



AB 423: Clean Air For All San Diegans

Summary

AB 423 will restructure the San Diego Air Pollution Control District Board (Board) so that it reflects the diversity of San Diego County residents. The Board will include representation from additional San Diego cities and other key stakeholders.

Background

Air district boards were established to help jurisdictions meet federal, state, and local air quality regulations and goals. Air districts are responsible for controlling emissions, ensuring that pollution sources are compliant with regulations, permitting facilities, addressing complaints, and developing technology and research. There are a total of 35 air districts across the state that vary from smaller, rural single county boards to larger, multiregional districts. Larger county air district boards typically include members of the board of supervisors and representatives from local cities.

The San Diego Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) represents over 3 million people across 18 cities. Within their jurisdiction, there are various sources of air pollution including, 42 Cap and Trade greenhouse gas emission sources, local port activity, and highly industrialized areas that include both light and heavy duty facilities. However, unlike other air districts that oversee a single county, the composition of the SDAPCD specifically excludes local cities from having a seat on the Board (AB 75 (Hauser), Chapter 961, Statutes of 1993). Instead, the Board is entirely made up of members of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, leaving out the perspectives and insight into local air pollution sources that cities and stakeholders could provide.

Air Pollution Control Boards are critical to controlling emissions, regulating facilities, and researching new technologies that will bring their districts closer to attaining their air quality goals. Despite having a \$27 million annual operating budget and a staff of 150 dedicated public servants, there are many examples of how the Board could be much more proactive in protecting our air. For example, San Diego County’s latest climate action plan to control greenhouse gas emissions has been rejected by the courts. The court found that the climate action plan failed to meet the county’s commitment to reach greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals laid out in state law; this is the third time the county’s climate action plan has been rejected.

The Board also does not require polluters to reduce their toxic emissions until the risk level reaches 100 per million. Information on the biggest polluters is also out of date, resulting in a lack of transparency and accountability on the Board’s enforcement actions (the most current pollution emission inventories on the Board’s website are from 2014). In the American Lung Association’s recent air quality scorecard, San Diego also received an “F” grade and ranked 6th in the nation for smog pollution. Given these risks and the immense health consequences posed by unhealthy air quality, cities and public members should have a seat at the table. In their new role, they will be able to offer their diverse perspectives and expertise to vital air quality decisions that directly impact their residents.

This Bill

AB 423 will increase the diversity on the SDAPCD by including the voices of several cities and subject-matter experts in the governance of the Board. The table below outlines how many representatives each group of cities will have on the expanded Board and the length of their term. The cities are grouped together based on their populations.

City	Number of Representatives	Term
San Diego County Board of Supervisors	2	4 years
City of San Diego	3	4 years
City of Chula Vista or Oceanside	1	4 years, rotate terms
City of Escondido, Carlsbad, El Cajon, or Vista	1	4 years, rotate terms in the order listed
City of San Marcos, Encinitas, National City, La Mesa, Santee, Poway, Imperial Beach, Lemon Grove, Coronado, Solana Beach, or Del Mar	1	4 years, rotate terms in the order listed
Public Members: one public health profession, one air pollution specialist, and one environmental justice member	3	4 years

The two members representing the Board of Supervisors will be appointed by a majority of the Board of Supervisors. The city representatives can be city council members or mayors and will be appointed by a majority of their city council. All public members will be appointed by a vote by the government representatives on the Board. If a city decides to not serve its term, the membership shall rotate to the next city listed.

Support:

Environmental Health Coalition (Co-sponsor)

Climate Action Campaign (Co-sponsor)

Coalition for Clean Air

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