

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Air District issues Spare the Air Smog Alert

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

Air quality in the Bay Area is forecast to be unhealthy tomorrow, Thursday, August 9. 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.

“With five Spare the Air Alerts already this summer and the hottest weather of the season likely yet to come, we need to do more to reduce air pollution,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “To do this, we must reduce the number of cars on Bay Area roads so we can avoid unhealthy air during high heat days.”

The Air District encourages the public to re-think their commute by taking transit, carpooling, working from home or biking and leave their car at home twice a week to avoid air pollution that builds up and creates unhealthy smog when the Bay Area experiences high temperatures.

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, switching to an electric vehicle, biking or walking. 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, Google+ or Twitter - follow the hashtag #staalert on Twitter to get Spare the Air Alerts

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.

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