Bay Area Air District



PARTICULATE MATTER | ALUMINUM FURNACES | NITROGEN OXIDES | ALUMINUM MELTING

Tesla Fremont Furnace Permit Applications

INFORMATION FOR LILA BRINGHURST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FAMILIES AND NEARBY RESIDENTS

The Bay Area Air District is reviewing two permit applications from Tesla related to aluminum melting furnaces at its Fremont manufacturing facility. The furnaces are located approximately 700 feet from Lila Bringhurst Elementary School.

We understand that families have questions about the proposed changes, potential health impacts, and what they mean for children attending the school and people in the surrounding community. Protecting public health is central to the Air District's permit review process.

What is Tesla proposing?

Tesla operates two aluminum melting furnaces used to produce vehicle components. The company has submitted applications to:

- **Install new pollution control equipment** designed to reduce nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions and replace the existing particulate filters.
- **Increase certain permitted emission limits,** including limits for nitrogen oxides and several metal toxic air contaminants.

These applications involve both proposed improvements to pollution controls and changes to how much pollution Tesla would be legally allowed to emit.

What air pollutants are involved?

The applications involve several types of pollutants:

- **Particulate matter:** Tiny airborne particles that can enter the lungs and affect respiratory health.
- **Nitrogen oxides (NOx):** Pollutants that contribute to smog and can affect breathing and respiratory health.
- **Toxic air contaminants:** Certain metals, including arsenic, hexavalent chromium, and nickel, that can pose health risks depending on the amount and duration of exposure.
- **Ammonia:** Used in the proposed NOx control equipment. Small amounts may pass through the equipment without reacting.

The Air District evaluates proposed emissions and applicable health risks before making permit decisions.

What does the health risk assessment say?

The Air District conducted a preliminary health risk assessment to estimate potential health impacts associated with emissions from the proposed project.

The assessment found:

- **Estimated cancer risk for a student at the school:** An estimated additional lifetime chance of developing cancer of 0.14-in-one-million, based on student exposure assumptions used in the model.
- **Highest estimated residential cancer risk:** An estimated additional lifetime chance of developing cancer of 1.4 in one million for an individual living at the location with the highest modeled residential exposure.
- **Air District project cancer risk limit:** An additional lifetime cancer risk of 10 in one million.

The preliminary assessment also found that estimated non-cancer health risks were below applicable Air District limits.

What does this mean for families?

These estimates are below the Air District's applicable project risk limits. However, they do not mean that exposure carries zero risk or that all air pollution affecting the school and surrounding neighborhood has been directly measured.

The estimates are based on modeling assumptions, including pollutant emission rates and exposure duration. The modeling assumptions also include a greater sensitivity of children to exposure of pollutants by applying age-specific factors when estimating cancer risk. They do not predict whether any individual child will develop a health condition.

Would the permits allow Tesla to emit more pollution?

Tesla is requesting higher permitted limits for certain pollutants, even as it proposes new pollution controls.

It is important to distinguish between:

- **Permitted emissions:** The maximum emissions allowed under specific permit conditions.
- **Actual emissions:** The pollution a facility releases during operation, as determined through testing, monitoring, and calculations.

Community members have raised concerns that the proposed changes could substantially increase permitted particulate emissions. The Air District is reviewing those calculations, including how emissions from the furnaces are measured and accounted for.

An increase in an allowable emission limit does not necessarily mean actual emissions will increase by the same amount. However, any increase in permitted limits requires careful evaluation.

Has the Air District approved Tesla's applications?

No final permit decision has been made.

The Air District has extended the public comment period to November 13, 2026. Families and community members raised questions about health risks, proposed emission increases, Tesla's compliance history, and access to technical information. To help respond to comments already received and directly answer community questions, the **Air District will hold a public webinar** on November 9 at 6 PM.

People may continue to submit comments to **zkowalewski@baaqmd.gov** or (415) 749-4681. For updates on these permit actions, please use the **Air District's Public Notices and Engagement page** and look for Tesla Applications 726496 and 751217.

How does the Air District oversee Tesla's compliance?

The Air District establishes enforceable emission limits and operating requirements for permitted equipment. It also conducts inspections, reviews testing and monitoring information, and investigates potential violations.

Tesla's aluminum melting furnaces have previously received notices of violation related to nitrogen oxide (NOx) emission limits. Draft permit conditions call for continuous monitoring of NOx, oxygen, and flue gas flow for each furnace; monitoring of bypass dampers and notification of any emergency bypass events; and annual source testing. These are proposed requirements. The Air District will continue to consider applicable compliance requirements and proposed monitoring provisions as part of its review of public comments.

If the Authority to Construct is approved, Tesla must demonstrate compliance with the permit conditions before the permit to operate is issued. The Air District has authority to take enforcement action when violations occur.

What happens next?

The Air District is reviewing the public comments and technical questions raised about Tesla's applications. This includes concerns about particulate emissions, health risk estimates, pollution controls, and access to supporting information.

The Air District is committed to providing clear information about its evaluation and the basis for its permit decisions.

Questions or concerns?

Families and community members are encouraged to ask questions and share concerns with Air District representatives at the meeting.

Learn more: Bay Area Air District

Tesla permit applications: 726496 and 751217

Tesla facility: 45500 Fremont Boulevard, Fremont, California

Air quality complaints: Report an Air Quality Complaint

Bay Area Air District