



NEWS

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For Immediate Release

Monday, October 17, 2005

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Spare the Air/Free Morning Commute Program Officially Ends Summer Smog Season Closes on a Record-Breaking Low Only One Spare the Air Advisory Issued in 2005

San Francisco, CA – Oct. 17, 2005 – The summertime 2005 smog season came to an official close last week, with just one Spare the Air advisory called this summer, the lowest since the Spare the Air program began in 1991. This single-day event was held on July 26. This year, the Bay Area had just one excess of the federal air quality standard for ground-level ozone and only nine excesses of the more stringent state ozone standards.

“Ten years ago the Air District issued 24 Spare the Air advisories in the summer of ‘95.” said Air District Executive Officer Jack Broadbent. “With only one Spare the Air day in 2005 we continue to make progress in cleaning the air, but we have to keep up our efforts as meteorological conditions can make a difference from year to year.” Broadbent added.

Since the Air District was created 50 years ago, a combination of strict controls on industry and consumer products, coupled with increasingly stringent controls on motor vehicles, has led to a steady reduction in air pollution. The Spare the Air program was created to notify the public when air pollution is expected to reach unhealthy concentrations and to encourage Bay Area residents to take individual action to reduce harmful pollutants.

This summer the Air District partnered with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and regional transit agencies to expand the Spare the Air/Free Morning Commute program. For the first time, free morning commutes were offered on 20 regional transit systems on Spare the Air week days. **The free morning commute program officially ended on October 14, 2005.**

The increased signage and publicity related to the 2005 Spare the Air/Free Morning commute program helped spread the Spare the Air message to the public. The public reduced air pollution on Spare the Air days by:

- Increasing overall transit ridership in the region by 6.7%. According to MTC, the estimated vehicle miles reduced by commuters taking advantage of the free morning commute is about 64,270 miles, which is the equivalent distance of driving between San Francisco to Los Angeles 85 times!
- Reducing driving. Over seven percent of Bay Area drivers reduced at least one trip to help Spare the Air.
- Joining AirAlerts, the e-mail notification system which gives 24 hour advance notice of Spare the Air days. Registrants reached an all time high of over 31,200 individuals.

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