



News Release

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CONTACTS:

Bay Area Air District: communications@baaqmd.gov

City of Richmond: Tony Tamayo, tony_tamayo@ci.richmond.ca.us, or 510.620.6527

Contra Costa County: Robert Rogers, robert.rogers@bos.cccounty.us or 510.942.2224

Air District awards \$65 million in penalty funds to City of Richmond, Contra Costa County, City of Benicia and beyond

Grants reinvest penalties from air quality violations back into the community

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air District has awarded \$65 million to Richmond, Contra Costa County, Benicia and surrounding communities, including North Richmond Pinole, El Sobrante, East Richmond Heights, San Pablo, the Iron Triangle, Point Richmond and unincorporated West Contra Costa County.

These penalty funds will reinvest in community-driven projects that will reduce air pollution, improve public health, expand clean energy, support the local economy and strengthen community resilience. The grants are funded through Bay REPAIR, or Reinvesting Penalties for Air Improvement and Resilience, and will support community-led projects as grant agreements are finalized and work begins.

The two largest grants, known as the Richmond Catalyst grants, have been awarded to the City of Richmond at \$10.7 million and Contra Costa County at \$12.9 million for a total of \$23.6 million. Catalyst grants, the largest funding category within the Bay REPAIR Local Community Benefits Fund, provide \$10 million to \$40 million for multi-project collaborations that address a range of community needs. Opportunity and Seed grants provide smaller award amounts.

“When facilities in Richmond violate air quality rules, the people who live nearby pay for it in the air they breathe. These grants send that penalty money back to the residents to decide how to reinvest it in their community,” said Dr. Philip Fine, executive officer of the Air District. “Shade trees, clean energy upgrades in homes, transit passes and asthma resources are the investments people asked for. The Air District will work alongside the city, the county and community partners to ensure each project is successful.”

Contra Costa County will use the Catalyst grant for the North Richmond Community Resilience Initiative in partnership with Urban Tilth, Community Housing Development Corporation, The Watershed Project and Bay Area Regional Energy Network. The initiative includes four projects to improve air quality and community resilience. Projects include completing the North Richmond Farm Community Resilience Center, upgrading and electrifying affordable housing and a senior center, planting 120 shade trees, improving the Wildcat Creek Trail and providing clean energy upgrades to homes and childcare facilities.

“As an Air District Board member that successfully advocated changing our policies to return fines against industrial polluters back to the community, I am heartened to see \$38.7 million of these fines being invested to make Richmond-San Pablo neighborhoods healthier and stronger. Communities like ours that have endured the impacts of pollution deserve to benefit from these fines. The Air District’s investment will support a community resilience center, home electrification, urban greening, cleaner and healthier homes, youth leadership opportunities, jobs, improved public health, and a stronger local economy. These were priorities supported by our communities and we look forward to working with local non-profits to implement these programs as fast as possible,” said Contra Costa County Supervisor and Air District Board Member, John Gioia.

The City of Richmond will use its Catalyst grant for Richmond Rising Together in partnership with 11 community organizations. The initiative includes 10 projects focused on clean transportation, urban greening, clean energy, public health and community resilience. Projects include supporting electric public transit, planting 600 trees, providing transit passes to 1,500 residents, upgrading 100 income-qualified homes, expanding asthma prevention resources and creating youth workforce and leadership opportunities.

“Richmond has carried the impacts of pollution for generations, so this investment means a great deal to our community. I’m grateful to the Bay Area Air District for putting these resources back into Richmond, and to our City staff and community partners who worked hard to bring this proposal together. This funding will help us invest in healthier neighborhoods, better transportation options, local jobs, and a stronger, more resilient Richmond. This is what can happen when government and community work together around a shared vision for a healthier and more equitable future,” said Eduardo Martinez, mayor of the City of Richmond.

Of the remaining \$41.6 million penalty funds, \$39.8 million was awarded to Opportunity grant recipients and \$1.8 million to Seed grant recipients. These grants will invest in community-driven projects to reduce air pollution, improve public health, expand home electrification, create clean energy workforce opportunities, strengthen community leadership and enhance climate resilience in frontline communities. The Air District will work closely with all grant recipients throughout implementation and will provide project updates as key milestones are reached.

The Air District adopted the Community Benefits Penalty Funds Policy in May 2024 to reinvest penalties from air quality violations into impacted communities. Bay REPAIR, or Reinvesting Penalties for Air Improvement and Resilience, is the Air District’s program for reinvesting these penalty funds. These awards are the first of their kind in California, directing air quality penalty funds back into the communities most affected by pollution.

The Local Community Benefits Fund is part of Bay REPAIR and provides Seed, Opportunity and Catalyst grants for community-led projects. In Round 1, the Air District awarded more than \$105 million for projects in Benicia, Richmond and surrounding communities. The grants were awarded through an open, competitive process informed by community priorities, public input and stakeholder engagement. The Air District reviewed 54 eligible applications from Richmond and surrounding communities. For more information about Air District's Community Investments program visit: [Community Investments Office](#)

The Bay Area Air District is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality and the global climate in the nine-county Bay Area. Connect with the Air District via [Facebook](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

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