

NEWS RELEASE

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Air District Board votes to approve community action plan to improve air quality in West Oakland

SAN FRANCISCO – Today the Bay Area Air Quality Management District Board of Directors voted unanimously to approve the community action plan, *Owning Our Air: The West Oakland Community Action Plan*, co-authored by the Air District and the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project.

Owning Our Air lays out a series of strategies and measures to be implemented over the next five years by state, regional and local agencies to further air pollution reductions in West Oakland.

“The plan approved by the Air District Board today is the result of West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project and other stakeholders working closely with Air District staff to deliver a shared vision of a healthier community,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “We look forward to working closely with all West Oakland stakeholders in the years ahead to implement the plan and make a meaningful improvement in peoples’ lives.”

The next step in the community action plan process will be a public hearing of the California Air Resources Board to be held in West Oakland on December 5, 2019, to consider the plan and its approval.

“Owning Our Air is a plan that has been coming together for West Oakland for over 20 years,” said Ms. Margaret Gordon, co-director of the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project. “Because of AB617, we finally are at a place where we know that there can be emission reductions, pollution reductions and public health improvements to the most impacted and vulnerable residents.”

“We have a terrific opportunity in West Oakland to improve our health and quality of life with the implementation of this ambitious plan,” said Brian Beveridge, co-director of the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project. “The entire country is watching to see how local air plans can be created by the very people harmed by pollution. AB617 is unprecedented in empowering communities and this plan offers a road map for dozens of communities already in the planning pipeline. The lessons learned, the successes, as well as the significant challenges of resident-led environmental planning will benefit all disadvantaged communities in California. When we started, we didn’t know how to write an air quality plan. But with our partners at the Air District, we got it done! Now we have to figure out how to implement it, but we’ll get that done, too!”

West Oakland is bounded by the Port of Oakland, the Union Pacific rail yard and the I-580, I-880 and I-980 freeways. Elevated levels of air pollution in West Oakland are the result of concentrated industrial activity including maritime freight, a rail yard and rail lines, large distribution centers, cement and asphalt plants, a power plant, metal facilities, and small to medium industrial and manufacturing operations. Trucks, cars and the road dust they generate also contribute to elevated emission levels.

The plan was developed as a requirement of AB 617, a state law passed concurrently with re-authorization of California’s cap-and-trade program, the centerpiece of the state’s efforts to reduce climate change. AB 617

recognizes that while California has seen tremendous improvement in air quality, not all communities have benefited equally, and some communities located close to freeways, ports, industry or other large pollution sources need additional focus and resources to reduce exposure levels.

A copy of the *Owning Our Air* plan, a plan summary and appendices can be viewed and downloaded online at the link below: <http://www.baaqmd.gov/ab617woak>.

The [Bay Area Air Quality Management District](#) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area. Connect with the Air District via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [YouTube](#).

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