement outreach in the community. Highlights of such CARB enforcement actions include:

- CARB working with local trucking companies to distribute educational material to incentivize the reduction of non-critical idling.
- CARB convening a catalytic converter theft deterrence and education workgroup, which has begun meeting with members of the steering committee who are interested in mitigating this issue. CARB is committed to working with the workgroup to create a catalytic converter theft deterrence and education program in Southeast Los Angeles.

- Establishment of CARB's Community Pollution Enforcement Workgroup to continue to address pollution enforcement issues regularly throughout implementation and provide the steering committee updates on its progress.

Finally, last year one of CARB staff's recommendations for the first year community emissions reduction programs developed for the three communities in South Coast AQMD at the time was to include specific metrics to track progress on the actions and goals in the Plan to establish what constitutes successful implementation of the Plan. In this Southeast Los Angeles Plan, every action includes metrics to track progress that are easy to identify and understand. Furthermore, the inclusion of metrics in early draft versions of the Plan helped the steering committee members identify very specific metrics they wanted included as made evident by the Response to Comments section in the Plan.

Recommended Actions to Strengthen Implementation

Staff recognizes that the Plan is the culmination of an extensive amount of work in a short timeframe. In future efforts, South Coast AQMD, CARB, and the community steering committee should work to refine issues related to implementation as the strategies in the Plan move forward, as well as the periodic status reports required under AB 617.

To support implementation going forward, CARB staff has developed a set of recommended actions in four key areas: expedited development of actions to address community priorities, incentives prioritization, enforcement, and improved access to online data. Progress in implementing these recommendations should be included in the annual progress reports submitted to CARB as required by the AB 617 statute.

Expedited development of actions to address community priorities

The Plan includes actions to be further developed with the steering committee to address metal processing facilities and general industrial sources. During the development of the Plan, the steering committee had the desire to further engage on discussion of actions for general industrial sources, better understand the various types of industrial sources and their emissions in the community. When the Plan was adopted, South Coast AQMD staff acknowledged the next steps were to work with the steering committee to identify industrial facilities of concern in the community and identify potential emission and exposure reduction measures. CARB staff recognizes the need for additional time to develop strategies to offset delays related to the stay-at-home orders. The community steering committee is now meeting quarterly during the development of multiple strategies and discussion on this topic has occurred at the first two quarterly meetings held in 2021. To expedite this process, the District should provide the steering committee the necessary data/information, in between quarterly meetings, to support the decision making process in an efficient manner.

Incentives prioritization exercises with community steering committee

The Plan includes basic information on incentives and incentives strategies to reduce mobile and stationary source pollution, but actionable goals and specific efforts are lacking. The District held an AB 617 Incentive Strategies Public Consultation Meeting in October 2020 for all the South Coast AQMD AB 617 communities to receive feedback prioritizing the use of AB 617 incentives funds. Once incentives amounts were allocated amongst each community and during Plan implementation, the South Coast AQMD held meetings in January, March and April 2021 where incentives were discussed specifically for the Southeast Los Angeles community. The Southeast Los Angeles Community was allocated \$10 million for Community-Identified Projects. The community steering committee was asked to prioritize the types of projects for Community Air Protection Incentives⁶ and Community-Identified Projects⁷, which offer unique funding opportunities for emission and exposure reduction projects that are traditionally not funded. Incentive priorities identified by the community steering committee members include:

- zero-emission technology, where feasible;
- additional incentives for small business owners and small truck fleets;
- school air filtration systems;
- green space projects; and
- railyard infrastructure.

Throughout the State, communities are asking for more transparency in the incentives projects funded in AB 617 communities. As a result, South Coast AQMD has engaged the Southeast Los Angeles Community Steering Committee and other AB 617 community steering committees in participatory budgeting for Community-Identified Projects. Participatory budgeting is a democratic process in which community members decide how to spend part of a public budget. This process has empowered community steering committees to prioritize Community-Identified Projects eligible for incentives and determine the distribution of funds for these projects, helping to ensure that the incentives budget reflects the community funding priorities. The budget priorities provide new metrics to gauge the progress of the actionable goals. South Coast AQMD should continue to work with the steering committee on their budget priorities for incentives projects and hold incentives-specific workshops for interested members to further develop Community-Identified Projects for incentive funding. In the future South Coast AQMD should instigate discussion of incentives prioritization sooner in the community emissions reduction program development process.

⁶ Community Air Protection Incentives: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/community-air-protection-incentives>

⁷ More information on Community-Identified Projects at: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/community-air-protection-incentives/stationary-source-and-community-identified>

Enforcement of mobile and stationary sources

South Coast AQMD compiled a three-year enforcement history and summarized those data in Chapter 4 and Appendix 4 of the Plan. During the review period for the draft Plan the steering committee asked for a more refined analysis of South Coast AQMD enforcement and compliance data (by sector) in order to prioritize enforcement strategies based on their notices of violations. Ways to improve the enforcement strategies would be to base opportunities for enhanced enforcement activities more so on those data. South Coast AQMD was not able to complete this analysis in time to be included in the final Plan, but did verbally commit to bringing this to the steering committee at a later date. We suggest stationary source enforcement and compliance data be provided to the community steering committee as they develop actions to reduce exposure and emissions from the general industrial facilities described above.

The near-term enforcement strategies in the Plan address community concerns, including actions to conduct enforcement sweeps for applicable mobile source rules, including truck idling. However, the truck idling concerns, do not necessarily reflect non-compliance data. For example, idling is a community concern, but based on prior enforcement activity, the majority of vehicles are compliant with the current commercial idling regulation. From January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2019, 1,126 heavy-duty trucks and buses and off-road equipment were inspected by CARB for idling in the Southeast Los Angeles community. All but 27 were in compliance with CARB's commercial vehicle, off-road equipment, and school bus idling rules (98% compliance overall). As mentioned above, there are also other actions in the Plan to address non-critical idling through outreach; CARB, South Coast AQMD and the steering committee should continue exploring a more holistic approach to addressing the communities idling concerns.

In the future, providing the community steering committee the opportunity to examine the mobile and stationary source enforcement data early in the process, including a detailed 3-year enforcement history and CARB's Enforcement Data Visualization System will establish a baseline from which the steering committee can choose how best to use available enforcement resources for future years.

Furthermore, enforcement actions identified from the steering committee during CARB's Community Pollution Enforcement Workgroup activities should be considered by South Coast AQMD to help refine the enforcement strategies in the Plan during implementation.

Improved access to online data for community members

There are a number of comments recorded in the Response to Comments section of the Plan about the availability of data of pollution sources. As a result, the Plan includes an action for CARB and South Coast AQMD to conduct an annual workshop to educate the community on the Criteria Pollutant and Toxics Emissions Reporting process and share the data that has been collected from facilities in the Southeast Los Angeles community. There are various additional data tools at the local and statewide level that are accessible and can support the

community. South Coast AQMD and CARB should work together to hold workshops to highlight online tools such as:

- South Coast AQMD Facility Information Detail (FIND)⁸ – a web tool that allows the user to search for public information about South Coast AQMD-regulated facilities, including equipment lists, facility air pollution emissions information on key enforcement actions.
- CARB’s Enforcement Data Visualization System (EDVS)⁹ – a user-friendly way to access and visualize CARB’s enforcement activities across the state, including field inspections and case settlements, on a map interface.
- CARB’s Technology Clearinghouse¹⁰ – The statewide Technology Clearinghouse identifies the best technologies for reducing emissions as required by AB 617. Additionally, the Blueprint requires the Technology Clearinghouse to be used to identify rules, regulations, technologies, or practices that could offer emissions or exposure reduction opportunities within impacted communities.
- CARB’s AQview¹¹ – a single, central hub for viewing the current air quality across the state including data collected as part of AB 617 community monitoring efforts, as required by AB 617.
- CARB’s CommunityHub¹² – A webpage to help tracking progress of CARB actions to support AB 617.
- CARB’s Community Resource Directory – a new tool available on the Community Air Protection Program Resource Center homepage¹³ that organizes all of the community resources including tools, trainings, videos, and webpages in a single location. This directory also provides increased clarity on which tools are developed specifically for selected communities or for use statewide.
- CARB’s Regulations Database – the newest component of CARB’s Technology Clearinghouse that will enhance public access to CARB’s regulations and Airborne Toxic Control Measures (ATCMs) by organizing this information in a single, searchable online database. This database is currently in-development and is expected to be released in Summer 2021.

The Plan has support from the community steering committee, which reached a consensus on supporting the plan at a steering committee meeting on November 18, 2020; the aforementioned suggestions will help serve to strengthen the Plan during the 5-year implementation period.

⁸ South Coast AQMD Facility Information Detail (FIND) Tool: <https://www.aqmd.gov/nav/FIND/facility-information-detail>

⁹ CARB’s Enforcement Data Visualization System <https://webmaps.arb.ca.gov/edvs/>

¹⁰ CARB’s Technology Clearinghouse: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/technology-clearinghouse>

¹¹ CARB’s AQview: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/community-air-quality-portal>

¹² CARB’s CommunityHub: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/capp-communities>

¹³ Community Air Protection Program Resource Center: https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/ocap_resource_center