



# AIR CURRENTS

BAY AREA AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

SUMMER 2010

## Air District's new CEQA Guidelines will protect Bay Area neighborhoods

In June, the Air District became the first regulatory agency in the nation to approve development guidelines that establish air quality thresholds for greenhouse gases and cumulative toxic risks.

Bay Area local governments now have a newly updated set of tools to help them make smart development

decisions, choices that will protect residents from harmful air emissions and reduce greenhouse gases in the region.

The California Environmental Quality Act, or CEQA, requires State and local public agencies to identify the environmental impacts of any plans or projects that they fund, approve or carry out. The Air District develops its CEQA Guidelines as a reference for local governments to use in determining the air quality impacts of these proposed projects.

The Air District last issued CEQA Guidelines in 1999. This year's comprehensive update includes explicit thresholds for air pollutants, including greenhouse gases, above which it is likely that a project will cause harmful environmental impacts. The guidelines also recommend measures for mitigating the public health impacts of potential projects.

For the first time, local agencies will also need to consider existing sources of air pollution in a specific geographic area when evaluating the additional health risks due to a proposed project. This cumulative risk provision will be especially protective of communities that already have significant air quality concerns.

The Air District held numerous public workshops to seek input on the proposed updates to the CEQA Guidelines and worked closely with local planning directors and public health officials. The Air District also developed an array of technical documents and in-depth case studies to assist agencies in applying the new thresholds.

The Air District's new CEQA Guidelines can be viewed online at: [www.baaqmd.gov/Divisions/Planning-and-Research/CEQA-GUIDELINES.aspx](http://www.baaqmd.gov/Divisions/Planning-and-Research/CEQA-GUIDELINES.aspx).

### Last Print Issue ! Air Currents to go "green" this fall

In an effort to reduce paper consumption, *Air Currents* will no longer be distributed by mail, but as an e-newsletter. This will be the last print edition of *Air Currents*.

To subscribe to the *Air Currents* e-mail distribution list, send a message to [sparetheair@baaqmd.gov](mailto:sparetheair@baaqmd.gov) with "Subscribe Air Currents" in the subject line.

## Key to cooling schools is through the roof

The Air District and its project partners, the Martinez Unified School District and the County of Contra Costa, completed the "cool roof" retrofit and other energy efficiency upgrades at the Las Juntas Elementary School in Martinez this past March.

Installation of the cool roof, weatherization and air filters will reduce energy use and increase student comfort in this 60's era building.

Dark roofs mean hotter buildings, higher air conditioning bills and higher

greenhouse gas emissions. The new "cool roof" at Las Juntas will reduce interior temperatures on sunny days without using additional energy. It will also provide a more comfortable environment for the students and staff.

Cool roofs are made from an engineered material with a high solar reflectance that reflects the sun's light, and hence, heat, back to the sky instead of transferring it to the building below.

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BAY AREA  
AIR QUALITY  
MANAGEMENT  
DISTRICT

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**DAILY AIR QUALITY** 1-800-HELP-AIR  
**COMPLAINT LINE** 1-800-334-ODOR  
**SMOKING VEHICLES** 1-800-EXHAUST

**GENERAL INFO**  
**COMMUNICATIONS** 415-749-4900

**WEBSITES**  
<http://www.baaqmd.gov>  
<http://www.sparetheair.org>

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# Cool School

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In addition to increased energy savings and student and staff comfort, cool roofs reduce the urban heat island effect.

Urban regions tend to experience higher temperatures year-round in comparison with surrounding rural areas. This is known as the urban heat island effect. Buildings and pavement made of dark materials absorb the sun's rays instead of reflecting them, causing an increase in the temperature of the surfaces and the air around them. The loss of vegetation and the prevalence of asphalt pavement effectively increase urban temperatures.

The urban heat island effect increases summertime peak energy demand, air conditioning costs and associated greenhouse gas emissions. Levels of ozone pollution are closely associated



with higher temperatures.

"I'm pleased that we were able to bring all the partners to the table to make this a reality," said Gayle B. Uilke, Contra Costa Supervisor and Air District Board member. "The Las Juntas

cool roof project not only demonstrates a cost effective, energy-saving option for homes and businesses, it's also an investment in our children's future."

## Spare the Air Smog Season gets underway in the Bay Area

The Spare the Air Smog Season began May 3, 2010, with the start of Air Quality Awareness Week. During the summer season, the Air District issues Spare the Air Smog Alerts when high levels of ozone pollution are forecast. Ozone pollution is particularly harmful to young children, the elderly and individuals suffering from respiratory illnesses. Last year, the Air District issued 11 Spare the Air Alerts during the summer.

This year the Air District is once again encouraging residents to be conscientious about their transportation choices and to take into account the pollution effects of their choices.

"Tailpipe exhaust from the three to four million vehicles on our roads each day remains the largest source of smog in the Bay Area," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. "To reduce the health impacts from smog, we all need to think differently about

how we use our cars as part of our daily routine."

While this summer has started off cool, the region may experience warmer temperatures more conducive to smog pollution later in the summer, as is typical of the Bay Area.

Tips and other information on how to "spare the air" and help the environment are available on the Air District's [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org) website. Also

available are materials for employers interested in engaging employees in conversations about carpooling, reducing energy usage and reducing their overall air quality footprint.

To check the daily air quality forecast in your area, visit [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org) or call 1-800-HELP-AIR (435-7247). Residents can also sign up online to receive e-mail AirAlerts that will notify them a day in advance of a Spare the Air Alert.

### Summer Spare the Air Statistics

Year	Spare the Air Days	Nat'l 8 hour excess days	CA 1 hour excess days	CA 8 hour excess days
2010*	0	0	0	0
2009	14	8	11	13
2008	13	12	9	20
2007	2	1	4	9
2006	11	12	18	22

\*As of July 20, 2010

## Great Race goes Bay Area wide for the first time

Registration has kicked off for the Regional Great Race for Clean Air, a commuter challenge sponsored by the Air District to reduce greenhouse gases and smog levels in the Bay Area. From August 1 through September 30, thousands of Bay Area commuters will participate in this friendly, employer-driven competition to try alternatives to driving solo—such as carpooling, vanpooling, biking, walking or riding transit.

Participating employers will automatically be entered into weekly drawings for prizes from Best Buy, Starbucks and other sponsors. So far, participating employers include: AMC Entertainment, Safeway Inc., Virgin America, facebook, Oracle and the University of California, San Francisco.

Employers can find more



information at the website [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org). On September 30, at the conclusion of the Great Race, employers with the highest percentage of employees participating and the biggest reductions in greenhouse gas emissions will be eligible for additional prizes. The Great Race for Clean Air is a fun, competitive way to improve air quality, reduce traffic and save money.

During the summer Spare the Air Smog Season, each of us can do our part to improve air quality. The Great Race

encourages commuters to try alternatives to solo driving. In the Bay Area, solo driving is one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and smog pollution. Participate in the Regional Great Race and make your organization a leader in reducing Bay Area pollution!

**Register your company at [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org) today.**

### Get involved with the Great Race

**Who:** You, your employer

**What:** The Great Race for Clean Air, a race to reduce pollution!

**When:** This summer, August 1 - September 30

**Where:** All over the Bay Area!

**How:** Encourage your employer to register today with the Air District at [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org). Tell other employers and challenge them to see who can reduce the most pollution.

## 1-800-EXHAUST program gets face lift

This summer the Air District launched a new Smoking Vehicle campaign in an effort to increase awareness and emphasize the importance of getting smoking vehicles off the road. The Air District first launched the 1-800-EXHAUST program in 1994 to encourage drivers to take action when their vehicle exhaust is excessively smoky. Since then vehicles on the road have become cleaner, but smoking vehicles still create pollution problems in the Bay Area.

Smoking vehicles generate excessive pollution, nearly 10 to 15 times more than a vehicle that has been properly maintained.

Pollution from these vehicles doesn't just affect the environment around

them; up to 15% of the emissions are circulated back into the vehicle and inhaled by the drivers and passengers.

With the "Help Someone Quit Smoking," campaign, the Air District is encouraging individuals to repair or retire smoking vehicles. For more information about the Smoking Vehicle program and what to do if you have or see a smoking

vehicle, visit [www.smokingvehiclehelp.org](http://www.smokingvehiclehelp.org).

Residents who receive a smoking vehicle letter from the Air District may be eligible to sell their car via the Air District's Vehicle Buy Back Program. For more information about the Vehicle Buy Back Program please visit the website at [www.baaqmd.gov/vbb](http://www.baaqmd.gov/vbb).



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**Air Currents is going green!**  
**This will be the last issue in print.**

In order to conserve resources and reduce our environmental footprint, in the future *Air Currents* will be distributed as an e-newsletter. To sign up to receive electronic issues of *Air Currents*, send an e-mail to [sparetheair@baaqmd.gov](mailto:sparetheair@baaqmd.gov) with "Subscribe Air Currents" in the subject line.

**Join us at the CAPCOA Climate Change Forum**  
**August 30 - 31**  
**San Francisco Marriot Marquis Hotel**

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District and California Air Pollution Control Officers Association are hosting the CAPCOA Climate Change Forum this August 30 - 31st in San Francisco. Join us at this exciting and timely event featuring speakers Van Jones and Arianna Huffington. For registration and more information, see [www.capcoaclimateforum.com](http://www.capcoaclimateforum.com).

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