



BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 28, 2016

CONTACT: Tina Landis

415.749.4900

***Spare the Air* summer season begins May 2 Bay Area commuters encouraged to carpool and rideshare**

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is launching the 2016 *Spare the Air* season on May 2, which focuses on reducing ozone, or smog-forming pollution during the warmer summer months.

The *Spare the Air* program encourages Bay Area residents to reduce air pollution every day by rethinking their commute and avoiding driving alone.

“As the Bay Area’s job market has grown, we see more gridlock on our roads and freeways, and transportation-related pollution,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “We can reduce traffic and smog-forming pollution by rethinking our commute and choosing something other than driving alone.”

Transportation is the largest source of smog pollution in the Bay Area and single occupancy vehicles are the main contributor. The *Spare the Air* summer outreach campaign encourages Bay Area residents to look for ways to share, shorten or change their commutes to reduce smog and traffic gridlock.

Bay Area employees are encouraged to check with their human resources office to learn what commuter benefits are available to them through their employer. The Bay Area Commuter Benefits program requires all employers in the Air District’s jurisdiction with 50 or more full-time employees to offer commuter benefits to their workers.

During the summer months, *Spare the Air* health alerts are issued when ozone pollution is forecast to reach unhealthy levels. Ozone can cause throat irritation, congestion, chest pain, trigger asthma, inflame the lining of the lungs and worsen bronchitis and emphysema. 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 limited to the early morning hours when ozone concentrations are lower.

To find out when a *Spare the Air* Alert is in effect, register for email AirAlerts at sparetheair.org, call 1(800) HELP-AIR, download the *Spare the Air* App or connect with *Spare the Air* on Facebook or Twitter.

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 sparetheair.org.

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