

California Air Resources Board
Community Air Protection Program

East Oakland Community Emissions Reduction Program Staff Report

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Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Executive Officer of the California Air Resources Board (CARB or Board) approve the *East Oakland “Right to Breathe” Community Emissions Reduction Program* (CERP), developed pursuant to *Assembly Bill (AB) 617*.¹ Staff further recommends that the Executive Officer direct CARB staff to work with the Bay Area Air District (Air District) and the East Oakland Community Steering Committee (CSC) to strengthen implementation, including refinement of strategies, enhanced interagency coordination, and increased transparency as implementation proceeds.

Background

CARB established the Community Air Protection (CAP) Program² (Program) to implement AB 617, which requires community-focused action to reduce air pollution. CARB implements the Program which establishes criteria for developing and implementing community emissions reduction programs³, community air monitoring plans, as well as other elements of the Program. The Blueprint 2.0⁴ was adopted by the Board in October 2023 and is the first five-year update to Program guidance. Blueprint 2.0 carries over certain elements from the 2018 Blueprint, incorporates clarifications to CERP requirements, and provides new elements to identify ways to support more communities.

On February 10, 2022, CARB selected the East Oakland Community for development of a CERP because residents face high cumulative pollution burdens, disproportionate exposure to emissions from freeways (I-880, I-580, I-238), industrial facilities, Oakland International Airport operations, rail lines, and legacy land-use inequities. Beginning in 2022, the Air District and its co-lead community partner, Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), convened the East Oakland CSC that is composed of residents, youth, community-based organizations, faith leaders, and local businesses, to guide CERP development.

This collaborative process included a *community mapping project*, where residents contributed 488 comments identifying pollution concerns, neighborhood conditions, and community assets. This project was paired with a technical emissions inventory analysis,

¹ *Assembly Bill 617*, Garcia, C., Chapter 136, Statutes of 2017

² Community Air Protection Program: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/capp>

³ Contained in *Blueprint 2.0* beginning on page 79

⁴ The Blueprint 2.0 is available at: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/blueprint-20>

which examined pollution sources across stationary, mobile, and area-wide categories to understand the major contributors to East Oakland's air quality challenges. Air District staff also reviewed air monitoring data, drawing on measurements from multiple monitoring sites to assess long-term pollutant trends, localized hot spots, and exposure patterns near freeways, industrial corridors, and the airport.

Complementing this technical work, the Air District analyzed enforcement findings from 2021 through 2024, which highlighted patterns in complaints, violations, and facility compliance. These data sources were integrated with a health outcomes analysis, which revealed higher rates of asthma, cardiovascular disease, and cancer in East Oakland than in Alameda County overall, along with notably lower life expectancy for residents. This combination of community insight, technical analysis, enforcement history, and health data formed the foundation for the strategies and actions included in the CERP.

On Thursday, February 5, 2026, the East Oakland CSC voted to adopt the draft CERP and transmitted the draft to the Air District's Community Equity, Health, and Justice Committee (CEHJC) for consideration. On March 11, 2026, the CEHJC recommended the Bay Area Air District Board adopt the Final Draft of the Community Emissions Reduction Plan. The Bay Area Board of Directors adopted the Draft Final CERP on April 1, 2026, and submitted it to CARB for consideration on April 14, 2026.

Community Emissions Reduction Program Overview

The East Oakland CERP was developed through a community-led process consistent with the structure used in other CAPP communities. The plan is grounded in a clear understanding of the community's pollution burden and the historical factors that have shaped it. East Oakland faces a convergence of environmental and health inequities driven by its proximity to major freeways that carry significant heavy-duty truck traffic; the presence of industrial clusters such as recycling yards, crematories, waste facilities, and manufacturing operations; emissions from Oakland International Airport, including aircraft and ground support equipment; and ongoing rail activity and goods-movement corridors that intersect residential areas. These impacts are further compounded by land-use and zoning patterns that place homes, schools, childcare centers, and other sensitive receptors directly next to pollution-generating sources.

Guided by community priorities, the CERP organizes 32 strategies and 105 actions designed to reduce emissions, lower exposure, and improve health outcomes across six focus areas: Built Environment and Land Use; Commercial and Industrial Sources; Illegal Dumping, Trash, and Odors; Public Health and Community Wellness; Transportation and Mobile Sources; and Urban Greening and Workforce Development.

The technical analysis supporting the CERP highlights several critical exposure concerns. PM_{2.5} concentrations have not improved over the past decade; the highest exposures occur near the I-880 corridor, industrial areas, and airport flight paths; and mobile sources continue to be a major contributor to emissions of diesel particulate matter, benzene, and nitrogen oxides. Stationary sources including transfer stations, crematories, and recycling operations, remain significant localized emitters, while aging housing stock and inadequate ventilation contribute to degraded indoor air quality.

These pollution burdens have clear consequences for community health. East Oakland residents experience asthma emergency department visits at twice the county average, along with higher mortality from cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and lung cancer. Life expectancy in East Oakland is lower than both Oakland and Alameda County averages, and rates of premature birth and low birth weight remain elevated. Together, these findings underscore the need for comprehensive action through the CERP and guide the strategies included in the plan.

Summary of CARB's Evaluation

CARB staff's evaluation finds that the Draft East Oakland CERP meets the requirements set forth in state law and in Blueprint 2.0, reflecting a clear alignment with the community priorities identified through the CSC process and public participation. The plan is supported by a strong technical foundation, including the emissions inventory, air monitoring data, and enforcement findings, and staff concludes that the strategies outlined in the CERP are likely to reduce emissions and exposure in the community when implemented with sustained collaboration and ongoing refinement.

At the same time, staff notes that successful implementation will require continued development of action-level details, strengthened coordination among key agencies, such as the City of Oakland, Port of Oakland, Caltrans, ACPHD, CARB, and OEHHA, and a commitment to develop and/or refine clear metrics, transparent tracking of these metrics, evaluation, and public reporting. Sustained community engagement and support for community involvement will also be essential to ensure the CERP delivers the intended air quality and health benefits for East Oakland residents.

Key Strengths

Strong Community Leadership and Participation

The East Oakland CSC demonstrated a sustained level of leadership and engagement throughout the development of the CERP. The Air District selected Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) as co-lead due to its strong community ties and extensive experience, and partnered with Just Cities for facilitation, translation, and interpretation,

with materials available in English, Spanish, and Chinese. The committee met regularly on a monthly basis, while transitioning to a hybrid meeting format in 2024, to ensure consistent participation and informed decision-making. CSC co-chairs Mr. Charles Reed, Aiyahna Johnson, and Mykela Patton played an active role in guiding agenda development and maintaining alignment with community priorities. This work was supported by outreach conducted by CBE and the Air District, which helped sustain broad community involvement. To further facilitate equitable participation, the process incorporated multilingual access, interpretation services, stipends for members, and the advance distribution of meeting materials, ensuring that all participants were prepared and able to contribute meaningfully to the work.

Comprehensive Technical Foundation

The Final Draft CERP is supported by a technical foundation that draws on multiple data sources to characterize emissions, exposure, and health conditions in East Oakland. The plan incorporates air monitoring data from three Oakland air monitoring stations, providing insight into pollutant trends and localized areas of elevated exposure. This monitoring information is complemented by an emissions inventory that includes approximately 400 permitted facilities, capturing both stationary and mobile source contributions to community-level pollution. In addition, staff conducted modeling of PM_{2.5} and diesel particulate matter, which helped identify areas with the highest cumulative exposure. The technical assessment also integrates enforcement data from 2021 through 2024, highlighting patterns in complaints, violations, and facility compliance. Finally, the plan draws on health outcomes data from the Alameda County Public Health Department, which documents elevated asthma, cardiovascular disease, cancer risk, and other pollution-related health burdens within the community. Together, these datasets establish the analytical basis for the strategies and actions included in the Final Draft CERP.

Diversity of Strategies Across Six Focus Areas

The CERP incorporates a broad suite of actions designed to address the multiple sources of air pollution affecting East Oakland. These actions range from strengthening dust-control requirements and improving facility compliance practices to enhancing enforcement efforts to reduce illegal dumping. The plan also advances zero-emission truck and bus initiatives, which target major contributors to diesel particulate matter exposure, and includes research to better understand and mitigate airport-related emissions and exposures. In addition, CERP prioritizes indoor air quality improvements, such as deploying air filtration systems in homes and schools, and supports expanding the community's tree canopy alongside creating pathways to local green jobs, aligning environmental benefits with economic opportunity. Together, these measures reflect a comprehensive and community-driven approach to reducing emissions and improving public health in East Oakland.

Alignment with Environmental Justice and Equity Principles

The East Oakland CERP is grounded in environmental justice and equity principles, reflecting the community's vision for transparency, accountability, and the fair distribution of environmental benefits. Developed through a community-led process, the plan elevates the lived experiences of East Oakland residents and prioritizes actions that address historic inequities in land use, enforcement, and health outcomes. Its strategies emphasize reducing disproportionate exposures, strengthening protections for sensitive populations, and ensuring that community voices shape decision-making. By integrating equity-focused objectives across all focus areas, the plan advances a framework in which East Oakland residents have both the right to clean air and a meaningful role in achieving it.

Recommended Actions to Strengthen Implementation

CARB staff recommends that implementation activities incorporate the following improvements, modeled after the recommendations used in prior staff evaluations.

Strengthen Agency Partnerships and Clarify Roles

Strengthening agency partnerships and clarifying roles will be essential for effective implementation of the East Oakland CERP. Several high-priority actions identified by the community such as improving zoning and land-use protections, addressing airport-related emissions and exposure, managing truck routes, and advancing housing quality improvements, extend beyond the Air District's direct regulatory authority. To ensure meaningful progress in these areas, the Air District will need to formalize cross-agency partnerships and work collaboratively with key partners, including the City of Oakland, the Port of Oakland, Caltrans, the Alameda County Public Health Department, CARB, OEHHA, and local school districts. CARB staff recommend that such agreements explicitly call out the need to include the CSC in strategy refinement. Establishing these partnerships will help align roles, leverage complementary authorities, and support coordinated action toward the community's air quality and health goals.

Continue Refining Strategy Details with CSC Direction

Effective implementation of the CERP will require ongoing refinement of strategy details in close collaboration with the CSC. Many of the actions identified in the plan will need further development during implementation, including the establishment of clear tracking metrics, defined timelines, funding pathways, designated agency responsibilities, and structured opportunities for CSC oversight and engagement with the broader community. As seen in other CAPP communities, the use of focused subcommittees or workgroups can support this deeper level of development. Creating these smaller, strategy-specific teams would allow the CSC, the Air District, and partner

agencies to work more efficiently on action design, ensure that community priorities continue to guide implementation, and maintain the level of detail needed to achieve meaningful emissions and exposure reductions. During the Community Equity, Health, and Justice Committee's March 11, 2026 review of the draft CERP, members raised concerns about the lack of quantified, action-specific emission reduction targets. This concern was echoed by public comments in the Draft Final CERP (Attachment 1, pp. 14-15). In response, the Air District committed to quantifying emission reductions at the 5-year implementation mark and tracking progress against East Oakland's baseline inventory. CARB strongly agrees that, whenever feasible, the Air District should estimate emission reductions for each CERP action.

Develop an Inclusive Budgeting Framework

As the CERP leverages incentive funds, CARB encourages the Air District to allocate funding based on CSC priorities, and to reevaluate funding as CERP implementation evolves. The CARB Board considers CERPs to be "living documents," and where discretion exists, strategy implementation and funding can be modified as needed. These modifications should then be documented in annual implementation reports.

Improve Documentation of Public Questions and Responses

To enhance transparency, CARB recommends more systematic documentation of public comments, questions, CSC communications, and agency responses, and posting them online.

CARB Commitments

CARB will work with the Air District and the East Oakland CSC to identify targeted enforcement opportunities, such as evaluating potential locations for deploying the Portable Emissions Acquisition System (PEAQs). CARB will also coordinate inspections in areas identified by the community as enforcement priorities to ensure that compliance efforts are aligned with local concerns to the extent feasible. In addition, CARB will continue supporting statewide rulemakings that are relevant to East Oakland, such as those addressing heavy-duty trucks, off-road equipment, and zero-emission transitions, to help reduce emissions from sources outside the Air District's authority. Where appropriate, CARB will further explore opportunities for collaboration to address air quality issues associated with airport-adjacent operations. As invited and appropriate, CARB can help play a role in convening other state and local agencies essential for effective implementation of strategies outside of the Air District's jurisdiction. CARB will facilitate peer to peer exchanges and convenings to support shared learning across CAPP communities. These commitments will help ensure that CARB's statewide and regional actions reinforce the goals and strategies outlined in the East Oakland CERP.

Conclusion

CARB staff finds that the East Oakland “Right to Breathe” CERP is community-driven, technically robust, and aligned with Blueprint 2.0. The strategies and actions are highly likely to reduce emissions and exposures in one of California’s most overburdened communities.

Staff recommends approval of the Final Draft CERP, with direction to prioritize the recommended implementation improvements outlined above.