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Air District marks completion of “Cool Roof” project at Las Juntas Elementary School

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District and its project partners, the Martinez Unified School District and the County of Contra Costa, today announced the completion of the “cool roof” retrofit and other energy efficiency upgrades at the Las Juntas Elementary School in Martinez.

Installation of the cool roof, weatherization, and air filters will reduce energy use and increase student comfort in this 60’s era building.

“Dark roofs mean higher air conditioning bills, and higher greenhouse gas emissions,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District, “The new ‘cool roof’ at Las Juntas will reduce interior temperatures on sunny days without using any additional energy. It will also provide a more comfortable environment for the children who attend school there.”

Cool roofs are an engineered material with a high solar reflectance that emits the sun's heat back to the sky instead of transferring it to the building below. In addition to increased energy savings and occupant comfort, cool roofs reduce the urban heat island effect.

Urban regions tend to experience higher temperatures year-round in comparison with surrounding rural areas. This is known as the urban heat island effect. Buildings and pavement made of dark materials absorb the sun's rays instead of reflecting them, causing the temperature of the surfaces and the air around them to rise. The loss of vegetation and the prevalence of asphalt pavement effectively increases regional temperatures.

The urban heat island effect increase summertime peak energy demand, air conditioning costs, and greenhouse gas emissions. Levels of ozone pollution are closely associated with increases in temperature.

“I’m pleased that we were able to bring all the partners to the table to make this a reality,” said Gayle B. Uilkema, Contra Costa Supervisor and Air District board member. “The Las Juntas cool roof project not only demonstrates a cost effective energy-saving option for homes and businesses, it’s also an investment in our children’s future.”

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is the regional agency chartered with protecting air quality in the Bay Area. For more information, visit www.baaqmd.gov.

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