



Fact Sheet
Citizen Group Takes Action to Improve Air Quality in the Tri-Valley
Tri-Valley Air Quality Community Alliance
December 2021

The Tri-Valley has unique air quality problems that local actions can help solve.

For decades, Livermore has recorded some of the highest smog concentrations in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Bay Air Quality Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) has reduced emissions and our air quality has improved. **However, one in five of the days each year our Air Quality Index (AQI) still reaches 50 or higher—unhealthy for sensitive populations.** On these days over 100,000 Tri-Valley residents—those with respiratory problems, young children, pregnant women, and elderly can be negatively impacted.



To engage our community and go the last mile to continue improving our air quality, in March 2020, the Air District funded the [Tri-Valley Air Quality Community Alliance \(TVAQCA\)](#) with a [Community Air Protection Program \(Assembly Bill 617\)](#) grant. We have addressed our key air quality problems:

- **Summer ozone, also known as “smog”**
- **Particulate matter (especially the finer particles, PM2.5, that get deep in the lungs and even enter the bloodstream and organs) from diesel trucks**
- **Wildfire smoke episodes, a source of PM2.5, ozone, and other toxic air contaminants**

Summer ozone. Westerly summer sea breezes carry emissions from the inner Bay Area to create much of the ozone in our valley. In addition, several days each year easterly winds bring over smog from the Central Valley. Local traffic especially on I-580 and I-680 freeways add to these emissions. Recently the [California Air Resources Board](#) found that gas-powered landscaping equipment now release as much ozone-causing pollutants as auto traffic! Recognizing this, in October 2021, the state legislature passed [Assembly Bill 1346](#) which will prevent the sale of all this gas-powered equipment starting in 2024. However, it will take decades before that regulation has significant effect.



To reduce our ozone now, TVAQCA launched an [incentive program](#) which funds landscape companies to purchase of electric equipment.

To accelerate reductions in emissions, we also recommend cities implement ordinances for electric equipment as well as minimize areas with lawns. Reducing lawn area benefits both our response to drought and improves air quality.

Visit us at www.TVAOCA.org or get in touch at tvaqca1@gmail.com.

[Particulate matter from diesel trucks.](#) While only a few percent of total emissions, **diesel trucks contribute over 85% to cancer risk in the Tri-Valley.** Statewide controls coupled with [BAAQMD's "Diesel Free by '33"](#) program will reduce emissions, but local actions, such as limited use of diesel generators, can help now.



[Wildfire smoke.](#) Due to Air District Spare-the-Air days to controls smoke from residential fireplaces, recent fine particulate matter (PM2.5) concentrations rarely exceed air quality standards, but since 2017 wildfire smoke has caused several weeks with the highest PM2.5 recorded in the Tri-Valley—once reaching 5 times the standard.



Smoke from California wildfires blankets the Bay Area on Sept. 9, 2020.

To reduce exposure from wildfires, we recommend homeowners install high-efficiency Heating-Ventilation Air Conditioning (HVAC) air filtration and optionally indoor air purifier systems.

You can also build your own room air cleaners: EPA's [DIY Air Cleaners to Reduce Wildfire Smoke Indoors](#) or [As wildfire season advances, so does major DIY air purifier effort](#) | [Berkeley News](#).

Visual air quality

In addition to causing health effects, air pollution also reduces visibility. For residences on the hillsides and those hiking our ridges, visual air quality is especially important. Visual range depends on many variables both natural and man-made. Higher ozone concentrations result in whitish horizons. Particulates, especially those in the PM2.5 range, reduce visual range and cause red sunsets.



Haze on Sept. 30, 2020, a high ozone day



Clear air on Dec. 23, 2020

Join forces with Climate Action Plans

We strongly encourage Tri-Valley cities and associated county governments establish a regular forum to unify air quality policies in parallel with Climate Action Plans.

The Air District's [Spare the Air-Cool the Climate](#) plan identifies actions which improve air quality while slowing climate change. Including air quality considerations with city [AB 32 Climate Action Plans \(CAPs\)](#) makes sense. Each city's General Plan includes policies to mitigate air pollution effects from urban growth and increased transportation. We recommend a regular venue for jointly addressing air quality issues in the Tri-Valley as a unit we call the "Tri-Valley Airshed."