



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 16, 2015

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Bay Area businesses join the *Great Race for Clean Air* ***Region-wide competition promotes alternative modes of transportation***

SAN FRANCISCO – Today, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District has opened registration for businesses from across the region to compete in the *Great Race for Clean Air*.

This friendly competition between Bay Area businesses and organizations of all sizes encourages employees to carpool, vanpool, walk, bike or ride transit to work, instead of driving alone. The emissions savings are tracked to see which company has done the most to reduce air pollution.

“Tailpipe exhaust from cars and trucks continues to be the largest source of air pollution during the summer months in the Bay Area,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “The Great Race for Clean Air helps reduce the number of cars on Bay Area roads by encouraging commuters to explore alternatives to driving alone to work. This, in turn, helps everyone by improving our air quality.”

The Great Race runs from September 1 through October 31, 2015. Employers who want to participate need to register the company before their employees can join the Great Race. To participate in the Great Race, employers can register online at www.GreatRaceForCleanAir.com.

During the competition, thousands of Bay Area commuters will keep track of their “clean commute days” through an online journal and will be entered into weekly random drawings for prizes, such as gift cards to local merchants.

At the conclusion of the Great Race, winning company teams will be recognized for highest CO₂ savings and highest average of “clean commute days” logged per participant. Employers in five different size categories will be recognized for achieving the highest rate of employee participation.

During the 2014 Great Race for Clean Air, employees at participating Bay Area companies saved approximately 773,225 pounds of carbon dioxide and about 1,000 pounds of smog forming pollutants by not driving alone to work. This is equivalent to taking more than 73 cars off the road for an entire year! Efforts such as these help reduce smog in the Bay Area along and relieve gridlock on our roads.

Studies have shown that employees are more likely to change their commute behavior when encouraged by their employer.

Last year, the Air District passed the Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program which requires businesses with 50 or more full-time employees to offer commuter benefit options to their employees. A competition, like the Great Race for Clean Air, can help businesses comply with the program and help employers learn which commute options work best for their employees and worksites. To learn more, visit 511.org and click on *Commuter Benefits Program*.

The Great Race for Clean Air is sponsored by the Air District in partnership with 511 Rideshare, 511 Contra Costa, the Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance and the San Francisco Department of the Environment. For more information about Spare the Air, visit www.sparetheair.org.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baaqmd.gov) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the Bay Area. For more information about Spare the Air, visit www.sparetheair.org.

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