

NEWS RELEASE

baaqmd.gov



Governor Newsom Signs AB 1465 (Wicks), tripling penalties for air quality violations at Title V sources, including refineries

Bay Area Air District-supported bill strengthens accountability for polluters

SAN FRANCISCO — The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is announcing today that Governor Gavin Newsom signed AB 1465 into law, marking a major victory for public health and environmental justice in California. The bill, strongly supported by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, triples the penalty ceilings for air quality violations at Title V sources, including refineries, significantly increasing the potential consequences for facilities that violate air quality regulations.

AB 1465 addresses the current penalty structure, which has not been significantly updated since 2001, with only minor inflationary adjustments in 2018. The new law resets these penalties, providing additional incentives for polluters to prioritize safety, perform required maintenance and communicate with the public about local health concerns.

"The signing of AB 1465 signals a new era of accountability for polluters and is a decisive step toward safeguarding the air we all breathe," said Dr. Philip Fine, executive officer of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. "By raising the penalty ceilings for large industrial sources, this law provides a stronger deterrent for air quality violations and helps protect communities, especially those disproportionately impacted by pollution."

"AB 1465 will reduce community air pollution by holding refineries and other major sources of pollution more accountable to protecting public health. This will reduce asthma attacks, heart attacks and stroke to community residents," said Mariela Ruacho, senior clean air advocacy manager of the American Lung Association.

Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, the author of AB 1465, represents the East Bay in the California State Assembly, with a district spanning the communities of Oakland to Richmond, and includes the City of Berkeley. Assemblymember Wicks made passage of AB 1465 a top priority and has been a tireless advocate for clean air, especially in disadvantaged communities that are disproportionately impacted by air pollution. She has ensured the Air District has the tools needed to protect public health. To better prepare, respond and build resiliency to catastrophic wildfires, she also sponsored the bill that made Clean Air Centers across the state a reality.

Title V sources are large industrial facilities, such as refineries, that are subject to federal air quality permitting requirements due to their potential to emit significant levels of air pollutants. These facilities must comply with strict operating standards and are regularly inspected and monitored to ensure they meet air quality regulations.

AB 1465 also directs the courts and air districts to consider public health impacts, community disruptions, and other factors when determining penalties for air quality violations. Incidents at Bay Area refineries in Richmond, Benicia and Martinez have resulted in school closures, healthcare visits, and shelter-in-place orders, prompting a review of existing penalties and their effectiveness in addressing such violations.

By increasing the potential financial consequences of non-compliance, the new law aims to further discourage refineries and other major facilities from continuing to operate in ways that endanger public health. AB 1465 will be particularly beneficial to communities located near heavily industrialized areas which are disproportionately impacted by air pollution. Earlier this year, the Air District Board of Directors adopted a groundbreaking policy that directs a significant portion of penalty funds to the communities most impacted by air quality violations. Under this policy, most of these penalty funds will be reinvested in local projects specifically designed to reduce pollution and enhance public health.

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 [X/Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

#

Air District Communications Office
375 Beale Street, Suite 600, San Francisco, CA 94105
[Air District Homepage](#) | [News Releases](#)