

# State of California Air Resources Board

## Board Item Summary

### Item # 22-7-2: Public Meeting to Hear an Informational Update on Assembly Bill 617 Statewide Strategy

#### Staff Recommendation:

This is an informational item only; no Board action is necessary.

#### Discussion:

The California Air Resources Board (CARB or Board) established the Community Air Protection Program (Program) to implement Assembly Bill (AB) 617 (C. Garcia, Ch. 136, Stats. of 2017). AB 617 is a significant step to transform California's air quality programs to address air pollution disparities at the neighborhood level. It requires new, community-focused actions that go beyond existing State and regional programs to reduce air pollution exposure in disproportionately burdened communities throughout the State, including statewide strategies and community-specific emissions reduction programs.

In January 2018, CARB convened the AB 617 Consultation Group (Consultation Group) to help advise CARB as it developed the statewide strategy to reduce emissions of toxic air contaminants and criteria air pollutants in communities affected by a high cumulative exposure burden as AB 617 requires CARB to consult with the Scientific Review Panel on Toxic Air Contaminants, air districts, the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, environmental justice organizations, affected industry, and other interested stakeholders in the development and updates of the statewide strategy.

In September 2018, the Board approved the statewide strategy known as the Community Air Protection Blueprint (Program Blueprint) that details the requirements for selecting communities, preparing community emissions reduction programs, identifying statewide actions, and conducting community air monitoring for the implementation of the Program. AB 617 requires CARB to update the Program Blueprint every five years.

The Consultation Group, chaired by Board Member Dr. John Balmes, formed an ad hoc working group in 2020 to begin a revision of the current Program Blueprint. In 2021, a number of environmental justice (EJ) leaders within the group, known as the Writer's Group, stepped forward to draft the *People's Blueprint for Community Air Protection*. The People's Blueprint is a starting point for review, discussion, and comment by the full Consultation Group, air districts, and the public on updates to the Program Blueprint.

The People's Blueprint lifts up recommended changes to the Program Blueprint that would more deeply empower community members, improve governance of community steering committees, and apply a racial equity lens to the work of achieving emissions and exposure reductions in disproportionately impacted communities.

The Board will hear an informational item on the update to the AB 617 statewide strategy through a representative panel of AB 617 Consultation Group members. Staff will share ideas for the Program Blueprint update that are significantly informed by the People's Blueprint and other models to support community focused strategies and better serve more overburdened communities in the State. Staff will also provide an update on efforts to re-envision the Program to bring benefits to more disproportionately impacted communities statewide.

**Summary and Impacts:**

Not Applicable