

County of Santa Clara

Office of the County Executive

County Government Center, East Wing

Eleventh Floor – East Wing

70 West Hedding Street

San Jose, California 95110



DATE: November 29, 2021

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors
Jeffery V. Smith M.D, J.D., County Executive

FROM: Jasneet Sharma, Director, Office of Sustainability
Sara H. Cody MD, Health Officer and Public Health Director

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SUBJECT: Update on Efforts to Align BRACE Grant and BAAQMD AB 617 Activities to Support Communities Impacted by Poor Air Quality

During the September 28, 2021, Board of Supervisors meeting (Items No. 49 and 50), at the request of Supervisor Chavez, the Board directed Administration to provide an Off-Agenda Report to the Board relating to how the County can align new Building Resilience Against Climate Effects (BRACE) grant funding strategies with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) AB 617 priorities to support communities most vulnerable to the health effects of impaired air quality.

This Off-Agenda Report provides an update on efforts to identify opportunities to align the BRACE grant strategies with BAAQMD AB 617 funding priorities to support investment in high need areas, specifically San Jose, Morgan Hill, and Gilroy.

Background: BRACE Grant and BAAQMD AB 617 Program

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention awarded the County approximately \$300,000 in BRACE funding for year one project activities beginning September 1, 2021. The goal of this five-year project is to implement adaptation actions to build community resilience to the health effects of exposure to extreme heat and poor air quality caused by but not limited to wildfire smoke. BRACE activities are being co-led by the Office of Sustainability and the Public Health Department (BRACE team) and focus on communities most vulnerable to these climate hazards, including South County and East San Jose.

In 2017, Governor Brown signed Assembly Bill 617 to reduce air pollution and related health impacts in the most affected communities. It is a statewide initiative led by the California Air

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Resources Board and implemented locally by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) through the Community Health Protection Program.

In October 2021, the BRACE team met with the BAAQMD Senior Deputy Officer of Policy and Equity and the Director of Environmental Justice and Community Engagement who oversee and lead AB 617 activities. The purpose was to determine collaboration opportunities to leverage resources and create synergy to protect the health of the County's most at-risk communities.

According to BAAQMD, the Community Health Protection Program identifies and applies an in-depth process to work with communities, community-based organizations, and elected officials to develop a Steering Committee and five-year emission reduction plan to reduce air pollution in identified at-risk areas. Current BAAQMD priority communities include Richmond and West Oakland. Bay View Hunters Point will be the next community, beginning 2023.

BAAQMD has identified AB 617 communities for future consideration, including the City of San Jose; however, the City is on a long-term implementation list pending future funding. Currently, there is no timeline for project rollout. To elevate San Jose's prioritization as well as that of other communities such as Morgan Hill or Gilroy, community partners can raise their concerns with BAAQMD about community exposure to air pollutants.

Beyond AB 617 funding, BAAQMD has provided grants to local organizations through its Community Health Protection and James Cary Smith Community programs. Grants in the amount of \$100,000 were awarded to International Children Assistance Network (ICAN) and Breathe California for a two-year period. In 2019/2020, the last round of James Cary Smith Community Grant funding, Veggielution and Valley Verde were awarded \$29,400 each.

Future BRACE and AB 617 Collaboration Opportunities

The County BRACE team will partner and work with BAAQMD in the following ways:

- Strengthen relationships with BAAQMD and encourage participation in the forthcoming BRACE activities such as the Health and Air Quality Resilience Collaborative.
- Explore opportunities to collaborate with BAAQMD to identify resources to conduct indoor air quality monitoring and provide resilience kits to improve air quality in homes.
- Support BAAQMD in developing relationships across Santa Clara County to build capacity for future AB 617 communities.
- Promote BAAQMD programs, resources, and grant funding opportunities to the BRACE network, including co-hosting resources and grant funding informational sessions.
- Engage BAAQMD grantees in BRACE activities. The most recent, solicitation for the James Carey Smith Community Grant Program closed October 1. If awards are made to local organizations, the BRACE team will contact the awardees to determine collaboration opportunities. Although BRACE activities will be implemented countywide, the priority communities identified in the first year of the project are South County and East San Jose.
- Collaborate on the distribution plan for the congregate air filtration units provided by BAAQMD to prioritize populations at risk of adverse health outcomes from poor air quality.