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## **Sacramento Region Air Districts Respond to American Lung Association's State of the Air Report**

*ALA Report Doesn't Tell The Full Story, Includes Misleading Data*

**Sacramento** – The Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District, Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District, Placer County Air Pollution Control District, Feather River Air Quality Management District, and El Dorado County Air Quality Management District have issued a joint response to the American Lung Association's recent release of its annual State of The Air Report and the *Sacramento Bee's* coverage of the report on April 22, 2022.

The Air Districts address the report's ranking of counties based on air quality data that is skewed by extreme but short-term wildfire data and the increasing international transport of pollution that raises background concentrations, resulting in a misleading picture of air pollution emissions in the Sacramento region. The *Bee's* article omitted these factors as well. While air quality and public health are absolutely impacted by wildfires, to assign an "F" grade without naming the reason doesn't tell the full story. It also unnecessarily undermines public confidence and denies true progress.

### **Response From the Air Districts of the Sacramento Region:**

"Thanks to innovative projects and programs by Sacramento region air districts and their partners, air quality has improved significantly over the past several decades and will continue to get cleaner in the future. Despite the challenges of wildfire and increasing transport of pollution, coupled with sharp increases in population and vehicle miles traveled, the Sacramento region has made great strides in moving toward and meeting strict state and federal health-based air quality standards.

Although the counties in our region received poor rankings, these rankings are flawed and do not reflect the real, tangible improvements in air quality that have been made possible by the efforts of our districts and residents. While we value our partnership with the American Lung Association, we are extremely disappointed that the ALA report fails to recognize that the region currently meets federal health-based air quality

standards for short-term particle pollution and is on track to meet similar standards for summertime ground-level ozone pollution within the next several years. That is no small feat and certainly worth a passing grade. We are equally disappointed that the *Sacramento Bee* article about the report did not acknowledge these factors or recognize the region's air quality accomplishments.

Our Districts are committed to combating climate change and improving air quality and public health outcomes for all residents, especially in our environmental justice communities. It is important for the ALA report to honestly reflect the significant challenges the region faces, while we continue to work together to find innovative new solutions to improve public health.”

### **Historical Air Quality Data Shows Dramatic Air Quality Improvement in the Region**

Between 2000-2022, the Sacramento Federal Nonattainment Area (SFNA) population grew 30.57% resulting in an increased number of vehicle registrations, and motor vehicles in the region. The SFNA is comprised of all of Sacramento and Yolo Counties, the eastern portion of Solano County, the southern portion of Sutter County, the western slopes of El Dorado and Placer Counties up to the Sierra crest and includes five local air districts.

Because cars, trucks and trains are the largest source of emissions in the region, Sacramento region air districts have developed creative and innovative strategies to ensure the region can continue to grow due to an increased population but at the same time reduce air pollution, combat climate change, stimulate economic prosperity and improve the quality of life for residents.

According to the state's historical data, the number of smoggy summer days that exceed the current 2015 ozone standard has declined from 81 days in 2000 to 47 days in 2020. Even with the 2020 data, which had high measurements due to summer wildfire smoke impacts, this shows a strong downward trend that is expected to continue over the next several years.

### **Innovative Air Pollution Reduction Strategies Are Making A Difference**

Sacramento region air districts have implemented numerous successful and innovative programs within the region to reduce air pollution that impacts our health, environment, and local economy.

A few examples include:

- Infusing millions of dollars into the region each year to support and incentivize electric vehicle conversion and infrastructure builds for businesses, public agencies, school districts and residents.
- Requiring the use of the most stringent emission control equipment on major stationary sources, which means less pollution coming out of the stack.

- Working with both public land managers and private landowners on prescribed burn activities to reduce excess vegetation and restore fire resiliency to the land.
- On-going support for the utilization of forest woody biomass wastes to fuel electricity generation and reduce wildfire size, severity, and pollution.
- Implementing mandatory or voluntary residential wood burning reduction programs.
- Creating clean, safe, and reliable transportation options by providing access to electric vehicles, carshare services, transit, and ride share for communities most in need in the region.
- Building out the region's zero and near zero emission infrastructure with the development of electric vehicle chargers, hydrogen fueling dispensers, and natural gas fueling stations.

### **About the Districts**

The Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District is responsible for monitoring air quality, reducing air pollution, and enforcing air quality regulations, and helps to achieve statewide carbon reduction goals. The District develops and administers programs to reduce air pollution levels below the health-based standards established by the state and federal governments, improve air quality in our region and combat global climate change. For more information, please visit [www.AirQuality.org](http://www.AirQuality.org).

The Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District's mission is to protect human health and property from the harmful effects of air pollution. The District works to fulfil its mission through the development and enforcement of local rules, state, and federal air quality regulations; providing guidance to local agencies of air quality impacts of projects and planning documents, creating strategies to meet state and federal air quality standards, monitoring local air quality and raising awareness of reduction strategies through public outreach and education. For more information, please visit [www.ysaqmd.org](http://www.ysaqmd.org).

The Placer County Air Pollution Control District's mission is to manage Placer County's air quality in a manner to protect and promote public health by controlling and seeking reductions of air pollutants while recognizing and considering the economic and environmental impacts. This is achieved through: enforcement of local, state, and federal air quality regulations, implementation of incentive programs to reduce emissions, air quality monitoring, efforts to reduce wildfire impacts, and land use/development reviews. The District works in concert with the five Sacramento-area air districts with a goal of moving the region into attainment of ambient air quality standards. For more information, please visit [www.PlacerAir.org](http://www.PlacerAir.org).

The Feather River Air Quality Management District is a bi-county District that was formed in 1991 to administer local, state, and federal air quality management programs for Yuba and Sutter counties. The mission of the Feather River Air Quality Management District is to promote and improve the air quality of Sutter and Yuba counties. This is accomplished through monitoring, evaluation, education, by implementing control measures to reduce emissions

from stationary sources, permitting and inspection of pollution sources, enforcement of air quality regulations, and by supporting and implementing measures to reduce emissions from motor vehicles. For more information, please visit [www.fraqmd.org](http://www.fraqmd.org).

The El Dorado County Air Quality Management District works to improve air quality and quality of life for El Dorado County residents by ensuring regulated sources control emissions and by implementing several emission reduction grant and incentive programs.

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