



May 16, 2022

Assembly Appropriations Committee  
1021 O Street, Suite 8220  
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: AB 2550 (Arambula)

Chair Holden and members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee,

Air pollution has numerous negative health impacts, including the development of asthma and other respiratory illnesses in children as well as increased risk of cancer and cardiovascular disease in adults. The San Joaquin Valley air basin has continuously failed to meet the 1979 ozone pollution standards as well as the 1997 standard for fine particle pollution. Furthermore, the San Joaquin Valley remains at serious risk of continued failure to meet these outdated as well as future, more health protective air quality standards. To restore clean air to the region, the California Air Resources Board must work with the San Joaquin Valley Air District to find additional emission reductions and accelerate existing commitments, in close consultation with community based organizations in disadvantaged communities.

### ***Bill Summary***

Assembly Bill 2550 (Arambula): Air Quality Attainment empowers the California Air Resources Control Board to work collaboratively with the San Joaquin Valley Air District, community based organizations, and disadvantaged communities to strengthen local programming and enforcement to meet health protective standards for ozone and PM 2.5 pollution. These additional measures are necessary because the San Joaquin Valley has epidemic levels of sickness due to air pollution, has a history of failing to meet clean air goals, and accelerating climate impacts like extreme heat and catastrophic wildfires only exacerbate these problems. The San Joaquin Valley (San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and the valley portion of Kern County) is the most polluted air basin in the United States for fine particles, and one of the most polluted places for ozone. Air pollution takes a serious toll on the

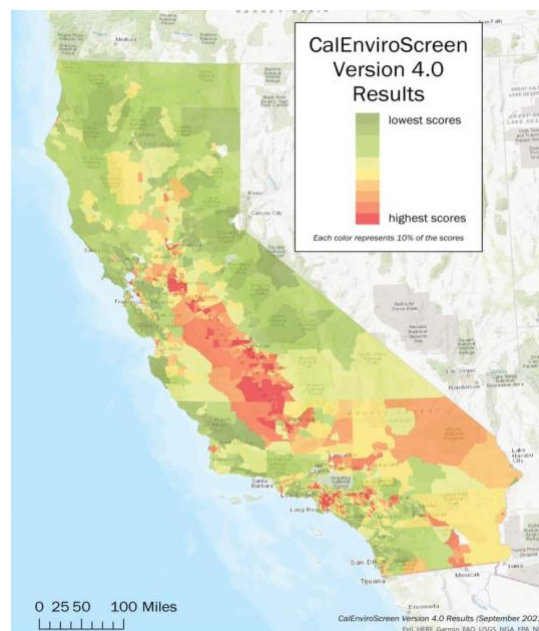
health and quality of life of everyone in the region, and disproportionately impacts Black and Indigenous people, People of Color, and low income communities.

### ***Costs of Inaction***

Assembly Bill 2550 increases state engagement in protecting the health of San Joaquin Valley breathers suffering from unhealthy air.

### ***Social and Economic Costs of Air Pollution***

Air pollution costs the San Joaquin Valley more than \$1,600 per person each year, according to a 2008 study. The region would enjoy approximately \$6 billion in savings if federal ozone and PM2.5 standards were met, representing saved lives and other health and social benefits. The authors note that the economic benefits are likely even higher than estimated.<sup>1</sup> To place the reduction in premature deaths in perspective, attaining the federal PM2.5 standard would save more lives than reducing the number of motor vehicle fatalities to zero in most of the counties in this study. Moreover, according to the California Air Resources Board, PM2.5 exposure is responsible for about 1,200 cases of premature death in the San Joaquin Valley each year.<sup>2</sup>



*CalEnviroScreen Version 4.0 Results (September 2021).<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> "The actual economic benefits are likely higher than the results reported here (p. 5).": Hall, J. V., Brajer, V., & Lurmann, F. W. (2008). The Benefits of Meeting Federal Clean Air Standards in the South Coast and San Joaquin Valley Air Basins. Available at: [https://www.arb.ca.gov/lists/sip111512/5-csuf\\_hall\\_report\\_benefits\\_meeting\\_clean\\_air\\_standards\\_111308.pdf](https://www.arb.ca.gov/lists/sip111512/5-csuf_hall_report_benefits_meeting_clean_air_standards_111308.pdf)

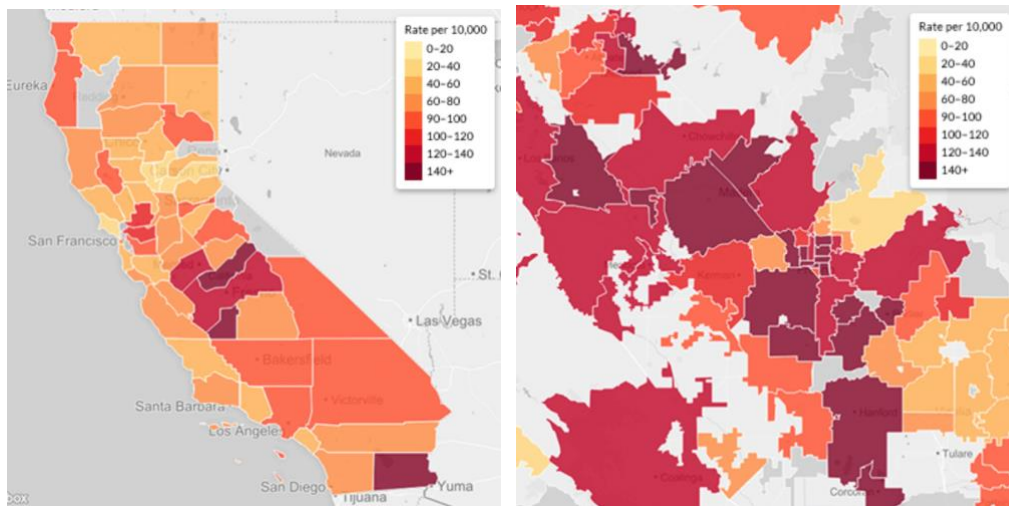
<sup>2</sup> California Air Resources Board. Clean-air plan for San Joaquin Valley first to meet all federal standards for fine particle pollution. Available at: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/news/clean-air-plan-san-joaquin-valley-first-meet-all-federal-standards-fine-particle-pollution>

<sup>3</sup> Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHHA). CalEnviroScreen 4.0. Available at: <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40>

## *Asthma Prevalence in the San Joaquin Valley*

According to the 2018 California Health Interview Survey, about 1 in 4 children in the San Joaquin Valley have asthma — making it the region with the highest proportion in the state.<sup>4</sup> Another 2018 produced a similar analysis which concluded that 26 percent of school-aged children had asthma.<sup>5</sup>

In 2019, Fresno County led the state in emergency department hospital visits for asthma for 0-17 year old children at a rate of 125.9 per 10,000 youth - about 3 times the state's average rate of 42.6 per 10,000 youth. Madera County followed behind with a rate of 105.1 per 10,000<sup>6</sup>.



*2012 Youth Asthma ED Visit Rates by Zip Code.<sup>7</sup>  
Left: California. Right: Central San Joaquin Valley.*

## *Additional Health Impacts*

AB 2550 will be an important investment in supporting many of the state's most disadvantaged communities in the San Joaquin Valley. The American Lung Association State of the Air report utilized the 2020 U.S. Census data to estimate a total of 4,278,713 people in the San Joaquin

<sup>4</sup> California Healthline. Dirty Air And Disasters Sending Kids To The ER For Asthma. Available at: <https://californiahealthline.org/news/dirty-air-and-disasters-sending-kids-to-the-er-for-asthma/#:~:text=Merced%20and%20Madera%20counties%2C%20also,to%20California%20Health%20Interview%20Survey>

<sup>5</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation. Low-Income Californians Feel Twice The Burn From Wildfires, Available at: [https://khn.org/news/low-income-californians-feel-twice-the-burn-from-wildfires/?utm\\_campaign=KHN%20-%20Weekly%20Edition&utm\\_source=hs\\_email&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=65763597&hsenc=p2ANqtz-9aVDULmQ6OitDWKNbfBrxRVD39gJMQ0K9H51mK58X11C\\_jdZApA9yqsMQpyuG4XsFKD3h7V3gNdu9UI8tc52hdgo3m5g&hsmi=65763597](https://khn.org/news/low-income-californians-feel-twice-the-burn-from-wildfires/?utm_campaign=KHN%20-%20Weekly%20Edition&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=65763597&hsenc=p2ANqtz-9aVDULmQ6OitDWKNbfBrxRVD39gJMQ0K9H51mK58X11C_jdZApA9yqsMQpyuG4XsFKD3h7V3gNdu9UI8tc52hdgo3m5g&hsmi=65763597)

<sup>6</sup> California Department of Public Health. Environmental Health Investigations Branch. California Breathing, County Asthma Data Tool. Available at: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDCPHP/DEODC/EHIB/CPE/Pages/CaliforniaBreathingCountyAsthmaProfile.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> Kamagra. Asthma Emergency Department Visits Project Site. Visual maps available at: <https://www.kamagra.com/articles/asthma-emergency-department-visits/>

Valley with 2,969,831 or 69.4% being people of color<sup>8</sup>. Some of our most sensitive populations include the 1,198,834 children under the age of 18 and the 537,974 adults over the age of 65 as well as the 371,023 people who reported having asthma.

The 2022 American Lung Association State of the Air Report found that 5 of the 8 counties in the San Joaquin Valley are the most polluted for PM 2.5.<sup>9</sup> Fine particulate matter contributes to a range of health problems including asthma, heart and lung diseases, and even early death.

Given the severity of the public health crisis caused by air pollution in the San Joaquin Valley and the long history of missed deadlines combined with increasing impacts from climate change, ***we urge your “yes” vote on AB 2550.***

If you have any questions about our position, please contact Catherine Garoupa White at [Catherine@calcleanair.org](mailto:Catherine@calcleanair.org).

Sincerely,

Dr. Catherine Garoupa White, Executive Director, Central Valley Air Quality Coalition

Daniel Barad, Senior Policy Advocate, Sierra Club California

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Ellie Cohen, CEO, The Climate Center

Theresa Zamora, California State Director, Mi Familia Vota

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Dan Ress, Staff Attorney, Center for Race, Poverty, and the Environment

Victoria Rome, CA Government Affairs Director, Natural Resources Defense Council

Matt Holmes, Environmental Justice Director, Little Manila Rising

Kevin Hamilton, Co-Director, Central California Asthma Collaborative

CC:

Assemblymember Chris R. Holden

Assemblymember Frank Bigelow

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<sup>8</sup> American Lung Association. <https://www.lung.org/research/sota/city-rankings/states/california/san-joaquin>

<sup>9</sup> American Lung Association. “Most Polluted Places to Live”. Pg 18. Available at <https://www.lung.org/getmedia/17c6cb6c-8a38-42a7-a3b0-6744011da370/sota-2021.pdf>

Assemblymember Issac G. Bryan  
Assemblymember Lisa Calderon  
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