Bay Area Air District

News Release

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Air District shares Bay Area clean air leadership at COP31 in Antalya

Board Chair Lynda Hopkins, Vice Chair Vicki Veenker and Executive Officer Dr. Philip Fine describe how regional action delivers cleaner air and climate progress

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air District shared how the Bay Area turns climate commitments into cleaner air at the United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP31, which runs November 9 through 20. During a live virtual press conference from Antalya on November 10, Air District leaders described how regional action protects communities already living with the impacts of climate change.

At COP31, Air District representatives joined subnational and regional leaders to discuss resilient cities, electrification and grids and sustainable transportation. The Air District emphasized its work to deliver cleaner air at the regional level through programs and funding opportunities, while working with partners at COP31 to accelerate solutions for the people who need them most.

The press conference fell on the COP31 thematic day for energy and transport, two areas where the Bay Area is moving fastest. Earlier this month, the Air District took a major step forward by approving amendments to the first regional rules in the United States requiring zero-NOx water heaters. Through its policies and programs, the Air District works to replace diesel trucks, which warm the planet and pollute the air, with zero-emission models. Earlier this year, it launched the Bay Area Regional Climate Action Plan to aggressively fight climate change and move the region to a carbon-neutral future.

“Anyone who has lived through a wildfire knows the fear of that first night and the long road that follows,” said Air District Board Chair Lynda Hopkins, who also serves as a Sonoma County supervisor. “In Sonoma County, we learned that recovery takes years, not weeks, and that neighbors, local leaders and public agencies get through it together. We came to Antalya to share what our communities have taught us and to learn from places facing the same smoke, heat and floods, so more families feel ready when the next one comes.”

“Cities are where climate commitments meet everyday life,” said Air District Board Vice Chair Vicki Veenker, who also serves as mayor of Palo Alto. “Palo Alto has cut its greenhouse gas emissions by about half compared to 1990, despite our population growing by 20%. What we learn as residents switch to cleaner appliances helps shape the Air District’s regional standards. That partnership between cities and regions is how climate goals become cleaner air people can see and feel.”

“Air quality is where climate change becomes personal for the more than seven million people we serve,” said Dr. Philip Fine, executive officer of the Air District. “Wildfire smoke, extreme heat and pollution from homes, trucks and industry all reach the same lungs, and the communities that breathe the worst air feel it first. The solutions that protect our climate also protect public health. That is why the Air District is at COP31, to share what is working in the Bay Area, learn from regions around the world and bring those lessons home to the communities we serve.”

The Air District’s participation reaffirmed that local action drives global impact and that cooperation across borders is essential to creating cleaner air and a healthier planet for all. Watch the full livestream.

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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