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Most comprehensive flare monitoring regulation in the nation

Air District Adopts Landmark Refinery Rule

San Francisco, CA. The Board of Directors of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District today adopted a regulation that will require oil refineries to monitor the air pollutants emitted from flare stacks. The rule will affect the twenty-five flare stacks found at the Bay Area's five oil refineries and is the most comprehensive flare monitoring rule in the country. It will require refineries to:

- Monitor the volume and composition of gases burned in flares,
- Calculate the emissions based on the data collected,
- Determine the reasons for the flaring,
- Continuously monitor and record the flares by video camera and
- Submit the data to the Air District on a monthly basis.

"This rule will give us a clear and accurate estimate of the amount of emissions coming from flares at Bay Area refineries," said William Norton, the Air District's CEO. "We will now be able to quantify, for the first time, these emissions and look for ways to reduce them as well," Norton said.

Flares are found at all refineries and are safety devices that burn pollutants that would otherwise be directly released to the atmosphere. In general, flaring results from the start-up and shutdown of units; from gases released by accidents and upsets; and from routine operations. However, as a result of collective research by Air District staff, environmental groups and industry, there has been an evolution of thinking about the quantity of emissions from flares and the potential for monitoring and controlling these emissions. The rule adopted today positions the Air District at the national forefront for the gathering of accurate data about flare emissions that will likely lead to reductions in the future.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is the regional air pollution control agency in the nine county San Francisco Bay Area.

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