



**NORTHERN SONOMA COUNTY**  
**Air Pollution Control District**

625 CENTER STREET HEALDSBURG, CA 95448  
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April 6, 2025

**RE: Air District Programs and Potential Collaboration Opportunities**

Dear Local Planning Agency Partner,

The Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District (District) is the local state air pollution control district in northern Sonoma County. Our Board of Directors is comprised of your select city councilmembers and county supervisors who asked us to build upon our history of successful collaborations together by sharing some important information about the role of the District in regards to CEQA and District programs that may interact with your agency. Please contact the District directly for any follow up after reviewing this information and be sure to visit us online at [www.NoSoCoAir.org](http://www.NoSoCoAir.org).

**Air Districts and CEQA**

In California, air districts rarely serve as lead agencies under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This may occur when a lead agency reaches out to a district and they enter into an agreement to transfer lead agency status, usually due to a project's narrow set of significant air quality impacts of a project. Generally, air districts are "commenting agencies" that are available for consultation by member agencies or constituents who may inquire into District roles or activities under CEQA.

After a development project completes its land use entitlements (though sometimes concurrently), the developer will apply for any applicable air permits. Air permits are required under different law than CEQA, and depending on the equipment or processes occurring at the project. Note that residential development does not need an air permit. Typically, air districts rely on the environmental review performed by the lead agency when considering environmental review for its permits.

Air Districts permit [criteria pollutants](#), for stationary sources and after such a permit is issued, the District will also evaluate hazardous air pollution, also known as [toxic air contaminants](#), operate air monitors, perform facility inspections, and respond to complaints, among other activities. Districts do not regulate

greenhouse gases, which are under the exclusive jurisdiction of the California Air Resources Board (CARB), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). CARB also has jurisdiction over on-road and off-road vehicles and portable equipment sources.

While the District does not regulate GHG emissions, it does offer advice to local agency partners and constituents on this topic, if requested. Additionally, if a local agency would like to work with the District to analyze air pollution under its CEQA process, the District is available for consultation, and welcomes the opportunity to review draft environmental documents, including exemptions, Negative Declarations, Environmental Impact Reports, or Addendums thereto.

### **Collaboration Opportunities and Interconnected Programs**

Several District programs may directly, or indirectly, interconnect with your agency activities. We would like to share some relevant items to help coordinate between us and to facilitate opportunity for collaboration.

- Asbestos Notification. State law requires that local entities verify asbestos notification to EPA or the delegated local air district of jurisdiction before issuing a demolition permit ([HSC §19827.5](#)). This typically applies to commercial buildings or multi-family dwellings of four units or more. The District is delegated by EPA to implement the federal asbestos rule ([CFR Part 61 Subpart M-National Emissions Standards for Asbestos §61.140 – 61.157](#)) and should be notified, as applicable.
- Wood Heating Appliances. District rules ([NSCAPCD Rule 4-1-400](#)) and county building code require that new or replacement wood heating appliances (fireplace, wood stove, pellet stove, fireplace inserts) must be EPA or District approved. This performance standard effectively prohibits the construction of new open-hearth wood-burning fireplaces and non-approved wood heating appliances may not be sold or installed.
- Open Burning. The District permits over 3,000 burns per year, which are used to help establish defensible space, manage excess biomass and maintain healthy forest ecosystems, and support agricultural activities. The District enforces permits under District Rules ([NSCAPCD Rule 2-300](#)) for all types of burning, and enforces state law for larger burns that require smoke management plans. Unpermitted or poorly managed burns may be subject to District compliance and enforcement action. Burning must occur in coordination with Burn Day Designations that are determined by CARB, the air district, and relevant fire agencies. See [17 CCR 80100 et seq.](#)

- Emergency Events Response. During emergency events like wildfire smoke response, the District performs enhanced monitoring, provides air quality advisories, coordinates with Sonoma County EOC and CARB and provides public advisement materials.
- Incentive Programs. The District offers several incentive programs to help reduce criteria pollutants, toxics, and GHGs to support the state, county, and District with their pollution reduction and climate resiliency goals. Incentive programs and funding levels vary; please visit our web site for current programs and applicability information.

If you would like to discuss these or any other air quality topics, or explore potential opportunities for collaboration, please do not hesitate to reach out to us!

Sincerely, Rob



**Rob Bamford**  
Air Pollution Control Officer / Executive Officer  
Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District

***P.S. Please be sure that your records note our new office location at 625 Center Street, Healdsburg.***

CC:

- NSCAPCD Board of Directors
- Brian Keefer, Ombudsperson, Permit Sonoma
- Patrick N. Streeter, Windsor Community Development Director
- Scott Duvien, Healdsburg Community Development Director
- Kevin Thompson, Cloverdale Community Development Director

Clean Air. **Good Living.**

