



# 2023 Annual Report



*I-80 overpass at Horseshoe Bar Road, Loomis*

# 2023 Annual Report

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## Fulfilling Our Mission

### MISSION

*The Placer County Air Pollution Control District's mission is to manage Placer County's air quality in a manner to protect and promote public health by controlling and seeking reductions of air pollutants while recognizing and considering the economic and environmental impacts*

### Placer Air District's Role in Reducing Air Pollution Emissions

#### Regulation, Enforcement, Advocacy

Placer County Air Pollution Control District (District) is charged with the enforcement of local air pollution control rules adopted by its Board of Directors (District Board), as well as State of California (State) and federal air quality requirements. The District permits the control of air pollution by businesses, regulates open burning, responds to odor and dust complaints, and encourages the reduction of emissions in areas that are not regulated directly.

#### Air Quality Monitoring

There are five regulatory air monitoring stations in Placer County (County) to measure air quality on a 24-hour basis.

#### Air Quality Plans

The District is responsible for preparing, adopting, and implementing air quality plans that seek to achieve and maintain State and federal air quality standards.

#### Incentives

The District provides incentives to local businesses and agencies to reduce air pollution in our communities.

#### Wildfire Impacts

The District participates in and promotes efforts to reduce the impacts of wildfire.

#### Emission Inventory Development

The District develops an annual emission inventory of all sources within Placer County and reports this information to the California Air Resources Board (CARB).

#### Land Use Review

The District acts as a commenting agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for land use development projects, and works with local jurisdictions to minimize impacts of land use decisions;

The District continually seeks to minimize the regulatory burden on business and industry, and objectively implements and enforces its rules to protect public health.

### District Organization & Budget

#### Board of Directors

The District Board is composed of three County Board of Supervisors and one elected official from each of the six County incorporated municipalities: Auburn, Colfax, Lincoln, Loomis, Rocklin, Roseville. The District Board appoints the Director/Air Pollution Control Officer (APCO).

#### District Staff

The District currently employs 17 full-time and 3 extra-help employees, and is organized into four operating sections: Administrative Services, Planning & Monitoring, Compliance & Enforcement, and Permitting & Engineering.

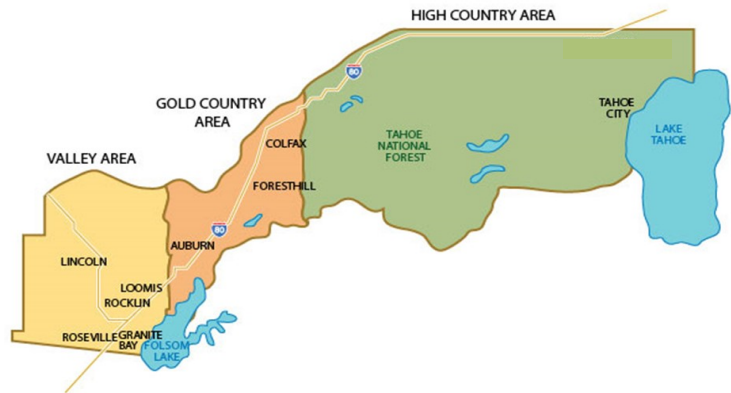
#### Budget

The District's current annual budget is approximately \$19.9 million, of which almost \$9 million is included as clean air incentive projects for local businesses. Most of the District's operational funding is derived from a surcharge imposed by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), along with emission and equipment fees assessed on permitted facilities. The District's activities are programmed into three separate funds depending on the revenue source. Each fund has its own revenue and expenditure accounts.

### The Placer County Region is Diverse

The District's jurisdiction includes all of Placer County, including the six incorporated municipalities, spanning many diverse areas. These include:

- Suburban areas of Roseville, Rocklin, Lincoln, Loomis, and Granite Bay in the southern portion;
- Rural farming and oak lands in the northern and western portion;
- Mountain communities of Auburn, Colfax, and Foresthill on the western slope of the Sierra;
- Nearly 560,000 acres of public and private forested land (58% of Placer County) east of Colfax to the Nevada state line; and
- The diversity of Lake Tahoe's northern and western shores.

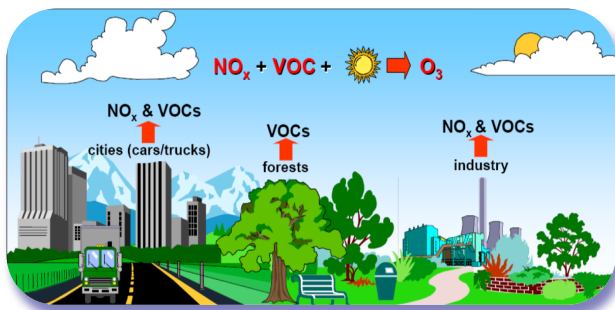


In 1970, Placer County's population of 78,280 was largely rural, with agriculture, a few large businesses, and government facilities supporting the economy. Today, Placer County is one of the fastest growing counties in California with a population exceeding 400,000, with a diverse mix of employers such as Hewlett-Packard, Sutter and Kaiser Permanente hospitals, several ski resorts, a casino, Union Pacific Railyard, and Sierra Pacific Industries lumber mill.

### Where Does Air Pollution Come from?

Air pollution comes from many different "sources". This includes larger stationary sources, such as power plants and boilers, and smaller sources such as dry cleaners and gas stations. Even small emission sources, such as the use of consumer products and paints at home, have an air quality impact. However, in Placer County and throughout California, the vast majority of pollutant emissions come from mobile sources such as cars, trucks, and trains.

### Ozone and Particulate Matter Pollution



Ozone ( $O_3$ ) is produced through the reaction in the atmosphere of oxides of nitrogen ( $NO_x$ ), and reactive organic gases (ROG), also called Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC), with sunlight. Typically, ozone exceedances of federal air quality standards occur during long stretches of hot stagnant days. Emissions from Placer County sources, as well as emissions that blow in from other parts of the State, contribute to the County's ozone levels.

Particulate Matter (PM) is a mixture of solid and liquid particles, and their chemical and physical compositions vary. PM can be emitted directly or produced by secondary formation in the atmosphere when gaseous pollutants, such as nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide, chemically react with ammonia and other compounds to form fine aerosol particles. PM pollution is caused mainly by human activities, such as residential wood burning, road dust, on-road and off-road vehicles, construction, and farming activities. PM can also be generated from natural sources such as windblown dust and wildfires.

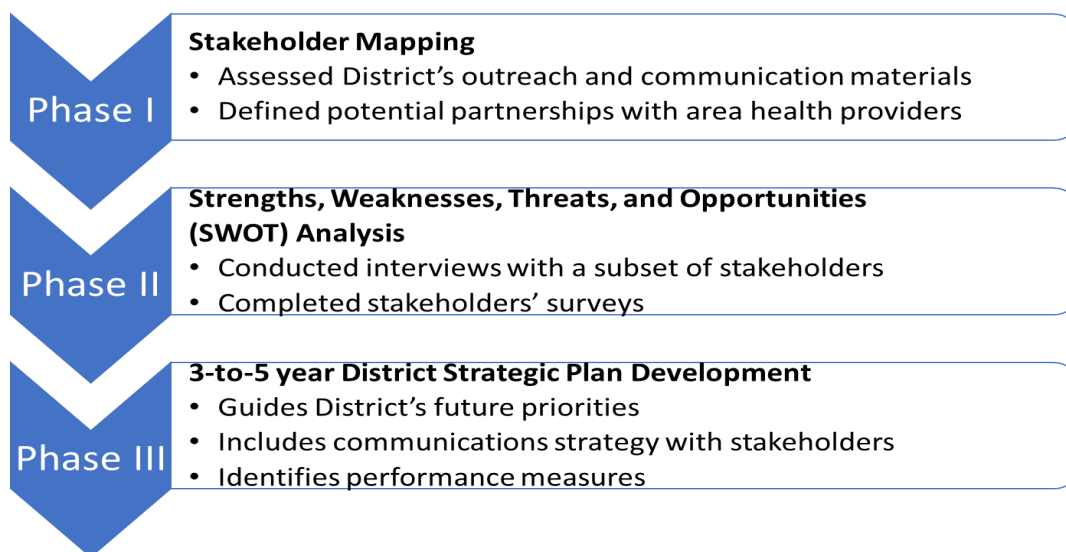


## Improving Operational Efficiency

### Ensuring Long Term Stability / Strategic Planning

The District continues to evaluate core District functions, recover District implementation costs, and where appropriate, identify additional revenue options. In 2020, the District contracted with Integrated Communication Strategies, LLC (ICS) for assistance in developing a 3-to-5 year strategic plan. The Strategic Plan is expected to be complete by June 30, 2023.

#### 3-to-5 year Strategic Plan



### Efficiency and Modernization

To improve efficiency, the District maintains a Capital Facility Maintenance Plan, which includes a schedule of required long-term maintenance for the District office. In 2021 and 2022, the District installed railings at a walkway in the front parking lot and made improvements to the building exterior, and will continue maintenance on the District office as needed in 2023.

A long-term fleet replacement schedule has been implemented to replace aging fleet. In 2022, the District sold its Honda Civic in surplus and will purchase a new vehicle in 2023.

The District has also implemented Cobblestone, a cloud-based contracts management system and organizational tool for our contracts and agreements. An Electronic Signature Policy, use of Adobe Sign, and a new Electronic Contract Records Policy were recent additions to improve the efficiency and security of digital contract records. Lastly, to ensure remote work will be as efficient as possible, the District purchased new laptop kits for every full-time employee.

### Expanding Online Interface

#### ~ Citizens Access Portal ~

The District continued work on improving the Accela data management system in 2022, with a specific focus on expanding the public facing online mechanism for owners/operators of stationary sources to navigate their regular permitting requirements. This system, known as the Accela Citizens Access (ACA) portal, allows for permit holders to apply for new permits, and modifications to their existing equipment, and complete the required annual "throughput" usage information request through the ACA online portal. ACA is expected to provide additional flexibility to permit holders, especially for the ever-growing population of equipment operators looking to manage their permits online. Over the next year, the District will continue to expand on the database management system to accommodate additional equipment categories for both the permit application and throughput submittal modules.

## *Focusing on Communities*

### **Community Outreach Efforts**

Seeking to enhance public outreach efforts and build relationships in our communities, the District participated in several community events throughout the County. District staff and Scooter, the Spare the Air Mascot, attended the Auburn Elementary School's Bike Rodeo to promote traffic safety and encourage alternative methods of transportation. Scooter also attended two other events in Placer County this year – the Roseville Downtown Tuesday Nights and the Rocklin Park Pulse. The District attended the Auburn Spring Home Show to promote District grant opportunities and share information about air quality. The District also staffed a booth at the Crops and Cul-de-Sacs meeting in Roseville with information about agricultural burning and attended Wildfire Preparedness meetings in Newcastle and Sheridan to discuss prescribed and residential burning and the health impacts of smoke. The District also implemented the U.S. EPA's Air Quality Flag Program this year and helped the Auburn Elementary School to do the same. Monday through Friday, a brightly colored flag is displayed outside the District office to indicate the day's air quality index for the community.



### **School Air Filter Upgrades**

CARB and the District continue their partnership on the Community Based Supplemental Environmental Project (CBSEP) Program, which provides project alternatives to violators of State regulatory requirements, in lieu of paying financial penalties to CARB directly. Each project has a focus on communities with higher air pollution impacts, such as those in close proximity to a railway, rail line or interstate.



Under the CBSEP Program, the District has installed high efficiency air filtration systems at 13 Placer County schools. These schools include Brown, Cirby, Kaseberg, Spanger and Woodbridge Elementary Schools; and Adelante, Independence and Roseville High Schools in Roseville; Bowman and Rock Creek Elementary; and Confluence, Maidu and Placer High Schools in Auburn. A second phase of installation will occur at Placer High School to add filters to the new heating and air conditioning system that will be installed in the Earl Crabbe Gym and the newly constructed Learning Commons Building. Also, with additional funding, the District will continue to assess, identify, and complete installations from the already developed list of prioritized schools and consider adding new schools to the list, particularly those impacted by wildfire.

### **Community Air Protection Program**

In 2017, AB 617 created the Community Air Protection (CAP) Program, which among its several elements, requires new community air monitoring programs and a community emission reduction plan. Although CARB's target communities selections did not include communities within Placer County, the District is taking actions towards the goal of reducing emissions in certain neighborhoods within the County which may be considered in the future, due to their close proximity to Interstate 80 and the J.R. Davis Union Pacific Rail Yard.

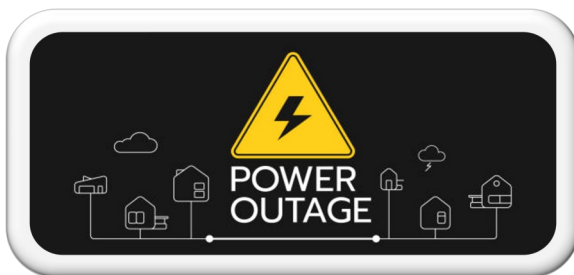


Under the CAP program, the District has continued its partnership with Health Education Council and Invest Health Roseville to enhance community outreach and project development efforts; worked on the emission inventory report required by the statewide Criteria Pollutant and Toxic Emission Reporting Regulation; evaluated the upgrade of video surveillance equipment near the Rail Yard's maintenance shop to assist with responding to residents' smoke and odor complaints; assisted CARB with identifying locations for a locomotive usage surveillance project; and reviewed data to prepare for an update of Roseville Rail Yard's Health Risk Assessment.

## Electrical Grid Stabilization Efforts

California continues to face energy supply shortages brought about by long periods of abnormally hot weather that engulfs the state, now referred to as extreme heat events, as well as the continued impacts from recent drought years which brought with them the loss of baseline hydroelectric power generation during the summer and fall of 2021. In addition to these challenges, State energy managers must always consider the potential loss of energy transmission infrastructure caused by wildfires, which would limit the potential to import power from neighboring states when needed. With these challenges in mind, the District has continued to work closely with local and state power managers to approve additional sources of backup power generation capabilities for essential services and communities during times of emergency.

In 2021, District staff collaborated with the City of Roseville's Electric Utility (Roseville Electric), the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), and the California Energy Commission to permit and commission two new 30 MW natural gas-fired combustion turbine generators at the existing Roseville Energy Park power plant. At the time of their initial commissioning, the turbine generators were installed with limited air pollution capabilities due to the unavailability of the abatement systems; however, in the past year, District staff worked closely with DWR and Roseville Electric staff to complete the full commissioning of the power generators with the permitted air pollution control systems. As of July 2022, the new turbines were fully compliant with all air pollution control requirements and continued to be available for dispatching as determined to be necessary by power balancing authorities.



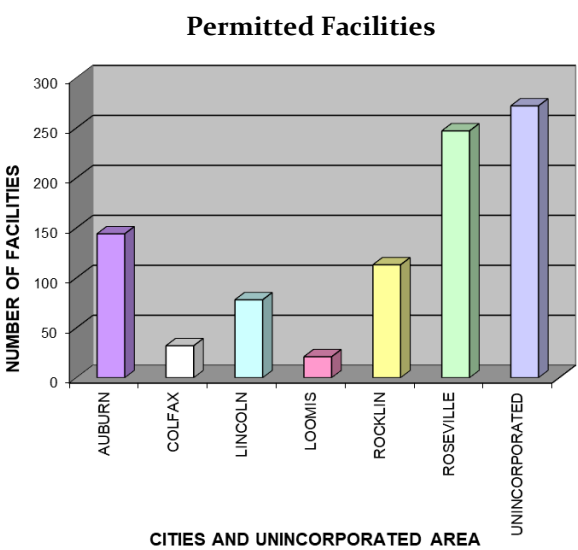
Additionally, District staff have continued to evaluate and permit new emergency power generation projects which ensure that essential services and individual businesses across the District have reliable access to electricity in the event of both primary power outages and public safety power shutoffs (PSPS). These systems are designed to keep the lights on in cases in which the serving electric utility is unable to provide electricity due to storm damage, equipment malfunction, or proactive precautions taken to avoid wildfire ignitions. In extreme cases related to forecasted energy shortages, emergency generation equipment may even be used as an alternative to utility power to relieve energy demand on the grid. In 2022, the District received at least 5 reports of permitted emergency power generator engines operating in response to widespread energy shortages throughout the State over the course of a 7-day extreme heat event. These operations resulted in a cumulative 91 engine run-hours and over 350 lbs of NO<sub>x</sub> released.

Along with the permitting of new and existing emergency power generation systems, the District will continue to engage with State energy managers and local electrical utilities to be a part of the overall grid stabilization solution. Additionally, the District will continue to focus on evaluating the emissions impacts from backup power generation systems used to alleviate the ongoing effects from extreme heat events and will report the emissions estimates to CARB, when requested, for potential mitigation through existing air quality programs.



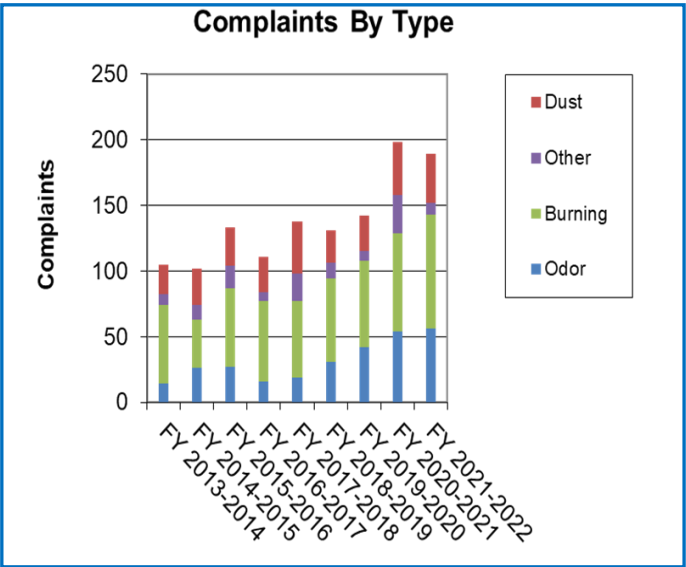
### Efficient Permitting

As authorized under federal and State law, the District has successfully implemented its permitting requirements for stationary sources of air pollution throughout the County. 133 Authority to Construct (ATC)/permits to operate were issued and 1,430 operating permits (at 909 separate facilities) were renewed in 2022. The five largest emitting facilities in the District have “Title V” federal operating permits, which are triggered by specific requirements in the U.S. Clean Air Act. In 2022, two of these facilities (Sierra Pacific Industries and Roseville Energy Park) started the process of making certain modifications and renewing their Title V permits for an additional five years. It’s expected that the renewal process for these two facilities will be completed in 2023.



### Ensuring Compliance and Responding to Complaints

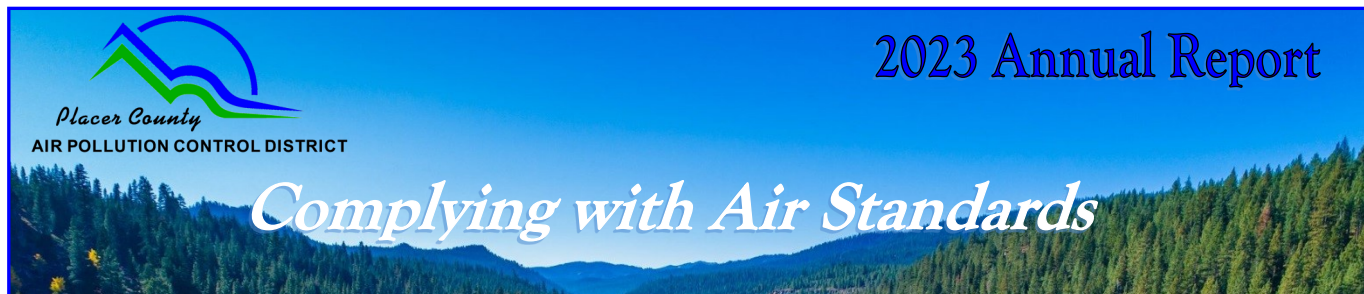
The District continued to implement effective and fair enforcement and citizen complaint resolution programs. In 2022, almost 200 complaints were investigated, with about one-half concerning smoke from burning, one-quarter from odor, and the remainder from fugitive dust and chemicals. Over 100 violation notices were issued. Just over \$150,000 in penalties were collected (half of this is from a gasoline dispensing vapor recovery contractor as a result of a court case judgment). District staff inspected 358 facilities (comprising 702 permits). Close to 100 emission source tests were observed. These activities are critical to ensure expected emission reductions from District programs are realized, and there is a level playing field for compliance among regulated and permitted sources.



### Odor Management

The District continues to receive complaints concerning nuisance odors from communities (including residential and commercial developments) that encroach on the landfill, municipal wastewater and sewage treatment plants, and the Roseville Rail Yard. The District has reviewed and approved odor management plans for the Western Regional Sanitary Landfill, Pleasant Grove Wastewater Treatment Plant, Lincoln Wastewater Treatment Plant, and Rio Bravo Rocklin Biomass Power Plant. The enforceable odor management plans establish best practices to minimize odor impacts.





## Air Quality Monitoring Modernization

In 2022, the District upgraded its ozone analyzers at the Lincoln and Tahoe City sites to enhance the accuracy of ozone concentration measurements. The District also applied new data acquisition software to allow data downloads on an automated schedule, enhance the data review process, and generate required data report files. In 2023, the District will upgrade the site communication system from dial-up modem to cellular modem for faster and more secure data acquisition. Current air quality monitoring information can be found on the District's website at:

<https://www.placerair.org/8082/Air-Quality-Monitoring>

## Federal Ozone Standard

The Sacramento Federal Nonattainment Area (SFNA) is designated as nonattainment for the U.S. EPA's 2015 ozone standard. Because of the unique challenges the region faces, in 2020, the SFNA air districts submitted a request to the U.S. EPA to reclassify the SFNA from "moderate" to "serious" nonattainment status. The reclassification request was approved by U.S. EPA in 2021, and the regional attainment deadline was extended from August 2024 to August 2027.

However, CARB's modeling analysis indicated that the SFNA would not be able to attain the standard in 2027. The SFNA air districts submitted another request to reclassify the SFNA from "serious" to "severe-15", with a new attainment deadline in 2032. The request was sent to U.S. EPA on August 5, 2022 and is pending final approval. In addition, the District has completed its Reasonably Available Control Measures analysis for the regional attainment plan to evaluate the earliest date possible that the SFNA can demonstrate attainment for the 2015 federal 8-hour ozone standard. Currently, the District is working with the other SFNA air districts and CARB to finalize the necessary components of the 2015 ozone standard attainment plan. The attainment plan is anticipated to be released for public review in Summer 2023.

### 2022 Air Quality Index (AQI) data: (# of days)

	Ozone:	PM2.5:
Good	258	280
Moderate	93	75
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	14	3
Unhealthy	0	4
Very Unhealthy	0	3

## State Ozone Standard

Because Placer County (excluding the Lake Tahoe Air Basin) has been designated as nonattainment for the state ozone standards since 1994, the District is required by the California's Health and Safety Code to prepare a triennial progress report every three-years to assess progress towards attaining both the state 1-hour and 8-hour average ozone standards. The triennial progress report describes historical trends in ambient air quality levels; provides updates of emission inventories; summarizes the progress of emissions reductions; and concludes with an air quality planning progress overview. In June 2022, the District completed the triennial report and submitted it to CARB. In September 2022, CARB redesignated the Lake Tahoe Air Basin as nonattainment for the state ozone 8-hour average standard due to one exceedance in 2021 at the Tahoe City monitoring station.

## Federal PM2.5 Standard

Placer County currently does not exceed the federal PM2.5 daily average standard. However, due to wildfire smoke in the summer of 2022, several PM2.5 daily averages exceeded the federal PM2.5 standard in Placer County. Therefore, an exceptional event demonstration report will be prepared for U.S. EPA's approval, in order to maintain the attainment status of the federal PM2.5 daily average standard for the SFNA.

In January 2023, U.S. EPA announced a proposal to tighten the PM2.5 annual average standard. This proposal would cause many counties in California, including Placer County, to become nonattainment areas for this revised standard. U.S. EPA will soon release a detailed proposal for public review and will make a final determination regarding the revised standard in 2022 or 2023.

### Incentive Programs

The District's successful implementation of its Clean Air Grant (CAG) Program, which administers multiple grant funding sources, has led to measurable reductions in criteria pollutant emissions from unregulated activities and sources. Funding sources have ranged broadly and include DMV surcharges, land use mitigation funds, and State and federal awarded funds. In 2022, the District awarded funding of \$5.8 million for 36 projects throughout the County. Since 2001, the District's contracted CAG projects have invested more than \$31 million on emission reducing projects, which have resulted in a total of 1,277 tons of NO<sub>x</sub>, ROG and PM reductions.

#### Ag Equipment

The District recommended nine agricultural equipment replacement projects for funding in 2022. These nine projects are expected to reduce 22.14 tons of criteria pollutant emissions by the time their contracts are complete, within the next 10 years.



#### School Buses

In 2022, fifteen school bus replacements were recommended for funding: three for Tahoe Truckee Unified School



#### Infrastructure

In 2021, the District collaborated with the City of Auburn to fund an electric vehicle charging station on Magnolia Avenue in Auburn. This station is available for public use for a small fee and provides a useful service for electric vehicle users along the I-80 corridor. In 2022, the District helped fund an expansion to the station, providing an additional three charging stations to the site.

In 2022, the District recommended eight electric vehicle charging stations for funding, including two stations for school districts (Dry Creek Joint Elementary School District and Rocklin Unified School District), the City of Auburn, City of Roseville, the Placer County Water Agency, and various local businesses from Rocklin to Tahoe. These projects are all expected to be completed within the next three years.

District, eight for Roseville Joint Unified High School District, and four for Rocklin Unified School District. The projects are scheduled to be completed in 2023. Additionally, one project for Western Placer Unified School District was funded in 2021 and, due to manufacturing delays, was not able to be completed in 2022 and is now expected to be completed in 2023.

#### Zero Emission Vehicles

In 2019, the Board approved \$114,000 in Air Quality Mitigation funds for a partnership to accelerate Electric Vehicle (EV) adoption in Placer County. Beginning in March 2020, the District partnered with SMUD, Roseville Electric, and Plug-In America (PIA)—a non-profit advocacy group dedicated to facilitating a shift to plug-in EVs to reduce dependence on petroleum, improve air quality, and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. PIA's PlugStar program provides car shoppers with a platform for connecting with trained dealerships and support services to make informed EV purchases. The EV Dealership Incentive provides participating dealerships \$300 for every EV sold. There are currently 22 participating dealerships in the Sacramento Region, with many in the Roseville Auto Mall. Year to date, the District, via PIA, has incentivized a total of 66 EV purchases, for a total of 151 since inception.

#### CNG Waste Trucks

In 2022, two projects from the City of Roseville were selected to be funded by Department of Water Resources mitigation funds. These two projects are for replacement of two heavy-duty diesel waste trucks with two new 2023 heavy-duty Compressed Natural Gas vehicles.



## *Creating Partnerships to Reduce Emissions*

### **FARMER Grants Program**

The District is partnering with CARB to administer funding of their Funding Agricultural Replacement Measures for Emission Reductions (FARMER) Program, for Shared Allocation Pool (SAP) air districts. The FARMER program provides funding through local air districts for emission reduction projects in the agricultural sector. The air districts which contribute to over one percent of the state's agricultural emissions receive their allocated funding directly from CARB, and the remaining districts (including Placer County) share an allocation, known as the SAP.



The District has successfully administered the SAP funds for years 1-3 and is currently funding projects for year 4. The District has recommended a total of 197 agricultural replacement projects for award within the SAP districts. These projects are expected to reduce at least 48 tons of PM<sub>2.5</sub>, 848 tons of NO<sub>x</sub>, and 85 tons of ROG over their project lives.

### **FARMER Reporting Tool**

In 2019, CARB approached the District to develop a customizable, cloud-based Reporting Tool (Tool) for local air districts to report FARMER expenditures to CARB in a more efficient manner than the multi-tabbed spreadsheets they were using, which had become large, cumbersome, and difficult to quality control.

The District selected the Salesforce software platform and engaged Eide Bailly to develop and deploy the Tool. SAP air districts can use the Tool to upload and submit individual FARMER applications to the District. SAP districts can also track FARMER expenditures throughout the contract. The District can then log into the Tool and export the required reporting information for CARB.

### **Partnering with Community Healthcare Providers**

Seeking to enhance public outreach efforts, the District engaged doctors from local healthcare systems to provide a professional review from clinical experts in pulmonology of the District's public outreach and web materials related to how to protect oneself from potential health impacts of wildfire smoke, advice during high heat and high smoke conditions, proper face mask use, and Air Quality Index outdoor activity guidance.

### **Woodstove Replacements**

Monetary incentives are available for eligible applicants in Placer County to replace an old, uncertified wood stove with a certified, cleaner burning home heating device. The goal of the program is to reduce localized fine particulate matter pollution and minimize health impacts from wood smoke. The Wood Stove Changeout Incentive Program (Program) is currently accepting applications countywide and offering a standard incentive of \$599 and an enhanced incentive up to \$2,000, for low-income eligible applicants. In addition, applicants are reimbursed for the cost of the building permit, up to \$170 in the Mountain Counties and Sacramento Valley Air Basins and up to \$150 in the Lake Tahoe Air Basin. Approved applicants may replace their uncertified wood stove/insert with a certified wood or pellet stove/insert or gas or electric heating device.

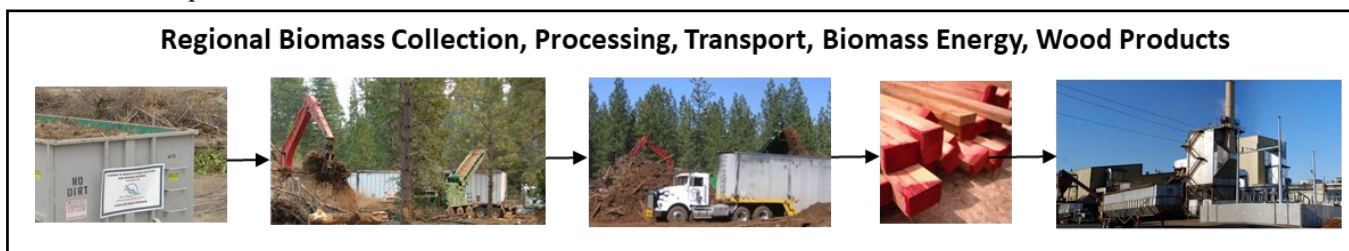


The District formed a partnership with the El Dorado County Air Quality Management District (EDCAQMD) to implement the Program. EDCAQMD processes applications and handles the majority of the administrative aspects of the program. The District coordinates outreach and advertising in Placer County and conducts inspections to verify eligibility. There is funding available for 496 changeouts at the standard incentive amount and 334 at the enhanced incentive amount. At the end of 2022, eleven applications were pre-approved.



### ***Biomass and Forest Resiliency***

Over half of the County is forested land at risk for catastrophic wildfire due to heavy fuel loads from past fire suppression and harvesting, as well as from the recent tree mortality epidemic from drought and insect attack—as was seen with the Mosquito Fire. For the last fifteen years, we have successfully partnered with public and private stakeholders on numerous innovative projects and policy development and implementation to reduce forest fuel load, return our forests to a fire resilient condition, and utilize byproduct wastes for energy, biochar, or other wood products.



In the past year, we continued to make important contributions. The Placer Biomass Consortium—a committee we spearheaded the formation of—is made up of four different County entities in addition to the District: the County of Placer, Placer County Water Agency, Pioneer Community Energy, and Western Placer Waste Management Authority. The Consortium continues to collaborate on local biomass facility development opportunities and plans for an upcoming “Biomass Technology Symposium”. We also assisted with successful prescribed burning at local residential properties; conducted a detailed evaluation of innovative gasification/pyrolysis biomass energy conversion technology; supported the Governor’s Forest Resiliency Taskforce and the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research in continuing to foster new ways to utilize forest biomass and other mechanisms that promote forest health, particularly developing a CALFRAME Biomass Aggregation Hub, a regional biomass feedstock contracting and brokering consortium; participated on State Utility Commission proceedings involving biomass use in microgrids, Community Choice Aggregation agency support of bioenergy, and pipeline injection of biomethane; provided comments on the CARB GHG Scoping Plan working lands section; and assisted with the approval of a biochar and forest fuel treatment GHG offset protocol at the Climate Action Reserve.

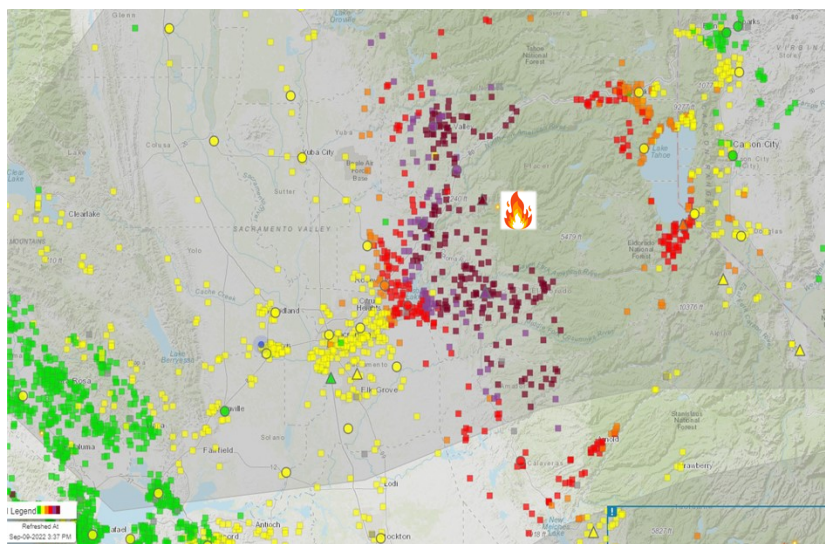
In coming years, we will continue to identify where we can most effectively provide “value added” contributions that fill voids in State and federal policy, while not duplicating others’ efforts. We will lead local action that makes a difference, influence state and federal policy, and support critical research efforts, specifically:

- Enhancing efforts to expand the application of prescribed fire to reduce wildfire risk.
- Working to support local bioenergy and forest wildfire resilience through the County Biomass Consortium.
- Developing District policy allowing financial investment in forest health projects to satisfy greenhouse gas mitigation requirements of CEQA.
- Collaborating with local land managers, governmental agencies, and educational institutions to support forest health and productive utilization of biomass wastes, including participating in the Sacramento Valley Basin Control Council, William Jessup University Institute for Biodiversity and the Environment, and CARB Low Carbon Fuel Standard.



## **Wildfire Smoke Impacts/Community Outreach**

California experienced another difficult wildfire season in 2022. Compared to the prolonged impacts in Placer County in 2020 and 2021, smoke impacts in 2022 were brief, though there were periods of hazardous smoke concentrations during the Mosquito fire, which started outside of Foresthill on September 6, 2022. The fire grew to 76,788 acres before it was fully contained on October 27<sup>th</sup>. Placer County experienced highly concentrated smoke impacts due to the Mosquito Fire's proximity. The District deployed three temporary particulate matter (PM) monitors, called EBAMs, in Foresthill, Weimar, and Kingvale. The District evaluated air monitoring data from our existing fixed monitoring network, from these temporary EBAMs, and from low-cost sensors deployed throughout the County. Throughout the Mosquito Fire, District staff participated in daily cooperators' meetings, community town hall meetings, and the Board of Supervisors' briefing. Staff were also interviewed by local television news stations about County smoke impacts. During the 2022 wildfire incidents, the District worked with HHS to issue five air quality advisories, covering 16 days.



*AirNow Fire and Smoke Map  
(screenshot on 9/9/2022, showing smoke impacts from Mosquito Fire)*

The District continues to implement innovative tools to improve our response to wildfire smoke incidents and our communications with Placer County residents. In early summer, the District developed a smoke information business card and flyer, which feature tips on protecting oneself from smoke and a QR code linked to our Smoke Information webpage. The District also updated its "Smoke Information" webpage (<https://www.placerair.org/8126/Smoke>) to include access to the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (U.S. EPA) AirNow Fire and Smoke Map (<https://fire.airnow.gov>). The information on the webpage provides County residents real-time air quality measurements and strategies to minimize health impacts from smoke. The District also worked with the Placer County Communications Office, in collaboration with U.S. EPA AirNow and United States Forest Service staff, to create and publish a video on usage of the Fire and Smoke Map. The video can be found at this website: <https://vimeo.com/592345480>.

## **How Wildfires Affect Air Quality**

Wildfire smoke results in significant air quality impacts and reflects on the PM<sub>2.5</sub> and ozone concentration measurements at air monitoring stations. This smoke can cause exceedances of the state and federal ozone and PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards, as measured by the District's permanent air monitors. In past years, the District has submitted exceptional event analyses data to CARB, to demonstrate that ozone and PM<sub>2.5</sub> exceedances are due to wildfire smoke and should therefore be excluded from regulatory decisions regarding the State's ozone and PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards.

With the smoke impacts from the Mosquito Fire this past year, the District will prepare a state exceptional event analysis. The Auburn monitoring site had one day that exceeded the State's ozone 8-hour average standard (0.070 ppm). The District will work with CARB and other neighboring air districts to identify whether the exceedance resulted from wildfire smoke.



## *Managing Smoke from Burning*

### ***Allowable Outdoor Burning in Placer County***

The District provides information to determine if and where burning of vegetation is allowed. The California Health and Safety Code (HSC) specifies different allowable types of burning, under the categories of Agricultural and Non-Agricultural burning. The District's rules were developed to accommodate burning throughout the County in accordance with the HSC. As the County has developed, Roseville, Rocklin and Lincoln, along with high density developments, eliminated burning as an option. For the burning that is allowed, detailed conditions are outlined in the District's rules, including when the issuance of a District burn permit is required.

### ***Reducing Wildfire Smoke Impacts through Prescribed Burning***

With concerns over managing land for fire resiliency, there is more interest in using prescribed burning. For more than 40 years, District staff have continued to be actively engaged with both home owners and private and public land managers wanting to use prescribed burning. To help with the increasing use of prescribed burning, in 2019, the District Board approved the acceptance of funds from CARB for implementation of the District's Smoke Management Program. Under HSC definitions, prescribed burning is defined under and is a subgroup of agricultural burning. The District continues to receive some annual funding to augment our already robust Program. There has been an increase in the use of prescribed burning, which may help make land more fire resilient, decrease fire hazards from excessive vegetation and increase fire safety in and around communities.



*USFS prescribed fire, April 2021, Foresthill, CA*

### ***Reducing Smoke Impacts from Residential Burning through Education and Other Alternatives***

The District and local fire agencies work together to provide guidance on smoke management and safe residential outdoor burning. Where allowed, pile burning is used for the disposal of dry vegetation, grown on the property of a single or two-family residence, on a Burn Day, when smoke is expected to rise and disperse. Fire agency burn permits may be required, but a District burn permit is not issued. The District continues to outreach to the public about good burning practices to reduce smoke from burning. This includes the District's brochure and business cards developed by staff that provide information on what is allowed and how to find out if it is a burn day. When done right, the safe and controlled burning of dry vegetation can help manage vegetation, reduce wildfire risk from excessive vegetation, and meet defensible space requirements.. In addition, the Air District encourages the use of alternatives instead of burning, including County green waste programs such as chipping, composting, and recycling. Using an alternative to burning can be an excellent way to dispose of the annual growth of vegetation and also eliminate the possibility of creating a smoke nuisance.

### ***Limiting Smoke from Agricultural Burning of Rice Straw***

Many do not realize that rice is grown in Western Placer County, where it is one of the dominant agricultural crops. This past season, 12,269 acres of rice were planted in Placer County, with 258,446 acres grown valley-wide. In 1992, the Rice Straw Reduction Act mandated the amount of diseased rice straw that can be burned annually, based on the number of planted acres. Currently, 25% of the rice straw from the previous planted season can be burned. For the Fall 2022 season in Placer County, 309 acres of rice straw were burned. In 2022, one complaint was received regarding smoke from this type of burning that came from outside the County.



## Advocating for Improved Air Quality

### Legislative and Policy Advocacy

The District will continue its legislative and regulatory advocacy in 2023 through continued conversations with State elected officials and state agencies. A key focus is on advancing forest resiliency projects that will benefit Placer County, along with reducing the risks associated with catastrophic wildfires, as well as ensuring adequate State funding in support of State and CARB mandates. This will be achieved by:

- Advocating for the protection of State and federal funding that supports the District's core mission and incentive programs.
- Interacting and collaborating with CARB on the implementation of the Working Lands Section of the newly approved Greenhouse Gas Scoping Plan.
- Participating in the State's Forest Resiliency Taskforce and Joint Institute for Wood Products at the Board of Forestry, and in particular the committees that work on biomass utilization and prescribed fire.
- Actively participating in the CPUC's proceedings relating to the implementation of programs supporting the establishment of rural microgrid systems, the reduction of the reliance on diesel generation for PSPS back up power, and the use of forest biomass for renewable and low-carbon energy production.
- Supporting research efforts through CAL FIRE grants and CEC grants in the areas of biofuels, methane emissions from forestry practices research, black carbon, and new gasification technologies, by partnering with public and private sector entities on such grants.
- Working to ensure State initiatives (outside of the CPUC) regarding PSPS and Energy Emergencies do not adversely impact rural County residents who are dependent upon portable power during such events, nor negatively impact ongoing programs to reduce emissions.
- Seeking sufficient funding to support state mandated programs such as through the CAP Program.
- Investigating and supporting legislative efforts to improve emergency service and disaster funding to the District, including response to poor air quality associated with wildfires.

At the federal level, the District will be monitoring and advocating on several topics, including requirements for cleaner mobile sources (cars, trucks and locomotives), enhanced forest resiliency funding and policies, and increased funding to support attainment of NAAQS and implementation of other federal mandates.

### Representing the District at the State and Federal Level

The District engages in policy discussions and advocacy at the federal and State levels. These assignments provide both an influential venue for the District's priorities to be considered in statewide and national policies affecting air quality and incentive funding, as well as unique opportunities to help shape the efforts of local jurisdictions throughout the region on climate adaptation policies.

#### ***Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce's Capitol-to-Capitol (Cap-to-Cap) advocacy delegation***

As Co-Lead on the Air Quality Team, the District's annual participation in this event in Washington, D.C. allows discussions with congressional staff and federal agencies on air quality, wildfire, and forest resiliency topics.

#### ***National Association of Clean Air Agencies (NACAA)***

District selected to serve on the Board of Directors, and to co-chair the Mobile Source and Fuels Committee, which provides a unique opportunity to engage nationally on issues that impact air quality in Placer County.

#### ***U.S. EPA's Mobile Sources Technical Review Subcommittee (MSTRS)***

District selected to serve on the MSTRS, comprising 30 national technical experts to advise U.S. EPA on a wide range of mobile source developmental issues and research areas.

#### ***California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA)***

District selected to serve as President, in addition to membership on their Climate Protection and Legislative Committees. CAPCOA is the state-wide association which advocates on issues affecting local air districts in California.

#### ***Cleaner Air Partnership***

District selected to serve as Co-Chair of this regional public/private advocacy and coordination partnership.