

VALLEY AIR NEWS

March 2019



VW Mitigation Trust Workshops

The District was selected by the California Air Resources Board to administer a statewide incentive program for transit, school and shuttle buses funded by the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust. Public meetings about the entire program will be held on April 11 at the CalEPA Headquarters Building in Sacramento and on April 16 at the District's office in Fresno and offices in Modesto and Bakersfield via video teleconferencing.

The \$130 million fund will replace older, high-polluting diesel transit, school and shuttle buses with new battery-electric or fuel-cell buses as a way to reduce pollutants like nitrogen oxides (NOx) and diesel particulate matter. The program is projected to reduce an estimated 1,650 tons of NOx over a 10-year period.

For more information, call 559-230-5800.

Despite early wildfire impacts, the Valley ends CBYB with clean days

Last month, the Check Before You Burn Program finished its 16th year, which was one of the cleanest in recorded history despite record-breaking wildfires at the beginning of the season.

The Check Before You Burn Program, which takes place annually from November through February, is designed to minimize the build-up of harmful fine particulate pollution. Regional high pressure systems often cause pollutants to become trapped in the bowl-shaped San Joaquin Valley, creating high concentrations of particulate matter (PM) 2.5 that build up quickly at ground level, resulting in poor air quality.

November's Camp Fire, which was the deadliest wildfire in the state to date and burned 153,336 acres in northern California, generated some of the most significant smoke impacts ever experienced in the Valley. The District issued several Health Caution notifications, encouraging residents to proactively protect their health by monitoring the Real-Time Air Advisory Network and limiting their outdoor activities when air quality became poor.

Despite the devastating Camp Fire and other wildfires, the wintertime air quality this season improved overall. Frequent winter storms immediately following the Camp Fire, along with favorable weather patterns, a high level of cooperation by Valley residents with the Check Before You Burn Program and the use of much cleaner wood, pellet and natural gas devices, had a positive impact on air quality.

Funding is still available to help Valley residents reduce their contribution to particulate pollution by upgrading from an open-hearth fireplace or older wood stove to a cleaner device using the District's Burn Cleaner incentive program. This program provides funding toward the purchase of a cleaner wood/pellet insert, freestanding stove or natural gas insert. To apply, visit valleyair.org/burncleaner. Additionally, residents can register their clean burning devices to take advantage of the "No Burning Unless Registered" days by visiting valleyair.org/CBYBregistration.

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