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Air District fines Radius Recycling, formerly Schnitzer Steel, \$575,000 for air quality violations

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District announced today that Radius Recycling, formerly Schnitzer Steel, has agreed to pay \$575,000 to settle air quality violations that occurred at its facilities in West Oakland and San Jose. The penalty resolves eight notices of violation.

Seven of the notices of violation are associated with the installation and operation of air pollution abatement equipment that the Air District and other agencies required Radius Recycling to install at its metal shredder in West Oakland. A separate notice of violation was issued to Pick-n-Pull Auto Dismantlers in San Jose, which is owned and operated by Radius Recycling, for failure to change out a carbon filter matrix used to control gasoline vapors.

“The communities where these facilities are located already experience a disproportionate share of environmental pollution,” said Dr. Philip Fine, executive officer of the Air District. “We take these violations seriously and are committed to ensuring that air pollution control technologies are fully operational at all times to safeguard air quality and protect the health of those living in the surrounding neighborhoods.”

In May 2024, the Air District’s 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, \$237,500 of this penalty will be reinvested in local projects specifically designed to reduce pollution and enhance public health in the communities affected by these violations.

At its West Oakland facility, Radius Recycling shreds and sorts metal materials, such as older vehicles and appliances, which are then sold and transported from the facility for reuse in steel mills and foundries globally. Pick-n-Pull Auto Dismantlers, located in San Jose, offers self-service recycled auto parts to the general public.

In 2022, Radius Recycling installed new abatement equipment on the metal shredder at its West Oakland location to comply with Air District regulations. The mandated abatement equipment has been effective in reducing the shredder’s potential to emit precursor organic compound emissions from its stacks from approximately 236.7 tons per year to just 5.1 tons per year, as well as in greatly reducing risks from toxic air contaminants. However, in 2022, emissions testing identified certain problems with the abatement equipment, including tuning issues that were

leading to increased emissions of oxides of nitrogen and problems with a mist eliminator that allowed higher-than-permitted particulate matter emissions. Subsequent testing in late 2022 and 2023 showed that these problems had been resolved. The Air District issued these seven notices of violation for those violations and for other related issues such as late submittal of test results.

This penalty does not address notices of violation the Air District issued in connection with the August 2023 fire at the West Oakland facility. The Air District has referred those notices of violation to the Alameda County District Attorney to allow for criminal prosecution of that case. Under California law, air quality violations can be prosecuted civilly by the Air District or criminally by the District Attorney, but not both. The District Attorney’s criminal prosecution is ongoing.

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](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

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