

State of California Air Resources Board

Board Item Summary

Item # 23-9-4: Public Meeting to Consider the Assembly Bill 617 Community Air Protection Program Statewide Strategy Update (Blueprint 2.0) and to Hear an Informational Update on the Community Air Protection Incentives Guidelines

Staff Recommendation:

California Air Resources Board (CARB or Board) staff recommend that the Board approve the Community Air Protection Program Statewide Strategy Update, also known as Blueprint 2.0 as described in the proposed Resolution 20-22.

Discussion:

Assembly Bill (AB) 617 (Garcia, Chapter 136, Statutes of 2017) requires CARB adopt by October 2018 the Statewide Strategy, or Blueprint, and update the strategy every five years. The Board adopted the first Blueprint on September 27, 2018, and is now considering approving its first update known as Blueprint 2.0. CARB implements most of the activities described in the Blueprint through the Community Air Protection Program. This Program provides a community-focused action framework to reduce air pollution and improve public health in disadvantaged and low-income communities. The original Blueprint describes how CARB selects initial communities, establishes how community air monitoring plans and community emissions reduction programs must be developed and implemented, and identifies new strategies for reducing pollution in all communities affected by a high cumulative exposure burden (overburdened communities) consistent with state statute. Blueprint 2.0 builds on lessons learned in the program over the last five years, provides guidance to implement the Program, and incorporates new pathways to expand the Community Air Protection Program benefits to more communities statewide. The Final Draft Blueprint 2.0, if approved, will replace the original document in its entirety.

Blueprint 2.0 was developed through a multi-phased engagement approach. In 2021, CARB provided technical assistance support to the writers group of Environmental Justice leaders within the AB 617 Consultation Group to write the People's Blueprint. CARB staff then initiated the first phase in early 2022 of Blueprint 2.0 development involving a robust discussion of the People's Blueprint with the AB 617 Consultation Group and a public workshop on December 6, 2022. In phase two, from December 2022 through January 2023, CARB staff held focused discussions with close to 100 representatives of most of the

Community Air Protection Program's community steering committees, business associations, local government, and academia, including leaders of the newly selected community steering committees communities in Bayview Hunters Point-Southeast San Francisco and Northern Imperial Corridor Phase 1, and with community leaders whose communities have been consistently nominated. For Phase 3, a narrative draft of Blueprint 2.0 was released in June 2023, discussed in three virtual public workshops (one Spanish-led) in July 2023, and deliberated at two AB 617 Consultation Group meetings in the summer of 2023. CARB released the final draft Blueprint 2.0 for public comment on September 26, 2023. Blueprint 2.0 is informed by comments received through the Community Air Protection Program's engagement efforts and developed for Board consideration based on this outreach.

Blueprint 2.0 is composed of two parts. Part One includes the vision, mission, guiding principles, goals, and priority actions that CARB commits to over the next five years. Part Two offers practical guidance for air districts, communities, affected industries, and other stakeholders to actively engage in improving local air quality and how to implement each Community Air Protection Program component. Part Two provides guidance to support (1) the successful completion of the community air monitoring plans and community emissions reduction programs for communities selected to date and (2) engagement with consistently nominated communities to highlight new pathways to improve local air quality. Part Two describes new pathways for community action that include: community-focused enforcement to better address local air pollution issues, the use of Community Air Grants to develop Local Community Emissions Reduction Plans, and more flexibility in the use of incentives funding to support air quality improvements aligned with the priorities and address the concerns of overburdened communities statewide.

When the Community Air Protection Blueprint was proposed in 2018, CARB prepared an environmental analysis under its certified regulatory program (California Code of Regulations, title 17, sections 60000 through 60008) to comply with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code section 21080.5). The environmental analysis, included in Appendix G of the Community Air Protection Blueprint entitled Appendix G: Final Environmental Analysis Prepared for the Proposed Community Air Protection Blueprint, dated September 14, 2018, determined the 2018 Blueprint could result in adverse impacts on aesthetics, agricultural and forest resources, air quality biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, transportation and traffic, utilities and service systems, and geology, seismicity, and soils. Staff has determined through an Addendum to the 2018 environmental analysis that there is no need to prepare, pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15162, a subsequent environmental analysis to the 2018 environmental analysis because the Blueprint 2.0 does not propose changes that involve new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in severity of those previously identified.

In parallel with the development of Blueprint 2.0, staff are also working on updates to the Community Air Protection Incentives Guidelines. These updates will expand project options

statewide to include the most effective incentives-based measures developed by air districts to meet strategies in their Community Emissions Reduction Programs, enabling the efforts in selected communities to be replicated by air districts in other disadvantaged and low-income communities statewide. These Community Air Protection Incentives Guidelines are expected to be released by early 2024.

Summary and Impacts:

CARB staff have prepared Blueprint 2.0 as the first update to the 2018 Program Blueprint, the statewide strategy to reduce toxic air contaminants and criteria air pollutants in communities affected by high cumulative exposure burdens. The update reflects lessons learned from work with selected communities, air districts, affected industry, and other stakeholders in the first five years of the Program and in consideration of the input on the Draft Blueprint 2.0 received from stakeholders. Implementation of the updates in Blueprint 2.0 will reinforce a commitment to implement and complete actions contained in already approved Community Emissions Reduction Programs and help set forth new pathways to benefit more communities statewide.