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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Regional Agencies Mark Milestone in the Mandatory Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program**

*Thousands of reminder letters to be mailed, employers urged to enroll today*

**SAN FRANCISCO** – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission today marked the 10-year anniversary of the Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program, which requires employers with 50 or more full-time employees in the region to enroll in the program, select the commuter benefit option they will provide, and identify how they will promote that benefit to employees. Options include a pre-tax benefit that allows employees to exclude transit or vanpool costs from taxable income; subsidies to cover or reduce employees' month transit or vanpool costs; employer-provided transit; a company-wide telework policy; or an alternative benefit that reduces single-occupancy commute trips.



The Air District and MTC today began mailing thousands of courtesy notification letters of noncompliance to employers whose registration has lapsed and to employers who have not yet enrolled in the program. Annual updates are part of the program requirements. The Air District and MTC developed the Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program in response to Senate Bill 1339, which was signed into law by then-Governor Jerry Brown in September 2012. After a two-year pilot program, [Air District Regulation 14, Rule 1](#) was adopted by its board of directors in March 2014. The goal of the program has been to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and traffic congestion by using the federal tax code to encourage employees to commute via alternatives to driving alone.

When the pandemic halted much of the Bay Area commute, the Air District paused notification activities for the Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program. A grace period for employer notifications was put in

place while enhanced regional outreach activities were conducted to reeducate employers and employer organizations about the program.

“Now is the time employers can implement transformative change in both our workplaces and on our roadways, creating lasting benefits for our environment and our health,” said Davina Hurt, Belmont City Council member and Air District Board Chair. “By embracing sustainable commuting solutions, employers help improve the quality of life for all Bay Area residents, especially those disproportionately affected by transportation-related pollution.”

“Congestion on many of the region’s highways and bridges has now surpassed pre-pandemic levels, and that increase can negatively impact the Bay Area’s economic growth,” said Jim Wunderman, executive director of the Bay Area Council. “Employers can play an important role in addressing our traffic problem by encouraging their employees to examine their commute habits and take full advantage of the many valuable benefits available to use transit.”

“By promoting commuter benefits options to employees, employers not only help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but they can also help both parties save money on payroll taxes,” said Alfredo Pedroza, Napa County Supervisor and MTC Chair. “Whether it is by carpooling, riding transit, biking or working remotely, commuters who opt to not drive solo in their vehicles positively impact the region. “

To enroll in the Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program or to update their status, employers should visit the [program website](#). Registration is free and takes approximately 15 minutes. For additional assistance, the program team may be reached at (510) 285-3183 or [commuterbenefits@511.org](mailto:commuterbenefits@511.org).

The [Metropolitan Transportation Commission](#) is the transportation planning, financing and coordinating agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. 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](#).

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