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## NEWS RELEASE

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# Spare the Air smog season begins today

*Commuters urged to find alternatives to driving alone*

**SAN FRANCISCO** - The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is announcing the start of the Spare the Air summer smog season today, Monday, May 1.

Millions of cars on our roadways each day remain the largest source of smog pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in the Bay Area. The Spare the Air campaign encourages Bay Area residents to drive less and look for ways to share, shorten or change their commutes to help reduce smog, traffic and gridlock in the region. The Air District already issued its first Spare the Air Alert of the year on April 27.

"More driving means more air pollution," said Dr. Philip Fine, executive officer of the Air District. "To safeguard our air quality, health and quality of life, it is crucial that we explore alternatives to driving alone, such as taking transit, walking or biking."

The launch of the Spare the Air smog season coincides with the start of the **2023 Air Quality Awareness Week**, a nationwide campaign to increase air quality awareness and inspire people to take steps to reduce their contribution to air pollution. This year's campaign highlights resources that spread awareness of air quality issues, encourages people to take action and incorporate air quality knowledge into their daily lives.

Spare the Air Alerts are issued when smog, or ozone pollution, is forecast to reach unhealthy levels. Ozone can cause throat irritation, congestion and chest pain. It can trigger asthma, inflame the lining of the lungs, and worsen bronchitis and emphysema. Ozone pollution is particularly harmful for young children, seniors, and those with respiratory and heart conditions. When a Spare the Air Alert is called, limit outdoor exercise in the late afternoon when temperatures and ozone concentrations are highest.

To find out when a Spare the Air Alert is in effect, residents can register for email or text notifications at [www.sparetheair.org/alerts](http://www.sparetheair.org/alerts), call 1(800) HELP-AIR, download the Spare the Air Bay Area App or connect with Spare the Air on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

The [Bay Area Air Quality Management District](#) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area. Connect with the Air District via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#). For more information about Spare the Air, visit [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org).

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