

LATEST UPDATES

FROM THE SAC METRO AIR DISTRICT



Taking a Deep Breath - The Staying Power of Teleworking & Cleaner Air from Less Solo Driving

As we consider returning to a semblance of pre-COVID pandemic “normal” life, it’s important to reflect and re-imagine how we should move forward. One of the few silver-linings of sheltering-in-place was the noticeable improvement in air quality we saw in the region.

The greater Sacramento region has the unwanted distinction of being in the top 15 in the country for the worst ozone or PM2.5 pollution. As we went into sheltering following the county health orders, air quality in the region improved significantly. For example, in April 2020, air pollution decreased approximately 10% - 35%, largely driven by the more than 70% reduction in vehicle miles traveled in the six-county region. These air quality improvements are comparable to what was seen in many other places around the world under similar lockdown.



And it all makes sense. We are still heavily reliant on fossil fuels for transportation. Motor vehicles (of all shapes and sizes) and equipment powered by gasoline or diesel engines are responsible for most air and climate pollution. As we stopped driving, tailpipe pollution decreased, and the air got cleaner. For instance, the largest employer in the region is the State of California. Before COVID, nearly 40,000 state workers reported driving alone, generating more than 800 metric tons of CO₂ from driving 1.6 million miles every commute day. The level of improvement we saw in air quality was very significant and should be inspiration for us to envision a cleaner and more sustainable future.

So, stay tuned as this agency promotes a broader regional discussion about the *game plan* for teleworking long-term and how to balance other priorities like promoting economic development and commercial revitalization.

-Alberto Ayala, APCO, Sac Metro Air District



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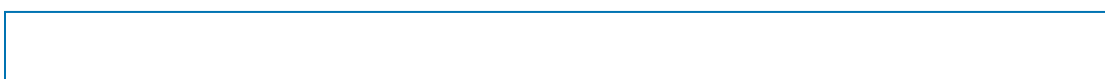
District Updates

Emergency Plan Will Help Residents Make Decisions During Smoke Episodes

Tracking air quality is a good step for everyone to take. When wildfire smoke drifts into our region, it’s especially important to know what the air quality conditions are and to take steps to reduce exposure because smoke can be particularly unhealthy to breathe. During those smoky days, schools, businesses and public agencies need to know where to get air quality information that can help them make decisions to reduce smoke exposure for children, employees and Sacramento County residents. But it hasn’t always been clear where to go and what to do in the moment when smoke quickly descends. That’s why the Sac Metro Air District is developing a Wildfire Smoke Air Pollution Emergency Plan that will serve as a guide for Sacramento County residents and employers.



Working in partnership with the Sacramento County Public Health Department, Offices of Emergency Services, school districts, and other business stakeholders, the Emergency Plan has been taking shape. The plan will be completed in 2022, but many tools have already been created and are available for use now including a quick reference [5-Step Planning Guide](#), [Air Quality Action Charts](#) and [outreach advisories](#). These resources can be found at the Sac Metro Air District website on our [Wildfire Smoke Information webpage](#). The Air District strongly recommends using these tools in conjunction with the [EPA AirNow Fire and Smoke Map](#) during smoke events. Know the air quality, follow the recommended actions and stay healthy out there.



Strategy Prioritizes Efforts to Accelerate Reducing GHG Emissions & Meeting Climate Goals



The Sacramento region is the leader in many aspects of zero emission vehicles. From the nation's largest electric school bus fleet to a robust network of alternative fuel infrastructure, the region has taken many steps to clean up the transportation sector. However, despite these advances, more is needed to meet California's goals of reducing emissions on our state's roads. But where is the biggest need, and how are we going to get there? These are the questions four of the region's leading agencies asked themselves and each other recently, which

resulted in the development of a strategic plan on how best to answer those questions.

The Sac Metro Air District, along with SMUD, SACOG, and Sac RT created the "Sacramento Area Zero Emission Deployment Strategy," known as the ZEV strategy, as a way to prioritize where efforts and funds from these agencies should be directed. The ZEV strategy is a guidebook the agencies will use to work together to create a safe, reliable, and clean transportation network for all residents, with a special emphasis on those that have been traditionally underserved and continue to face mobility challenges. The ZEV Strategy looks at ways to increase the use of zero emission transit fleets to move people, reduce emission in the goods movement sector by building a robust network of electric vehicles and charging infrastructure in the region, providing more access in under resourced communities with electric mobility hubs, and providing workforce development and training opportunities that this new and innovative transportation technology will bring to the region.

Working together, and with great partners that are leading the push like the City of Sacramento, the region can make big advancements toward meeting our state's goals on reducing vehicle emissions, cleaning the air we breathe, and creating a transportation system everyone can use.

Check Before You Burn Resumes November 1

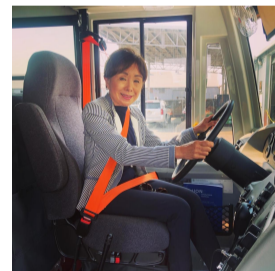


The Sac Metro Air District's annual Check Before You Burn season runs from November 1 through the end of February. This wood burning regulation, [Rule 421 Mandatory Episodic Curtailment Of Wood And Other Solid Fuel Burning](#), restricts or prohibits the use of all fireplaces, woodstoves, inserts and pellet stoves when fine particle pollution (PM2.5) is forecast to be high. This law applies to residents and businesses in unincorporated Sacramento County, Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, Galt, Isleton, Rancho Cordova and Sacramento.

Remember, Check Before You Burn is a law in Sacramento County and penalties apply for violations. Check the daily burn day status by visiting [AirQuality.org](#), calling 1-877-NO-BURN-5 or downloading the free Sacramento Region Air Quality app. To report a wood burning violation please call 800-880-9025 or file a complaint [here](#).

District Highlights

Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-Calif.) visits Lion Electric and gets behind the wheel of a Twin Rivers School District EV school bus. Through incentive programs administered by the Sac Metro Air District, every school district in the county has at least one all-electric school bus making Sacramento County the home of the largest EV school bus fleet in North America.



More EV School Bus News



On October 28, 2021 the District Board of Directors authorized the Air Pollution Control Officer to execute contracts with the Elk Grove Unified School District and the Twin Rivers Unified School District totaling more than \$7 million dollars for electric school bus funding. This means Sacramento County's EV school bus fleet will grow by at least 29 buses in the next two years. These all-electric buses are zero emission. Having these buses on the road instead of old, dirty, polluting vehicles protects public health while dramatically decreasing vehicle maintenance costs for school districts.

District Announces Award Funding

Earlier this year, the Sac Metro Air District released a competitive solicitation to fund projects designed to reduce the impacts of mobile source emissions in Sacramento region communities. Up to \$18 million was allocated towards projects that met the program guidelines and community needs. The selection process resulted in 45 applicants receiving the total amount of funding available. To view the project list [click here](#).



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