

**NOTICE OF EXEMPTION FROM THE
CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)**

To: Governor's Office of Planning and Research -
State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth St, Suite 222
Sacramento, CA 95814-5502

From: South Coast Air Quality Management District
21865 Copley Drive
Diamond Bar, CA 91765

Project Title: Community Emissions Reduction Plan for the Southeast Los Angeles Community per Assembly Bill 617

Project Location: The project is located in the following communities within the jurisdiction of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD): South Gate, Florence-Firestone, Walnut Park, Huntington Park, Cudahy, and Bell Gardens, referred to herein as Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) community in Los Angeles County.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: Assembly Bill (AB) 617, signed into state law in 2017 (see Health and Safety Code Section 44391.2), requires air districts to prepare a Community Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP) for environmental justice communities selected by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). CERPs provide a blueprint for achieving reductions of air pollution emission and exposure within selected communities and are tailored to address each community's air quality priorities. The SELA community was selected by CARB to prepare a CERP in December 2019. The purpose of this project is to implement a CERP for the SELA community per AB 617. The beneficiary of the project is the identified community and the nearby areas, but the entire region within South Coast AQMD's jurisdiction will also benefit. The SELA CERP includes actions to reduce emissions and/or exposures to toxic air contaminants and criteria air pollutants, an implementation schedule, an enforcement plan, and a description of the process and outreach conducted to develop the CERP. Implementation of the SELA CERP actions is expected to occur over five years beginning in 2021. A summary of the action items by category is described below.

Trucks and Freeways: 1) Support CARB's efforts of establishing a Community Pollution Enforcement Workgroup for trucks and other vehicles and conduct quarterly workgroup meetings; 2) Conduct quarterly enforcement sweeps with CARB; 3) Partner with CSC, CARB, land-use agencies, school districts, and law enforcement agencies to install and enforce "No Idling" signs; 4) Continue to develop Warehouse Indirect Source Rule to reduce emissions from large warehouses and fulfillment center; 5) Conduct truck incentive outreach to small businesses and local fleets; 6) Conduct community outreach events to encourage replacement of older polluting vehicles with cleaner vehicles, and increase the availability of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging stations in the community; 7) Identify freeway projects within the community undergoing CEQA review; 8) Conduct air monitoring in the community to support implementation of truck emission reduction strategies; and 9) Work with local school districts and CSC members to identify and prioritize schools exposed to truck emissions that may benefit from installation of air filtration systems.

Rendering Facilities: 1) Engage in community outreach and provide information on Rule 415 and how to file odor complaints; 2) Conduct air monitoring for VOCs and odorous compounds near each rendering facility and in the community to better characterize the emissions and make data available to the public; 3) Continue complaint response and Rule 415 compliance inspections; 4) Identify and evaluate the need for additional requirements to address odors and establish a rule development schedule, if needed; and 5) Explore the development of an odor event notification system for schools and sensitive receptors.

Green Spaces: 1) Collaborate with land-use, state and local agencies, and nonprofit organizations to develop a list a low-VOC and drought tolerant trees; 2) Evaluate opportunities to use future settlement funds to support community green space projects; 3) Collaborate with nonprofits, local, and regional agencies to provide letters of support and air quality information for urban greening funding opportunities; and 4) Work with relevant agencies to identify and prioritize locations for installing vegetative buffers near freeways.

Metal Processing Facilities: 1) Conduct public outreach explaining various types of metal processing operations and metals-related rules; 2) Initiate rule development process to address housekeeping and best management practices at metal recycling plants to reduce fugitive emissions; 3) Develop metal processing facility list, applicable rules list, compliance history, air monitoring data, or other sources of information; 4) Conduct CSC activity to prioritize sources of metal emissions and develop a strategies list, if appropriate; 5) Conduct air monitoring to identify potential sources of emissions; 6) Implement strategies and approaches based on the prioritization of sources and issues identified; 7) Make referrals to the appropriate agencies when issues are found during inspections that fall outside of South Coast AQMD's jurisdiction (e.g., Water Board, DTSC, Cal-OSHA); and 8) Collaborate with local land-use agencies to provide outreach information to metal processing facilities on required South Coast AQMD permits.

Railyards and Locomotives: 1) Conduct air monitoring around railyards and in the community to assess how railyard related emissions may contribute to the overall air pollution burden in this community; 2) Identify potential strategies to reduce emissions from railyards and the Alameda Corridor; 3) Continue to develop the Railyard Indirect Source Rule; 4) Incentivize the replacement of older diesel equipment (e.g., locomotives); 5) Coordinate with CARB to

conduct community outreach on locomotive idling regulations and how to file complaints; and 6) Support CARB's relevant rulemaking activities, including those for Transport Refrigeration Unit, Advance Clean Fleets, In-Use Locomotive, and amendments for cleaner cargo handling equipment and facility infrastructure at ports and railyards.

General Industrial Facilities: 1) Develop general industrial facilities document and identify facilities of concern; 2) Prioritize emissions sources for further investigation; identify potential air monitoring (conduct air monitoring, where feasible), emissions and exposure reduction measures, if necessary; and 3) Identify measures requiring Board action in the annual CERP progress report.

Public Agency Approving Project: South Coast Air Quality Management District	Agency Carrying Out Project: South Coast Air Quality Management District
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Exempt Status:

- CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) – Common Sense Exemption
- CEQA Guidelines Section 15262 – Feasibility and Planning Studies
- CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities
- CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures
- CEQA Guidelines Section 15306 – Information Collection
- CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 – Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment
- CEQA Guidelines Section 15309 – Inspections
- CEQA Guidelines Section 15321 – Enforcement Actions by Regulatory Agencies

Reasons why project is exempt: Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), South Coast AQMD, as Lead Agency, has reviewed the proposed project pursuant to: 1) CEQA Guidelines Section 15002(k) – General Concepts, the three-step process for deciding which document to prepare for a project subject to CEQA; and 2) CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 – Review for Exemption, procedures for determining if a project is exempt from CEQA. Because the physical changes that may occur as a result of implementing portions of the proposed project would only require minimal construction activities and cause negligible physical impacts, it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that any physical actions that may be associated with the proposed project may have a significant adverse effect on the environment. Therefore, the project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3). Further, because the overall purpose of this project is to improve the environment of the SELA community and nearby areas, and all of the action items within the SELA CERP support this goal, the action items are also categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308. The SELA CERP contains action items involving feasibility and planning studies, because information needs to be collected to make an informed decision about further actions such as rule development. However, these action items neither prescribe or commit to specific rule requirements, nor require advance approval or adoption of future actions because they require an open public process. Thus, the SELA CERP action items involving feasibility or planning studies are statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15262. The SELA CERP contains action items requiring minor physical modifications to existing structures or buildings, such as installing air filters or monitoring equipment, which are categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301. The SELA CERP contains action items requiring minor construction of small structures, such as electric vehicle charging stations, which are categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303. The SELA CERP contains action items involving the collection or exchange of information or data obtained from inspections and air monitoring, which are categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15306. The SELA CERP contains action items involving inspections requiring performance or compliance checks, which are categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15309. The SELA CERP contains action items relying on enforcement activities which are categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15321. Finally, there is no substantial evidence indicating that any of the exceptions to the categorical exemptions apply to the proposed project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 – Exceptions. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA.

Date of Project Approval: South Coast AQMD Governing Board Hearing: December 4, 2020

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Date Received for Filing: _____ **Signature:** 
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