



NEWS

**For Immediate Release
June 18, 2003**

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\$226 Million Awarded in Bay Area Grants over Ten Years by Air District's Transportation Fund for Clean Air

San Francisco, CA. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District's (Air District) Transportation Fund for Clean Air (TFCA) has contributed \$226 million over the past ten years to projects that reduce emissions from motor vehicles—the single largest source of air pollution in the Bay Area.

The 1,407 projects around the Bay Area that were funded by the program reduced smog-forming and particulate emissions by an estimated 12,600 tons in the decade since the Air District inaugurated the TFCA grant program. This is equivalent to taking 60,000 cars off the road.

"As much as we are celebrating the many innovative projects the TFCA program has made possible in the past 10 years, we also look forward to what we can achieve in the future," said William C. Norton, CEO, Bay Area Air Quality Management District. "Emerging technologies make this an exciting time for implementing innovative programs to reduce air pollution," Norton added.

The goal of TFCA funds is to implement the most cost-effective projects in the Bay Area that will decrease motor vehicle emissions and, therefore, improve air quality. The fund covers a wide range of project types including: purchase or lease of clean fuel buses, purchase of clean air vehicles, shuttle, and feeder bus service to train stations; ridesharing programs to encourage carpool and transit use; bicycle facility improvements such as bike lanes, bicycle racks, and lockers; road management improvement projects to speed the flow of transit buses and traffic on major roads; and transit projects to enhance the availability and accessibility of transit information.

Some of the criteria used to determine awards include: cost effectiveness at reducing emissions, feasibility, matching funds, effect on disadvantaged communities, and promotion of alternative transportation modes.

The TFCA grant is funded by a \$4 surcharge on Department of Motor Vehicle registration fees collected in the Bay Area. Public agencies can apply for the funds themselves or on behalf of private agencies that provide essential public services such as vanpools and shuttles.

A portion of the TFCA Regional Funds is earmarked for eligible projects that are implemented directly by the Air District. This includes six programs established to improve air quality in various ways.

- **SPARE THE AIR**
One of the programs most familiar to Bay Area residents, the Spare the Air Program advises the public when air quality is poor and asks for cooperation in limiting polluting behaviors such as driving and other activities. To sign up to receive Spare the Air notices via e-mail and for daily air quality forecasts, visit www.sparetheair.org or call 1-800-HelpAir.
- **VEHICLE BUY BACK PROGRAM**
The Air District offers \$500 to scrap your 1981 or older car, van, or pick-up truck. Because these older vehicles have less efficient emission control equipment, they produce significantly more air pollution than newer vehicles. Since inception of the TFCA grant, The Vehicle Buy Back program has purchased 15,700 vehicles and decreased emissions by 2,050 tons.
- **SMOKING VEHICLES PROGRAM**
Smoking vehicles contribute up to 30 percent of the soot and particles in the air we breathe, which is a serious health hazard. This program is intended to educate the public that smoking vehicles, those that emit excessive visible exhaust, generate 10 to 15 times more pollution than well-tuned vehicles. Fortunately, keeping vehicles in good repair can prevent smoking vehicles. This program encourages reporting smoking vehicles on the road by calling 1-800-EXHAUST or filling out a short complaint form on-line at www.800exhaust.org.
- **VEHICLE INCENTIVE PROGRAM**
The Vehicle Incentive Program provides incentives to public agencies for purchasing or leasing cleaner-fueled fleet vehicles. Fleet vehicles often travel extensive distances to do their jobs and so are good candidates for emissions reductions when running on cleaner fuels. This program has funded many of the natural gas, propane, hydrogen, electric, and hybrid-electric vehicles driving on Bay Area roadways. All funded vehicles are certified to the ultra-low, super-ultra-low, or the zero emissions vehicle standard. This program has provided over \$3.2 million for the purchase and lease of 796 vehicles.

- **LOWER EMISSION SCHOOL BUS PROGRAM**
The Lower-Emission School Bus Program helps school districts buy cleaner school buses. By replacing old school buses with new natural gas, propane, or electric-powered buses and by retrofitting old diesel school buses with particulate matter (PM) control devices, this program reduces harmful emissions of diesel PM and oxides of nitrogen. Because school children interact with these buses daily and because they are more susceptible to air pollution, reduced emissions from buses is a substantial benefit. The Lower-Emission School Bus Program has funded in excess of \$13.6 million for 125 bus replacements and 29 bus retrofits.
- **CHARGE!**
Charge! is the TFCA's newest program, aimed at helping to create a network of public access electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. Both public and private entities can apply to purchase and install EV chargers within the boundaries of the Air District's nine-counties. The Charge! program was developed to increase EV range and boost consumer confidence by providing a network of public access charging stations in the Bay Area. Thus far the program has provided \$73 thousand in grants to install 27 inductive and conductive charging stations.

In the ten years since the TFCA's inception, the Air District has expanded the number and type of programs funded by the program from two to eight, making it a more robust program available to greater numbers of applicants. The number of project applications has increased annually, ensuring that the funds are being spent on the best projects that the Bay Area has to offer. Despite state of California budget cuts, TFCA will continue to fund innovative programs to reduce air pollution. Visit www.baaqmd.gov for more information on the program.

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