

SACRAMENTO METROPOLITAN



**AIR QUALITY**  
MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## News Release

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# Sac Metro Air District to Develop Wildfire Smoke Emergency Response Plan

October 3, 2019 – Governor Newsom has signed Assembly Bill 661, *Wildfire Smoke Air Pollution Emergency Plan: Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District*, authored by Assemblymember McCarty, District 7.

“The City of Sacramento is grateful for the leadership of Assemblymember McCarty, who sponsored this bill and moved it through the legislative process,” said Sac Metro Air District Director, Steve Hansen. “Last year’s wildfires demonstrated that while we can’t stop smoke from impacting Sacramento residents, we can make sure the District and our partners are well prepared and working to reduce smoke exposure, particularly for vulnerable residents.”

This bill requires the Sac Metro Air District to prepare a wildfire smoke air pollution emergency plan as an informational source for local agencies and the public during wildfire smoke emergencies. The plan will be developed in coordination with the Sacramento County Public Health Officer and in consultation with local offices of emergency services, school districts, regional planning agencies and the California Air Resources Board.

The plan will set recommendations and guidelines that will be health protective during wildfire smoke impacts affecting Sacramento County. These include recommendations for schools, sensitive populations and outdoor workers to decrease their exposure to particulate matter air pollution caused by wildfire smoke. In addition, the plan will include best practices for private businesses and public agencies to reduce their contribution to worsening air pollution during a smoke event.

“Protecting public health is the District’s number one priority,” said Sac Metro Air District Chair, Eric Guerra. “We never plan to fail, but we failed to plan during the last wildfire season. Formalizing a response plan, with the contribution of our partners, will protect the residents and businesses of Sacramento County.”

“For multiple days last year, Sacramento had the worst air quality of anywhere in the world,” said Assemblymember Kevin McCarty (D-Sacramento). “Besides the health impacts, these events caused confusion among our residents in how to properly respond to poor air quality conditions. The Governor’s signing of AB 661 allows our region to strengthen its emergency planning so we are able to step into action when we experience these environmental events. As California continues to respond to wildfires across the state, Sacramentans can know that we are prepared.”

AB 661 directs the Air District to conduct research, public education, outreach air monitoring, and demonstration to develop and evaluate programs and projects that will lead to a coordinated response to the next wildfire smoke episode. The Air District will need to submit its recommendation to the Legislature by January 1, 2022.

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