

To: **Liane M. Randolph**, Chair, California Air Resources Board
Honorable CARB Board Members

From: Steven S. Cliff, Ph.D., Executive Officer, California Air Resources Board

Date: May 17, 2023

Subject: Annual Update on AB 617 Implementation

This memorandum is part of California Air Resources Board (CARB) staff efforts to update the Board on the implementation of the Assembly Bill (AB) 617 (C. Garcia, Chapter 136, Statutes of 2017) Community Air Protection Program (Program). AB 617 represents a key opportunity for CARB to focus on advancing equity, including racial equity, in our work. As such, our efforts to reimagine this Program to benefit more communities are guided by our [vision and framework for racial equity](#) and support [Board Resolution 20-33](#) on racial equity.

This update highlights progress made in the implementation of eleven Community Emission Reduction Programs (CERPs) through hundreds of strategies focused on enforcement, incentives, rulemaking, and collaborative partnerships. The update includes new directions for reimagining the Program based on lessons learned over the past several years. These new approaches will be reflected in the revised Program Blueprint, which will be submitted to the Board for consideration on September 28, 2023, to meet the statute's requirement to update the strategy every five years. The revised Program Blueprint will be significantly informed by the [People's Blueprint](#), which was drafted by a subset of environmental justice leaders in 2021, most of whom are members of the AB 617 Consultation Group.

[Draft AB 617 Annual Implementation Update Memorandum Attachments](#) were posted for a 30-day public comment period on CARB's website earlier this year. During the public comment period, CARB staff sought feedback from stakeholders on the value and clarity of the Program implementation information contained in the Draft Attachments and suggestions or requests for other forms of Program implementation tracking. CARB staff received several comments from the public and air districts that have been incorporated in this final memorandum.

A summary of key findings from the Annual Update is found below. Engagement efforts to support the revision to the Program Blueprint are also described. Attachment A focuses on the future by describing the innovative directions of the Program and updates to the Program Blueprint. Attachment B to this memorandum provides a more in-depth update summarizing the progress made in Program implementation. Attachment C includes links to air district-submitted Annual Reports for CERPs in implementation.

Annual Update Key Findings

- Since the launch of the Program in 2017, and based on data through November of 2022, air districts have expended \$433 million of the \$1,116 million appropriated for

Community Air Protection incentives. CAP Incentive funds have supported 3,274 projects, which include 897 zero-emissions technology projects, that will reduce over 16,800 tons of oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), 1,370 tons of reactive organic gases (ROG), and 780 tons of particulate matter (PM) statewide.

- \$149 million (or ~34%) of expended funds have been awarded in the 11 AB 617 communities with implemented CERPs. Emissions reductions in these communities are estimated to be 5,850 tons of NO_x, 407 tons of ROG, and 274 tons of PM.
- Community-identified incentives projects are a category of incentive projects that allow air districts to design and implement new kinds of incentives, with CARB approval, to address CERP strategies as needed. To date, CARB staff have reviewed and approved 18 of these project plans, which have led to \$4.8 million being invested in 483 Community-Identified Projects as of November 2022. SJVAPCD created the first of these plans in support of the emissions reduction program of the South-Central Fresno community, consisting of funding for a study of truck traffic within the community. Each of the four selected communities in SJVAPCD includes a similar truck study project in their CERP.
- Exposure reduction remains a key priority within AB 617 communities. A total of 8 out of 18 Community-Identified Projects that rely on incentives are exposure reduction-focused projects, such as school and residential indoor air filtration, truck re-routing studies, and urban greening and vegetative barrier projects.
- Rule development strategies, such as those in SCAQMD (Rule [2306](#), [1460](#), and [1109.1](#)), will provide further emissions and exposure reduction in many of the communities in that area.
- The combined estimated emission reductions in the eleven CERP communities from CARB's statewide strategies and regulatory actions during the fifth (i.e., target) year of CERP implementation is estimated to be around 1,800 tons of oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), 27 tons of particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), and 26 tons of diesel particulate matter (DPM).
- As of May 2023, of the 19 communities selected into the Program, seven are in their fourth year of CERP implementation, six are either in their first, second, or third year of CERP implementation, five continue work developing a CERP, and one is currently in their fifth year of monitoring per their CAMP.
- CARB and air district staff have been working with community steering committees to implement CARB Board-issued guidance found in the CERP-approval resolutions.
- Community-driven enforcement is a priority for CARB's Enforcement Division, and CARB staff will be conducting community-prioritized enforcement work in overburdened communities, including those not selected for the Program, going forward.
- CARB Enforcement staff provided support to develop project ideas with AB 617 communities to submit for consideration under the Supplemental Environmental Projects program. Since September 2021, a total of \$7.7 million has been allocated to the SEP program through 18 settlements, out of which \$4.3 million were directed to fund nine community projects located in the following AB 617 communities: South

Central Fresno, West Oakland, Eastern Coachella Valley, West Oakland, East Los Angeles, Boyle Heights, West Commerce, South Sacramento-Florin.

As CERP implementation continues, CARB must be able to describe progress and learn from challenges to further inform additional strategies to support community-scale air quality improvement.

Blueprint 2.0 Engagement

CARB staff is revising the Program Blueprint through a three-phased approach to engagement. The first phase was launched in early 2022 through a robust discussion of the People's Blueprint with the Consultation Group and a public workshop on December 6, 2022, which included opportunities to provide feedback on the engagement plan. In phase 2, from December 2022 through January 2023, CARB staff held focused discussions with close to 100 representatives of most of the Community Steering Committees, business associations, local government, and academia, including CSC leaders of the newly selected CSC communities in Bay View Hunters Point and Northern Imperial Corridor Phase 1, and with community members whose impacted communities are not in the Program.

In the past year, CARB staff have produced two key deliverables for engagement and public comment. Those include:

- Blueprint 2.0 outline was presented to CARB governing Board in May 2022.
- Expanded Concepts Outline, released in Nov 2022 and discussed at the December 6, 2022, public workshop.

A narrative draft of Blueprint 2.0 will be released soon and workshopped in Summer 2023. The third phase of the Blueprint 2.0 is the release of the proposed final draft in late Summer of 2023.

Summary

The progress reflected in this update is the foundation upon which we will work to identify new, more cost-effective approaches for community-scale air quality protection that prioritize local actions to improve air quality and reduce exposures. It will require two parallel tracks: 1) sustained commitment to the 19 communities currently in the Program using the established model of an air district-convened community steering committee and 2) concurrently designing and implementing more efficient approaches to maximize similar air quality benefits for other eligible communities, particularly the 65 communities that have been consistently nominated for the Program but not yet selected.