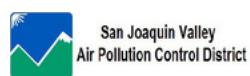




PEER TO PEER LEARNING SERIES KICKOFF MEETING SUMMARY

NOVEMBER 2025



OVERVIEW

The Peer-to-Peer kickoff meeting for the Community Air Protection Program brought together nearly 140 community members and agency staff from across the state. This event featured a presentation from Dr. Jonathan K. London, Director of the UC Davis Center for Regional Change, where he shared his key research findings and explored them in a panel discussion. This was followed by small breakout groups with community and agency participants to dive deeper into their experiences with the themes from the research. This document highlights the key themes that were discussed during the event and shares quotes of key insights from participants.

These conversations highlighted the importance of building community power and partnerships with government agencies, and spreading effective practices from Community Emissions Reduction Plan development and implementation happening across the state. Overall, the kickoff meeting aimed to encourage and create a more collaborative learning space and to introduce future topics for peer learning and engagement. Key takeaways from the gathering included:

- Despite challenges, community and agency relationships are improving through building trust, increasing collaboration and supporting community involvement in decision-making.
- Increased collaboration between community and agency fosters understanding, deeper empathy, and better alignment of perspectives and ideas during CERP development and implementation. For example, CSC requests for data and transparency resulted in community-identified gaps that led to the development of mapping tools and CERP progress tracking dashboards.
- Access to more data is helpful, but community members find that data doesn't capture the whole picture, or the information is too technical and difficult to understand. Communities want more resources devoted to accessibility, clarity, and technical support.
- CSC members and grantees find value in peer learning and want to see more opportunities to be in space with each other and learn from each other's unique experiences.

MEETING SUMMARY

[Click here to access Dr. London's presentation.](#)

Panel Discussion

Following his research presentation, Dr. London moderated a panel discussion with Cesar Aguirre, a Community Organizer with Central California EJ Network, Domingo Vigil, a Deputy Director with the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District, and Marisol Cantu, a Community Organizer at Reimagine Richmond, Steering Committee Member at Richmond Progressive Alliance and English as a Second Language (ESL) Professor at Contra Costa College, where they shared insights from their experiences within AB617 communities. Panelists discussed:

- The importance, but also the challenges, of trust and transparency in this work.
- Their experiences with overcoming obstacles in implementing Community Emissions Reduction Plans.
- How community-led processes can influence overall agency policy and culture.

Breakout Groups

In small groups, participants reflected on their experiences and insights related to community air protection. Participants discussed these questions:

1. What are the most important changes you've seen since your CSC began?
2. How do you see collaboration helping address air quality priorities?
3. How can CSCs and grantees better connect, share ideas, and support each other?

Question 1: Important changes in CSCs

Theme 1: Increased Community Power, Participation and Trust Building

“We have the ability to make decisions... At first it was intimidating to participate with agencies, but we have seen the change with our CSC members.”

"Trust has been built slowly over time... early on, there was less trust; meetings started intensely and emotionally, but relationships have been built."

Participants consistently emphasized how their confidence, leadership, and voice have grown over time. Many CSC members described the early stages of CERP development as intimidating, but over the years, participation deepened and trust between agencies and residents strengthened.

Theme 2: Better Data, Transparency, and Policy Influence

CSC members expressed that clearer data and increased access to information have helped them shape stronger policies. One positive outcome of data transparency and clarity is that community-identified gaps are now influencing CARB's mapping tools and emissions tracking.

"Data that was missing... [We shared data]. CARB used that [shared] data to create a more in-depth map and move policy forward."

"We have been able to make data about emissions to close gaps... This led to better tracking... [and] was used to formulate policy moving forward."

Theme 3: Shifts in Agency Behavior and Structural Changes

"The Air District started using penalty funds for programs that directly impact communities."

Participants pointed to real changes in how agencies engage with them—more responsiveness, expanded boundaries, and shifts in how funds and regulations are handled. These structural adjustments were seen as meaningful progress.

“Boundaries expansion... in the beginning we wanted boundaries to be expanded... but were told no, and now it's changing.”

Question 2: Collaboration and Air Quality Priorities

Theme 1: Collaboration Strengthens Learning, Empathy, and Shared Strategy

Participants described collaboration as a way to build collective understanding and deepen empathy, especially among agencies learning from community experiences. This came up across several comments, highlighting how shared stories strengthen the work.

“Residents in the same room help them learn from firsthand experience... helping CARB build more empathy.”

“When we hear these stories, there's a great deal of power that comes with collaboration... strong voice that is heard.”

Theme 2: Need for Accessible Data and Technical Support

Many participants shared that they struggle with overly technical information or not having access to the data they need, reflecting the barriers communities face when information isn't easy to understand or use.

“Would be better if data sharing was more accessible... difficult to come up with strategies without having data accessible.”

"[I feel] disappointment when CARB brings in community in their issues with technical processes, they have to draw from other agencies to provide the technical expertise, CSC is there to bring in that community perspective, extra resources are needed to ensure communities have access to healthy air."

Theme 3: Desire for More Open and Consistent Communication Across Communities

"We wish that conversations were to be more relaxed... without having the clock running all the time."

Participants expressed wanting more transparent, open conversations and clearer cross-community connections. There was a shared desire to slow down discussions, make space for questions, and understand what other communities are doing.

"CARB needs to help connect the dots. How did you do the projects—what contractors are being used?"

Question 3: Connecting, Sharing Ideas and Support Across CSCs and Grantees

Theme 1: Stronger Communication Infrastructure Across Communities

Community members want more effective ways to stay connected—newsletters, listservs, social media groups, and more structured networking. There is a desire for ongoing communication, rather than only meeting-based updates.

"I think that communication is needed to have better collaboration."

“Having our communities share from our CSC meeting to those that are in the L-CERPs... what has worked and failed.”

“Networking – more opportunities like today with more formal structure. A map with contact information and steering committee leads.”

Theme 2: Structured Learning Spaces

“Suggest a channel like Climate Action Corps, Slack channels, by topics, and ask questions.”

“[We need] a meeting of the month. High level learnings may be separated by advanced, beginning, and intermediate.”

Participants emphasized that real support requires consistent, organized spaces for learning. Monthly meetings, Q&A sessions, and skill-based groupings came up multiple times, demonstrating a desire for more intentional peer learning.

“I think having our communities share from our CSC meeting... what has worked and failed, and how as residents we can provide recommendations to those communities.”

Theme 3: Shared Tools – Contacts, Case Studies, and Recordkeeping

“A map with contact information and steering committee leads.”

Communities want practical tools they can use—contact lists, case studies, and documentation of what's worked. CSCs want to avoid reinventing the wheel and help newer CSCs gain traction faster.

“Having some type of record keeping of what models have helped and what have failed.”