

## **Newsom taps Fresno State health policy director to air pollution board**

By Daniel Gligich

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Dr. Tania Pacheco-Werner, the co-Assistant Director at the Central Valley Health Policy Institute at Fresno State, was appointed by Gov. Gavin Newsom to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

The district is a public health agency that oversees air quality management measures.

Pacheco-Werner is a Sanger native and has a PhD in sociology from the University of California, San Francisco.

She has a background in researching policy analysis and has been involved with the DRIVE Initiative (Developing the Region's Inclusive and Vibrant Economy) and the EMBRACE Study (Engaging Mothers and Babies, Reimagining Antenatal Care for Everyone).

In an email to The Sun, Pacheco-Werner said she is thrilled to be able to represent the community in an area that impacts the health of the community now and for future generations.

"As a researcher, I have done work on the impact of air pollution on neighborhoods, the protective factors that mitigate the health effects of air pollution and the effects of different types of pollution on birth outcomes like preterm birth," Pacheco-Werner said.

"I have co-authored publications on these topics, the latest one, published in March was called 'Cohort study of respiratory hospital admissions, air quality and sociodemographic factors in preterm infants born in California,' focused on the importance of neighborhood pollution as [a] factor in hospitalization for preterm infants during their first year of life."

Pacheco-Werner feels that her current position at Fresno State has allowed her to give voices to communities that are often underrepresented in decision-making circles.

"I would like to bring both the community voices and the science to the table, because more often than not, science ends up discovering what communities have known all along through lived experience, they just didn't have the data," Pacheco-Werner said.

Pacheco-Werner does not have plans to come into her new position seeking immediate change.

"Right now, I'm going in as a learner and listener," Pacheco-Werner said. "I think there are opportunities to further incentivize important new technologies that could benefit our valley's economy and our air, such as zero-emissions transportation."