



NEWS

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CONTACT: Tom Flannigan
415.749.4900

Spare the Air smog season begins as warmer weather approaches *Bay Area commuters encouraged to find alternatives to driving alone*

SAN FRANCISCO – Today, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District is announcing the launch of the 2017 *Spare the Air* summer campaign on May 1, which focuses on reducing smog, or ozone, pollution as well as greenhouse gases.

Transportation is the largest source of smog pollution and greenhouse gases in the Bay Area and driving alone in a car is the main contributor. The Spare the Air Every Day campaign encourages Bay Area residents to look for ways to share, shorten or change their commutes to reduce smog, driving alone, traffic and gridlock.

“The Bay Area, unfortunately, has some of the worst traffic in the nation and driving alone just isn’t sustainable in a region that over 7 million people call home,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “The region’s traffic causes harmful smog, generates greenhouse gases and significantly impacts our quality of life. Finding alternatives to driving alone – carpooling, taking transit or working from home – can improve our air quality and help us enjoy all the amenities the Bay Area has to offer.”

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 smog, or 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.

The Air District Board of Director’s recently adopted *Spare the Air, Cool the Climate*, a blueprint for tackling regional air pollution and climate pollutants while improving the health of Bay Area residents for the next several decades. For more information about *Spare the Air, Cool the Climate*, see the new video about our bold vision at <https://youtu.be/p9BxhIrlqrl>.

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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