



## PERMITTING EFFICIENCY TASKFORCE DISCUSSION SUMMARY

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2026

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Staff contact: Janet Whittick

Executive Officer Fine, Principal Deputy Executive Officer Bauer, and Deputy Executive Officer Crawford welcomed the taskforce at its inaugural meeting and explained that its purpose is to provide a forum for ongoing discussions about improvements to the Air District's permitting program and permit processing. Dr. Bauer explained that participants are meant to be broadly representative of the more than 10,000 permitted facilities in the region and communities in which they operate, noting that the final composition of the taskforce was still under development in consultation with the Board of Directors ad hoc committee on permitting. Dr. Fine commented that much progress has been made already, but fully addressing the permit backlog and reaching maintenance levels in permit processing could take two to three years to achieve. Deputy Executive Officer Crawford encouraged the taskforce to work with staff to identify opportunities for improved efficiency, including the use of new technology tools that can modernize systems and notifications, with Dr. Fine emphasizing that any changes made must also maintain or strengthen public health protections and regulatory stringency.

Janet Whittick, Engineering Program Manager, facilitated the meeting and reviewed proposed ground rules and the monthly meeting schedule, including periodic joint meetings with the Board ad hoc. Brian Butler, Senior Air Quality Engineer, was introduced as the incoming staff lead and point of contact for the taskforce. Staff noted that the taskforce would assist with concept development, with a focus on permit processing and communications, and that any rule or policy changes would still go through the Air District's full public rulemaking process.

Staff presented background information on the status of permit processing and permitting challenges, including a preliminary analysis of root causes, and an overview of performance tracking and strategic measures already being implemented. Staff introduced a proposed framework organized around the different phases of the permit process that could be used to collect input and questions from the taskforce. The framework was designed to help organize both real-time discussion and offline comments between meetings.

Taskforce members provided input on a range of topics, including the importance of process consistency and predictability in relation to project development and financing, improved communications between the Air District and permit applicants, the need for adequate resources

and staff training in the Engineering Division, upgrades to the Permitting and Compliance System that support process efficiency and performance tracking, approaches to addressing policy questions so they can be effectively resolved, and how applicants can raise process concerns when issues arise during permit review.

Staff committed to organizing these topics into future agendas and to creating a dedicated public webpage for posting taskforce information, agendas, and discussion summaries. For the next meeting in February, staff indicated they were planning an in-depth discussion on the Permitting and Compliance System and its public portal, My Air Online.