

Bay Area AQMD  
CEQA Guidelines Update

Public Workshop

*“Developing Thresholds of  
Significance”*

February 26, 2009

MetroCenter Auditorium  
101 8th Street, Oakland, California

# [Today's Workshop]

---

- Overall scope of Guidelines update
- Significance thresholds development options
- Next steps

# [ Objectives of the Guidelines ]

---

- Reduce emissions from land use and transportation
- Support transit-oriented development, smart growth and infill
- Compliment other air district program goals
- Guidelines are advisory; District's recommendations for thresholds & analysis

# [ Scope of the Guidelines Update ]

- Comprehensive review of thresholds, analytical methods, mitigation strategies
- Update effort to focus on:
  - New thresholds for greenhouse gases
  - Treatment of construction equipment exhaust
  - Plan-level analysis

# [ Threshold Options Strategy ]

- Purpose of a threshold is to:
  - Minimize adverse impacts to existing air quality, prevent further degradation from new sources
  - Define fair-share burden of future CEQA projects to reach air quality goals
- Basis for thresholds
  - Prefer science-based thresholds
  - Health-based regulation
  - Plan that addresses overall problem

# [ Air Quality Impacts Areas ]

- Criteria pollutants
  - Ozone precursors, particulate matter, carbon monoxide
- Odors
- Toxic air contaminants
- Greenhouse gases
- Cumulative, project-alone and plan-level



# Threshold Development Options

# Criteria Pollutant Options

- Plan/holding capacity approach
  - Project future projects subject to CEQA
  - Set threshold at level required to capture necessary reductions
- Clean Air Act emission limits approach
  - Current thresholds based on stationary source requirement to offset significant emissions



# [ Odor Options ]

---

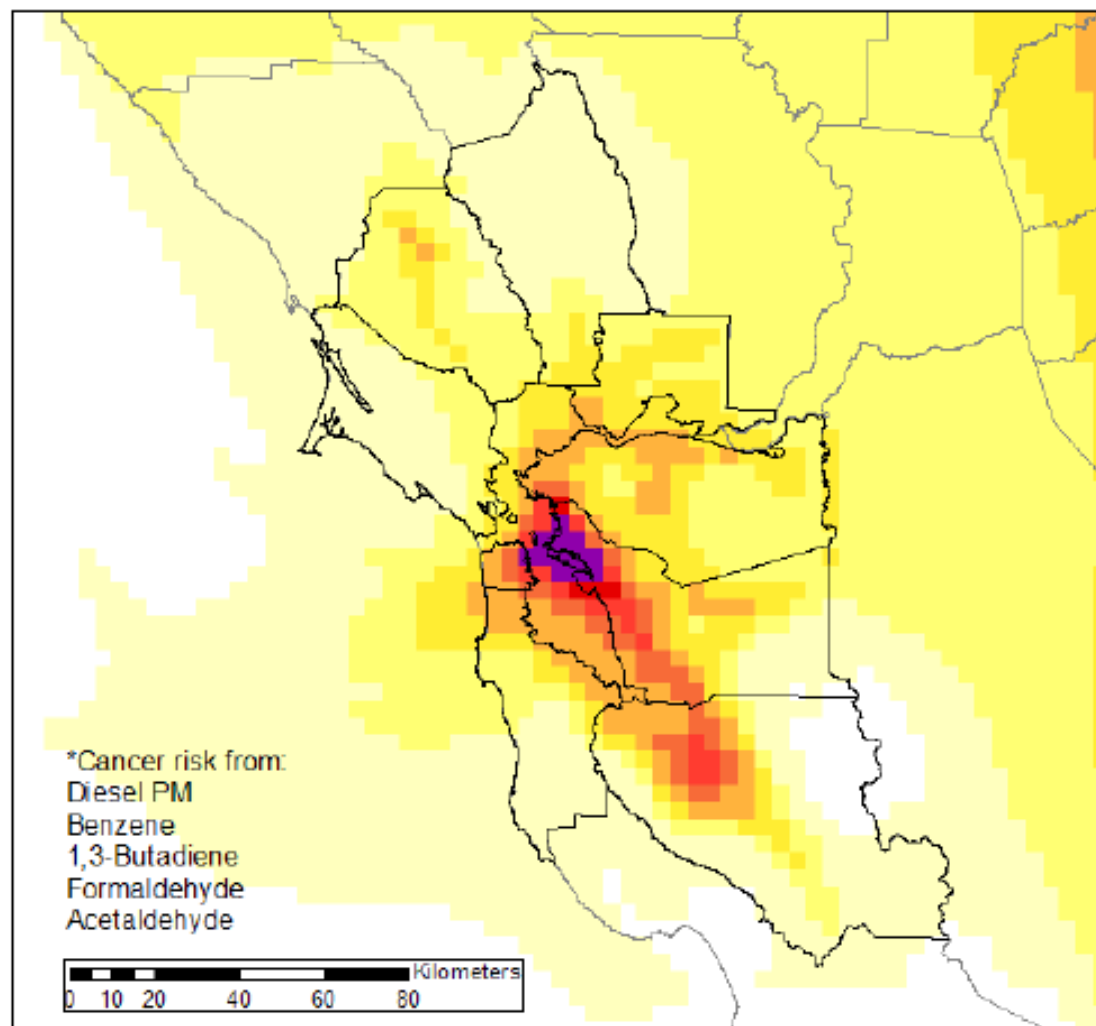
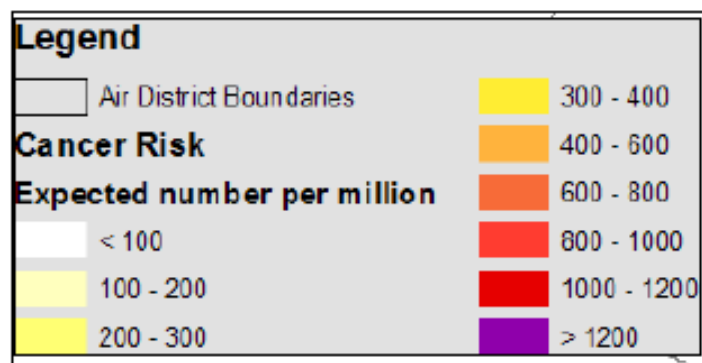
- Two types of impacts: new emitters & new receptors locating near existing sources
- Current threshold: closer than one confirmed/three unconfirmed odor complaints/year averaged over three years
  - Projects farther than screening distance for facility presumed less than significant
- Threshold concentrations based on modeling odorous chemicals/compounds

# [ Toxic Air Contaminant Options ]

- Two types of impacts: new emitters & new receptors locating near existing sources
- Incremental contribution: 10/million
- Point Reyes approach: 100/million
- Sliding scale approach: no net increase in “areas of high concern”
- Statistical health impact-based approach
- Surrogate pollutant, e.g. PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions

# Model Estimated Cancer Risk\*

- Expected cancer incidents per million people
- Modeled concentrations weighted by health risk of each compound



# Greenhouse Gas Options

- California Air Resources Board approach
  - Performance standards with mass emission level backstop
  - Proposed performance standards may include:
    - Recycle construction debris, use recycled building material
    - CEC's voluntary Tier II energy efficiency standards
    - Efficiency standard for water use
    - Efficiency standard for waste recycling
    - Limit per household VMT to 14,000 VMT/hh-yr

# [ More Greenhouse Gas Options ]

- Scoping Plan-based approach
  - Use Bay Area emissions inventory
  - Project future GHG emissions subject to CEQA
  - Set threshold at level required to capture necessary reductions
- Efficiency-based approach
  - Per capita or Per service population (residents + employees)
  - Threshold is efficiency at target level of emissions

# [ Plan-Level Threshold Options ]

- Project-level thresholds difficult to implement on large area/general plans
- Current threshold: consistency with regional air quality plan
  - Population growth, VMT increase & TCMs
- Efficiency-based approach for criteria & greenhouse gas pollutants
  - Per capita or Per service population (residents + employees)



Next Steps

# [ Update & Workshop Schedule ]

- February 26: Workshop #1
- Early April: Publish draft Thresholds of Significance White Paper
- Week of April 27: Workshop #2
- Early May: Publish draft CEQA Guidelines Update
- Week of May 18: Workshop #3
- Early July: BAAQMD Board Hearing



# [ Participate in the Update ]

---

- Attend public workshops & hearings
- Comment on draft documents
- Check <http://www.baaqmd.gov/pln/ceqa/index.htm> for new information, notices and draft documents
- Request to be added to the notification list
- We encourage and appreciate your comments and suggestions



# Primary Contact

Greg Tholen

Principal Environmental Planner

Bay Area Air Quality Management District

939 Ellis Street, San Francisco, CA 94109

Tel (415) 749-4954 Fax (415) 749-4741

[gtholen@baaqmd.gov](mailto:gtholen@baaqmd.gov)