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CALIFORNIA'S AIR POLLUTION OFFICERS RELEASE JOINT CLEAN AIR REPORT
Progress toward clean air details successes, challenges

The Air Pollution Control Officers of the State's 35 local air-quality agencies have collaborated on a report that discusses the progress towards cleaner air. The report summarizes the significant reductions in ozone pollution over the past 30 years and a reduction in the total number of unhealthy air quality days for the past decade as measured by the Air Quality Index.

California's Progress Toward Clean Air, produced by the California Air Pollution Control Officer's Association (CAPCOA), is a current, objective assessment of the achievements, goals and challenges facing this most diverse state. The report includes statistical information and trends for each of the state's independent, local air quality agencies.

"While we are each working at the local level to address the unique challenges and circumstances in our respective air basins, we are also working cooperatively to realize our common goal of cleaner, healthier air Statewide," said current CAPCOA President and Air Pollution Control Officer of the Placer County APCD Thomas J. Christofk.

California, the most populous state in the nation, includes regions with pristine air quality as well as regions with the highest number of violations of federal health-based standards for ozone and particulate matter. However, even these areas have seen remarkable improvement in occurrences of violations for these pollutants since the formation of local air quality agencies.

Since 1980, Reactive Organic Gas (ROG) and Nitrogen Oxide (NO_x) emissions from stationary sources have been reduced by three-quarters and more than two-thirds, respectively. ROG and NO_x emissions from all sources, including mobile and area-wide sources, have been reduced by 68 percent and 39 percent during the same period. (For details, please refer to the report.)

The state has the strongest regulatory program in the nation, and coupled with significant public and private investment in voluntary, incentive-based measures, has experienced across-the-board improvements in air quality.

This multifaceted strategy addresses the many variables influencing California's air quality and serves as a model for the rest of the nation, and throughout the world, in combating air pollution.

"As an organization of independent agencies, the State's air districts continue to set the standard in both regulatory and voluntary emission reduction strategies for the rest of the country," Christofk said.

Local air quality agencies and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) maintain an extensive air monitoring network throughout California, providing a wide range of comprehensive data that is used in assessing air quality trends in each region. One measure is the Air Quality Index (AQI), developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This scale is calculated from measured ambient air concentrations of various pollutants and is used to develop the air quality forecasts that many residents are familiar with. (For a detailed explanation of the AQI, see the report.)

However, as federal health-based standards continue to evolve and become more stringent, meeting these standards continues to be a significant challenge to the state's metropolitan areas. Many areas continue to face challenges in meeting standards for ozone and fine particles, despite regional and state-level controls on mobile and stationary sources that are the most stringent in the nation.

"Our progress has demonstrated that in working together, the people of California can realize dramatic successes in cleaner air. This ongoing effort will be required as we continue to face the challenges that lie ahead," said Christofk.

For a copy of CAPCOA's **California's Progress Toward Clean Air** report, visit www.capcoa.org. For more information about CAPCOA and the state's air districts, call Ken Koyama, CAPCOA's executive director at 916-441-5700.