



NEWS

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Air District passes guidelines to protect Bay Area neighborhoods

SAN FRANCISCO – Today, the Bay Area Air District became the first regulatory agency in the nation to approve guidelines that establish thresholds for greenhouse gases and toxic risks from proposed development projects.

“The Air District’s new comprehensive CEQA Guidelines provide tools for local agencies to use in making smart development decisions that protect residents from harmful air emissions and reduce greenhouse gases,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District.

The California Environmental Quality Act, or CEQA, requires state and local public agencies to identify the environmental impacts of any plans or projects that they fund, approve or carry out. The Air District developed these new CEQA Guidelines as a reference for local governments to use in determining whether proposed development projects pose a significant health risk to local residents.

Under the new CEQA Guidelines, local agencies will consider existing sources of air emissions in a specific area when evaluating the additional health risks that would be brought about by a proposed project. The cumulative risk provision will be especially protective of communities that already have significant air quality concerns.

The Air District’s guidelines set thresholds for air pollutants, including greenhouse gases, above which there would likely be harmful environmental impacts. The guidelines also recommend measures to mitigate air quality and public health impacts.

The Air District held numerous public workshops to seek input on the proposed updates to the CEQA Guidelines and worked closely with local planning directors and public health officials in the development process to produce extensive technical support documentation and in-depth case studies.

The Air District’s new CEQA Guidelines can be viewed at:
www.baaqmd.gov/Divisions/Planning-and-Research/CEQA-GUIDELINES.aspx.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baaqmd.gov) is the regional agency chartered with protecting air quality in the Bay Area.

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