



NEWS

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Air District embarks on refinery emissions reduction strategy

SAN FRANCISCO - Today, the Board of Directors of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District embarked on an ambitious refinery emissions reduction strategy, designed to protect public health by further reducing emissions from local refineries.

This Bay Area Refinery Emissions Reduction Strategy was called for in the Air District's groundbreaking Refinery Emissions Reduction Resolution, passed on October 15, which sets a goal of reducing refinery emissions by 20 percent or as much as feasible in the next five years.

"Our new Refinery Emissions Reduction Strategy continues and reaffirms the Air District's commitment to significantly decrease harmful air pollution in our communities," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. "This strategy will ensure that refineries are taking the strongest steps to cut emissions and minimize their health impacts on neighboring residents and the region as a whole."

As part of the strategy's development process, Air District staff evaluated a range of approaches against a variety of factors—including reductions of "criteria pollutants" (pollutants for which air quality standards have been established), toxics and greenhouse gases, as well as impacts on neighboring communities—in order to determine the best way to further reduce refinery emissions.

The strategy involves five components:

1. Overall Goals. The strategy will seek to achieve a 20 percent reduction in criteria pollutants from refineries in the next five years, as well as a 20 percent reduction in health risk to local communities.

2. Reduction of Criteria Pollutants. Under a focused Best Available Retrofit Control Technology program, the Air District will investigate significant sources at refineries and pursue a variety of additional pollution controls at these sources. Rulemaking is already underway to reduce sulfur dioxide from coke calciners and particulate matter from catalytic cracking units. Several other rules to reduce refinery emissions will be developed in 2015.

3. Reduction of Health Risks from Toxic Air Pollution. This approach will begin with requirements to reduce toxic emissions from key refinery sources such as cooling towers and coking units. The focused toxics approach will also include site-wide Health Risk Assessments and the identification of sources for further emission controls, using health benefits as an important evaluative tool.

4. Evaluation of greenhouse gas emissions. Under this approach, the Air District would track emission reductions at refineries incurred as a result of the Cap and Trade system under AB 32. Refinery performance would be compared to third-party standards for best practices, with analysis of potential further opportunities for reductions.

Continued...Air District refinery emissions reduction strategy moves forward...

5. Continuous improvement. To ensure continuous improvement in emission reductions, refiners will be required to periodically evaluate the sources of the majority of their emissions in order to determine if additional pollution controls are needed.

The Air District will implement the Bay Area Refinery Emissions Reduction Strategy by developing a package of rules in 2015. The agency will work with community and industry to implement the strategy and refine these proposed rules.

As part of the strategy, the Air District will continue to prepare its Petroleum Refining Emissions Tracking rule, which will require updated health risk assessments and add further fence-line and neighborhood monitoring capacity, as well as mandate the compilation of an annual emission inventory. The Air District will also continue to prepare a companion rule to set emissions thresholds and mitigate potential increases at refineries. These rules are projected to be presented to the Board for adoption in 2015.

The Bay Area has five major oil refineries that produce air pollution and greenhouse gases in the region. These are already subject to more than 20 specific Air District regulations and programs, and their overall emissions have been steadily decreasing.

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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