

April 2018
AB 617 Community Air Protection Program
Draft Community Selection Process - Explainer

Assembly Bill 617 (AB 617) directs CARB to select communities around the State with high cumulative air pollution exposure burdens, and to focus additional efforts in those communities, to better address, and improve air quality in those communities. This selection process must be done by October 1, 2018, and updated yearly after that. AB 617 instructs CARB to prioritize disadvantaged communities and sensitive receptor locations in the selection process based on air quality monitoring information, public health data and other relevant information.

CARB will follow a 3-step public process for community selection as summarized below.

Step 1: Identification – CARB staff will develop a broad list of communities for inclusion in the program, drawing from recommendations from air districts, from community members, and from CARB’s own understanding of air pollution data. CARB will release a first draft of this list in May 2018.

Step 2: Assessment – CARB staff will work with air districts to assess the cumulative air pollution exposure burden in each community on the list based on the factors outlined below. CARB will release this assessment in summer 2018.

Step 3: Selection – CARB staff will develop recommendations on the selection of communities for the first year of program implementation. CARB’s Governing Board will consider staff’s recommendations at its September 2018 public hearing. The CARB Governing Board will select communities for focused action to reduce pollution and/or for the deployment of air pollution monitoring systems in the first year.

Step 1: How will potential communities be identified?

We are soliciting recommendations for communities from air districts, community members and community-based organizations directly¹. This is to ensure that the broad list of communities reflects the first-hand knowledge of local air quality impacts and the concerns of community members and community-based organizations. In addition, as AB 617 tasks the air districts with developing and implementing the pollution reduction programs and community monitoring, it is critical that they work with local communities throughout the community identification and pollution reduction program process. CARB staff will also review existing air pollution, health and environmental data to identify any gaps and supplement the lists received from community members and air districts as appropriate to ensure a comprehensive statewide list that informs each year’s selection process is established.

Step 2: How will the cumulative air pollution exposure burden in each community be assessed?

CARB will examine six factors to assess the cumulative air pollution burden in each community on the broad list of communities to inform selection of first year communities as well as selection of communities in subsequent years:

Exposure to air pollution:

1. Concentrations of smog, particle pollution, and toxic air pollutants from measurements, air quality modeling, or other information quantifying air pollution exposure burden.
2. Density of air pollution sources and the amount of emissions within the community from mobile, area-wide, and stationary pollution sources.

¹ **Draft Process and Criteria for 2018 Community Selections:** <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/capp-draft-process-and-criteria-2018-community-selections>

3. Cancer risk estimates based on existing or new air quality modeling that characterizes the burden faced by the community.

Sensitive populations:

4. Sensitive populations including children and the elderly at schools, hospitals, and day care centers that sit close to mobile and stationary emissions sources of concern, including roadways.

Other measures of vulnerability to air pollution:

5. Public health indicators that are representative of the incidence or worsening of disease related to air quality.
6. Socio-economic factors, such as poverty levels and unemployment rates.

Step 3: How will first-year communities be selected?

The number of California communities with high cumulative air pollution exposure burdens exceeds a single year's capacity to develop and implement community monitoring or pollution reduction programs. Therefore, we are proposing additional considerations CARB staff will use to recommend to the CARB Governing Board a list of communities to select for action in the first year. Along with air district and community-based recommendations for first year communities, these considerations include:

- **Regional Diversity** –Building capacity and supporting existing community-led efforts and solutions in multiple air districts.
- **Sources** – Achieving a mix of communities with varying pollution sources to support development of solutions that can be transferred to similar communities:
 - Freight-related activities
 - Specific industrial sources
 - Urban mixes of traffic, commercial, and residential sources
 - Rural sources such as agricultural activities and fugitive dust
 - Border impacts

Based on these considerations, we expect to select up to 10 communities for deployment of community monitoring and/or preparation of pollution reduction programs in the first year. Work in these first-year communities will serve as strong models for action in other communities. Communities included on the broad list under Step 1 will remain candidates on the list for selection in Step 3 in future years. CARB will continue with broader efforts to improve air quality so all highly burdened communities will see ongoing benefits prior to additional action through the AB 617 process in future years. These efforts include CARB and air district freight-related measures, statewide and local climate investments, and enforcement of emissions rules and regulations throughout the State.

What size will communities be?

The size of communities will likely vary based on input from the community and the specific nature of the pollution burden, including emission sources and the location of sensitive populations. Communities may consist of a single census tract or zip code within more urban areas, or an individual city in more rural areas. A community may also reflect a combination of several nearby areas that are impacted by the same pollution sources and therefore should be considered under a single pollution reduction or monitoring program.