



NEWS

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CONTACT: Ralph Borrmann
415.749.4900

Air District receives Clean Air Award for achievements

SAN FRANCISCO – Today, Breathe California honored the Bay Area Air Quality Management District with a *2011 Annual Clean Award* as one of 12 local “Green Leaders” who have made a significant contribution to clean air in the region.

The Air District’s award was bestowed for adoption of the nation’s first air quality guidance limits for greenhouse gas emissions and cumulative local toxics exposure from proposed plans and development projects.

“It’s gratifying to be recognized for the hard work our staff puts in, year after year, to improve air quality in the Bay Area,” said Jack Broadbent, the Air District’s executive officer, who accepted the award. “Our CEQA thresholds will ensure that growth takes place in a way that protects public health in all of our local communities.”

The Air District’s air quality thresholds of significance were published in the agency’s updated California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, approved by the Air District’s Board of Directors in June 2010. The CEQA Guidelines act as a reference for local governments to use in determining the air quality impacts of proposed plans and projects. CEQA requires state and local public agencies to identify and mitigate the environmental impacts of any plans or projects that they approve, carry out, or fund.

For the first time, the Air District’s guidelines include greenhouse gas emission thresholds, designed to minimize the climate change impacts of development in the region. Under the new air quality thresholds of significance, local agencies will also need for the first time to consider the cumulative impacts from existing sources of air pollution in a given area in the process of 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 Award was announced at the 21st Annual Clean Air Awards Luncheon, held at the Merchant Exchange Building in San Francisco. The event was attended by over 200 local environmental leaders, and California Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg gave the keynote speech.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baaqmd.gov) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area.

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