



**BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT**

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Nate Miley

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Ken Carlson
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Tyrone Jue
(SF Mayor's Appointee)
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SAN MATEO COUNTY

Noelia Corzo
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(Vice Chair)
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Margaret Abe-Koga
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Sergio Lopez
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SOLANO COUNTY

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Steve Young

SONOMA COUNTY

Brian Barnacle
Lynda Hopkins
(Secretary)

Dr. Philip M. Fine
EXECUTIVE OFFICER/APCO

Connect with the
Bay Area Air District:



May 22, 2023

The Honorable Scott Peters
California Congressman, 50th District
1201 Longworth Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Cleaner Air Spaces Act of 2023 (Peters) – Support

Dear Congressman Peters:

On behalf of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Bay Area AQMD), I wish to inform you of our support of the Cleaner Air Spaces Act of 2023, which will enable eligible entities, including air pollution control agencies, to establish accessible cleaner air centers located in areas at risk of being exposed to wildfire smoke and provides the opportunity to distribute air filtration units in low-income communities.

Wildfires and the smoke they cause have been increasingly common in California due to drought, heat waves, and high winds. Climate change has made wildfires more frequent and deadlier, and eight of the ten largest wildfires in California's history have occurred in the last decade. Wildfire smoke has become a significant public health risk for communities. This toxic air, which often contains elevated levels of contaminants from burned structures, vehicles, and consumer products, can travel the length of the state, causing negative health impacts to vulnerable populations including children, the elderly, people with existing health problems, and disadvantaged communities. As the past several fire seasons have shown, poor air quality is a persistent concern.

The Bay Area AQMD has and will continue to dedicate a significant effort to improving wildfire smoke public health response capabilities in the Bay Area Region in the coming years and additional funding opportunities will allow us to ensure this valuable work continues and reaches as many vulnerable residents as possible. As in many parts of the state, wildfire smoke from several of the catastrophic fires in recent years blanketed the region with smoke for weeks at a time, erasing public health gains made over many years through air district programs to reduce emissions from mobile and stationary sources.

The Bay Area AQMD has been involved with numerous efforts to protect the health of the Bay Area residents from the harmful effects of wildfire smoke. In 2019, the Bay Area AQMD sponsored a state bill – Wildfire Smoke Clean Air Center Incentive Program for Vulnerable Populations (Wicks, Chapter 393, Statutes of 2019) – which created a statewide program to establish a network of publicly accessible facilities with high-efficiency air filtration systems for people who may not otherwise have access to clean air during wildfire events.

Additionally, in 2021, the Bay Area AQMD Management expanded its Clean Air Filtration Program, providing portable air filtration units to unhoused and low-income residents in impacted communities as well as to emergency centers

throughout the Bay Area. This was the first program of its kind and helps mitigate the potential health impacts of wildfires, especially for the Bay Area's most vulnerable residents. Innovative programs like these that directly target residents where they live can make a huge improvement in their quality of life, but expansion throughout the Bay Area and the rest of California requires additional funding opportunities. For this, we are fully supportive of the Cleaner Air Spaces Act of 2023 and thank you for your leadership in this area.

The Bay Area AQMD is committed to reducing air pollution in California and ensuring that every one of the region's nearly 8 million residents can breathe clean, healthful air. We are also committed to ensuring that the state's most disproportionately affected populations realize emissions reductions as expeditiously as possible. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (415) 749-5052, or our Legislative Officer, Alan Abbs at (916) 769-7769.

Sincerely,

Philip M. Fine
Executive Officer/APCO

PMF:AA