



NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 15, 2012**

**CONTACT: Lisa Fasano (Friday)
415.749.4900 (office)
415.710.3505 (cell)**

Air District issues first *Spare the Air Smog Alert* of 2012 Bay Area residents urged to leave their cars at home

SAN FRANCISCO – Today the Bay Area Air Quality Management District issued the first *Spare the Air Alert* for smog in 2012.

Air quality in the Bay Area is forecast to be unhealthy tomorrow, Saturday, June 16, 2012. There is no free transit tomorrow and there is no wood burning ban in place. The Air District recommends residents avoid outdoor activities during the hottest part of the day, when air quality is unhealthiest.

“High temperatures and tailpipe exhaust from vehicles on Bay Area roads will combine to create smog,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “To help avoid unhealthy air quality this summer, we are asking residents to leave their car at home at least twice a week - take transit, work from home, carpool or bike to work instead of driving alone.”

Spare the Air Alerts are issued when ozone pollution is forecast to reach unhealthy levels. Ozone, or smog, can cause throat irritation, congestion, chest pain, trigger asthma, inflame the lining of the lungs and worsen bronchitis and emphysema. Long-term exposure to ozone can reduce lung function. Ozone pollution is particularly harmful for young children, seniors and those with respiratory and heart conditions. When a *Spare the Air Alert* is issued, outdoor exercise should be done only in the early morning hours when ozone concentrations are lower.

Smog is formed when volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides from motor vehicle exhaust, gasoline vapors, industrial emissions and household chemicals combine with oxygen in the presence of heat and sunlight.

Residents can help *Spare the Air* by carpooling, taking transit, biking or walking instead of driving alone. Visit sparetheair.org or 511.org for more information about commute alternatives.

Residents can check for *Spare the Air Alerts* by:

- Visiting sparetheair.org
- Calling the toll-free hotline 1-800-HELPAIR (435-7247)
- Signing up for email AirAlerts at sparetheair.org
- Downloading the *Spare the Air* iPhone or Android app
- Connecting with *Spare the Air* on Facebook, Twitter or Google+

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. For more information about *Spare the Air*, visit www.sparetheair.org.

###