

Air District Update to CEQA Thresholds of Significance for Greenhouse Gases

Public Workshop
December 9, 2021



BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT

How to Use

Black menu bar at top or bottom of screen:



Audio

Please mute yourself when not speaking

Video

Participants

- See others
- Rename yourself (Name and Group/Agency Affiliation if applicable)
- Raise hand (remember to lower)

Chat Feature

To provide questions and or comments when chat is enabled

Reaction

Raise hand, give thumbs up or applaud



Virtual Participation Principles

One person speaks at a time

Please mute when not speaking

Respect all opinions

Agenda



INTRODUCTIONS
& WELCOME



PRESENTATION



QUESTIONS,
ANSWERS &
DISCUSSION



CLOSING &
NEXT STEPS



Poll

- Who is in the Zoom-room?



Objectives

- Provide information on draft proposal for updating the Air District's CEQA Thresholds of Significance for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- Receive feedback on the presented concepts.





Update to the Greenhouse Gas Thresholds of Significance

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- What is driving the update
- Land use project thresholds
- Stationary Source thresholds
- Plan-level thresholds
- Next Steps

Air District Roles in CEQA

The Air District acts as a:

- **Lead agency** when it has the primary authority to implement or approve a project.
- **Responsible agency** when it has limited discretionary authority over a portion of a project.
- **Commenting agency** when it has concerns about the air quality or greenhouse gas impacts of a proposed project.

The Air District supports lead agencies with CEQA by:

- Establishing **thresholds** of significance for air quality and greenhouse gas emissions
- Providing **guidance** on methodology and best practices
- Developing **tools** to assist practitioners with the analysis



Determining a Significant Impact

- A significant impact occurs when a project would cause a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in the environment
- Thresholds of significance help lead agencies determine whether a project may cause adverse environmental impacts
- The Air District provides recommended air quality and greenhouse gas emissions thresholds to assist lead agencies with CEQA
- Lead agencies have the discretion to set their own thresholds



What is driving this CEQA Thresholds update?

Things have changed since we adopted the 2010 thresholds...

- New State GHG Targets
 - AB 32's 2020 targets replaced by SB 32
 - 2017 Scoping Plan sets 2030 targets
- EO B-55-18: Carbon neutrality as soon as possible; no later than 2045
- Local governments are asking us to update our GHG thresholds to support their planning
- Evolving case law



Proposed changes: Land Use Projects

(Proposed changes are BOLD)

Pollutant	Current	Proposed (Must include A or B)
GHGs	1,100 MT/yr OR compliance with qualified GHG strategy, OR 4.6 MT/SP/yr (residents + employees)	<p>A. Projects must include, at a minimum, the following project design elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Buildings <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. No natural gas (residential and non-residential) 2) Transportation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Achieve compliance with EV requirements in the most recently adopted version of CalGreen Tier 2 b. Achieve SB 743 target of 15% reduction in VMT per capita below regional average <p>B. Be consistent with a local GHG Reduction Strategy that meets the criteria under the CEQA Guidelines section 15183.5(b)*</p>

*The Air District is including guidance on how local climate action plans can comply with Section 15183.5(b).



Buildings & Transportation



Proposed changes: Stationary Sources

(Proposed changes are bolded)

Pollutant	Current	Proposed
GHGs	10,000 MT/yr	Compliance with Cap-and-Trade <u>OR</u> 2,000 MT/yr



Typical Stationary Source



Proposed changes: Plan Level

(Proposed changes are BOLD)

Pollutant	Current	Proposed
GHGs	Compliance with Qualified GHG Reduction Strategy OR 6.6 MT CO ₂ e per service population per year	A. Meets State's goals to achieve 40% emissions below 1990 levels by 2030, and carbon neutrality by 2045; <u>OR</u> B. Be consistent with a local GHG reduction Strategy that meets the criteria under the CEQA Guidelines section 15183.5(b)*

*The Air District is including guidance on how local climate action plans can comply with Section 15183.5(b).



Greenhouse Gas Thresholds of Significance Update Timeline



CEQA Practitioner Focus Groups – Aug & Sept 2021



Air District Committee Meeting – Sept 2021



Equity/Environmental Justice Focus Group – Nov 2021



Public workshop – December 9, 2021



Air District Board – February or March 2022

Stakeholder Feedback to Date

Overall support for the approach:

- Generally, people like the qualitative approach and the design elements
- Appreciate the alignment with state policy, codes and standards
- Many good suggestions were made about different strategies and measures that could be included in the Guidance

Some concerns surrounding:

- Projects that include specialized uses with limited alternatives to natural gas
- Recently adopted CAPs might not take carbon neutrality into account in their target-setting
- Rural communities can have a difficult time meeting the State SB743 VMT reductions
- Use of offsets will allow for continued pollution in over-burdened communities



Questions, Answers & Discussion

