California State Assemblymember Todd Gloria (D-San Diego) introduced legislation to reform the governing board of the San Diego Air Pollution Control District (APCD).

The bill, AB 423, sponsored by the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC), will change the board's membership to better represent the diversity of San Diego's residents.

"All communities deserve to breathe clean air, but we know not all communities do. With air pollution as a component of climate change and the effects of climate change occurring all around, it's clear business as usual isn't getting the job done," said Assemblymember Gloria. "By transforming San Diego's Air Pollution Control District into a more diverse and representative body, I believe we have the real potential to get the County to take aggressive action and ensure that whatever strategies are implemented, they are equitably distributed throughout the region."

The legislation will bring the San Diego APCD in line with other large metropolitan districts in California by requiring representation from all cities, and of public members including health professionals. The current air district board is comprised only of the five members of the County Board of Supervisors.

"San Diego has a serious air pollution problem. We need new leadership through a proactive board that will adopt strict rules to reduce emissions and improve public health, especially in the communities most impacted," noted EHC Executive Director, Diane Takvorian. "Air monitors in Chula Vista and El Cajon both indicated a human cancer risk of over 300 per million, which is unacceptably high. This does not even include diesel particulate matter, the number one cancer causing pollutant in outdoor air."

For decades, air pollution from multiple sources such as port operations, heavy diesel traffic, and local zoning that allows industrial businesses to be located near homes and schools, has plagued communities such as Barrio Logan and National City. The rate of asthma emergency room visits for children living here is up to three times higher than other areas in the county.

"Our communities have a right to know how air pollution is impacting them," said Sandy Naranjo, a resident of National City. "Regular notifications of health risks should be sent to residents. Elected officials need to involve us, not just industries and polluters, in the process of making rules and standards that have serious impacts on our health and wellbeing."

An Assembly committee will hear AB 423 in April. If passed into law, it would increase the APCD Board membership to 11 individuals representing each city in the region and members of the public.