

**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: South Los Angeles Community Emissions Reduction Plan per Assembly Bill 617

Project Location: The proposed project will occur in a portion of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) jurisdiction located in the South Los Angeles (SLA) community in Los Angeles County which includes the following areas in whole or in part: Adams-Normandie, Athens, Baldwin Park, Broadway-Manchester, Central-Alameda, Chesterfield Square, Compton, Crenshaw, Exposition Park, Florence, Gramercy Park, Historic South-Central, Jefferson Park, Leimert Park, Lynwood, Manchester Square, South Park, Vermont Square, Watts, West Adams, the unincorporated areas of Willowbrook and Westmont, and parts of Inglewood and Los Angeles.

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 emissions and exposure within selected communities and are tailored to address each community's air quality priorities. The SLA community was selected by CARB to prepare a CERP in February 2021. The purpose of this project is to implement a CERP for the SLA 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 SLA 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 SLA CERP actions is expected to occur over five years beginning in 2022. A summary of the action items by category is described below.

Mobile Sources: 1) Provide outreach to warehouses regarding South Coast AQMD Rule 2305; 2) Explore opportunities to make Rule 2305 reports available on South Coast AQMD's online F.I.N.D. tool; 3) Report on Rule 2305 implementation and enforcement in the community; 4) Conduct focused inspections, including idling sweeps, and initiate enforcement, as needed, at Community Steering Committee (CSC)-identified locations, such as warehouses and construction sites; 5) Provide outreach to the community regarding CARB mobile source regulations, best management practices, how to file a complaint, and incentive programs; 6) Conduct an activity or solicit input through the CSC's contacts in the community to collect feedback on CARB's complaint filing system; 7) Install "No Idling" signs at CSC-identified locations; 8) Explore incentive funding opportunities for cleaner mobile source technologies and provide outreach to the CSC when funding is available; 9) Install air filtration systems in schools that meet a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) 16, where technically feasible; 10) Provide outreach to the CSC when new funding opportunities are available to install school air filtration systems; 11) Work with local school districts and CSC members to identify and prioritize schools that may benefit from the installation of air filtration systems in order to reduce exposure to air pollution, especially mobile source emissions; 12) Work with local school districts and CSC members to identify support for community projects (e.g., Safer Routes to Schools program); and 13) Work with local city or county agencies to identify strategies to address the CSC's concerns with designated truck routes.

Auto Body Shops: 1) Provide education and outreach to CSC members and owners and operators of auto body shops about how South Coast AQMD and partner agencies regulate auto body shops; 2) Identify and prioritize locations of concern and conduct initial air measurement surveys near facilities of concern to identify and characterize any potential emissions and install fixed or stationary monitors if recommended; and 3) Conduct focused inspection sweeps of auto body shops in CSC-identified locations and take enforcement action when appropriate; 4) Provide periodic summaries of findings from inspection and enforcement activities (i.e., whether odors or emissions were confirmed and verified with complainants during inspections, and whether any enforcement actions were required and taken; 5) Collaborate with and make enforcement referrals to the appropriate agency(ies) when inspections conducted by South Coast AQMD personnel identify potential compliance issues which are not within South Coast AQMD's jurisdictional authority; 6) Provide outreach to CSC-identified locations to encourage incorporation of best management and "Good Neighbor" practices; 7) Explore feasibility to amend South Coast AQMD Rules 1151 and 1171 to include best management practices from the United States Environmental Protection Agency as requirements for auto body shops; and 8) Explore incentive funding opportunities for low-VOC paints and coatings, and water-based cleaners and provide outreach to the CSC when funding is available.

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION FROM CEQA (continued)

General Industrial Facilities: 1) Prioritize facilities of concern, identify applicable South Coast AQMD rules, provide three years of compliance history, summarize air pollution emission data from the facilities and from areas monitored near the facilities, and identify potential emission reduction measures, if appropriate; 2) Conduct inspections of dry cleaners and enforcement of South Coast AQMD and CARB regulations; 3) Initiate rule development process to amend South Coast AQMD Rule 1102 to consider establishing a new emission standard reflecting zero-emission technologies for new dry cleaning systems and identify incentive opportunities to transition to community-identified alternatives for dry cleaning technologies (e.g., South Coast AQMD Rule 1102); 4) Provide education and outreach to owners/operators of dry cleaners and new permit applicants of dry cleaning facilities about incentive opportunities and cleaner alternative technologies, and seek feedback from owners or operators regarding their willingness to transition to and/or need of support to transition to community-identified alternatives; 5) Conduct outreach and training for the SLA community on how to use the South Coast AQMD's online F.I.N.D. tool and procedures for making air quality-related complaints; 6) Conduct initial air measurement surveys near facilities of concern to identify and characterize any potential emissions and install fixed or stationary monitors if recommended; 7) Collaborate with CSC to improve outreach to small businesses to encourage incorporation of best management and "Good Neighbor" practices; 8) Collaborate with and make enforcement referrals to the appropriate agency(ies) when inspections conducted by South Coast AQMD personnel identify potential compliance issues which are not within South Coast AQMD's jurisdictional authority; and 9) Conduct focused inspections of construction sites to evaluate compliance with South Coast AQMD regulations.

Metal Processing Facilities: 1) Identify all metal processing facilities, prioritize metals facilities of concern to the CSC located within the SLA community, identify the applicable South Coast AQMD rules and potential strategies to address concerns, provide three years of compliance history, summarize air pollution emission data at or near the facilities, and share this information with the SLA community; 2) Conduct initial air measurement surveys near facilities of concern to identify and characterize any potential emissions and emission reduction measures, if appropriate, and install fixed or stationary monitors if recommended; 3) Provide community outreach about criteria pollutants and toxics that may be found in the community (e.g., hexavalent chromium, lead, zinc, nitrogen oxides), Criteria Pollutant and Toxics Emissions Reporting (CTR) process, and CARB Chrome Plating Air Toxic Control Measure (ATCM) requirement; 4) Provide outreach to facility owners and operators about how South Coast AQMD and CARB regulate metal processing facilities and encourage best management and "Good Neighbor" practices; 5) Conduct an assessment to identify the South Coast AQMD metal processing rules which regulate metal toxic air contaminants but lack best management practices and initiate rule development process to amend these rules to incorporate provisions for best management practices; and 6) Initiate rule development process for Proposed Rule 1460 to address housekeeping and best management practices at metal recycling facilities to reduce fugitive emissions.

Oil and Gas Industry: 1) Prioritize locations of concern for siting air monitoring equipment; 2) Conduct air measurement surveys near and around oil drilling sites to characterize any potential emissions and install fixed or stationary monitors if recommended; 3) Provide periodic summaries of monitoring results and outreach on online tools and data available to the public; 4) Collaborate with appropriate agencies and CSC to determine if additional air monitoring is needed during specific well activities or under certain conditions; 5) Collaborate with and make enforcement referrals to the appropriate agency(ies) when inspections conducted by South Coast AQMD personnel identify potential compliance issues which are not within South Coast AQMD's jurisdictional authority and periodically provide summaries of findings from enforcement activities to CSC; 6) Identify opportunities for other agencies to provide information regarding their authority, existing and proposed rules, and/or projects and programs, involving the oil and gas industry; 7) Identify opportunities to support community scientists in their efforts to conduct community air monitoring; 8) Initiate rule development process to amend South Coast AQMD Rule 1148 Series to explore limiting or eliminating use of odorants and chemicals onsite and to consider including notification and other requirements pertaining to injection wells, active acid work, operation of workover rigs, use of odorants and chemicals onsite, improvement of leak detection and repair, modifications to any previous notifications, and lower-emission or zero-emission equipment for on-site operations; and 9) Explore incentive opportunities to support implementation of best management practices and/or installation of emission reduction technologies at oil and gas facilities, and conduct outreach to the CSC when opportunities are available.

Public Agency Approving Project:
South Coast Air Quality Management District

Agency Carrying Out Project:
South Coast Air Quality Management District

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION FROM CEQA (concluded)

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 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
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Reasons why project is exempt: 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 implementing the various components of the proposed project (SLA CERP) would either not cause any physical changes (e.g., community outreach about South Coast AQMD rules, programs, and tools), or the physical changes that may occur as a result would only require minimal construction activities and cause negligible physical impacts (e.g., installing “No Idling” signs or air filtration systems), it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed project may have a significant adverse effect on the environment. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) – Common Sense Exemption. Further, the proposed project is also categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 – Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment, because the overall purpose of the proposed project is to benefit the environment and health of residents of the SLA community and all the action items within the SLA CERP support this goal. The proposed project also contains action items involving feasibility and planning studies, which require information to be collected and examined to ascertain whether follow-up actions are needed without prescribing or committing to specific future actions. Thus, the action items involving feasibility or planning studies are statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15262 – Feasibility and Planning Studies, while action items involving the collection or exchange of information or data obtained from these studies are categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15306 – Information Collection. The SLA CERP contains some action items which may require minor physical modifications to existing structures or buildings, such as installing air filters or monitoring equipment, and these activities are categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities. The SLA CERP also contains some action items which involve inspections requiring performance or compliance checks and which may involve follow-up enforcement, and these activities are categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15309 – Inspections and CEQA Guidelines Section 15321 – Enforcement Actions by Regulatory Agencies. Finally, for the action items identified as categorically exempt there is no substantial evidence indicating that any of the exceptions to the categorical exemptions set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 – Exceptions, apply to the proposed project. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA.

Date of Project Approval: South Coast AQMD Governing Board Public Hearing: June 3, 2022

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Date Received for Filing: _____

Signature:  June 3, 2022

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