



Contra Costa County
NEWS
RELEASE

**Contra Costa County and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District
push for at least 40 percent of Tesoro settlement funds to stay local**
Proposals include funding countywide health initiatives

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(Contra Costa County, CA) – In partnership with the Air District, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors Chair John Gioia sent a letter Friday, June 2, to the U.S. Department of Justice requesting at least 40 percent of the penalty against Tesoro Refining & Marketing Company be used for local health initiatives.

The \$27.5 million penalty was assessed in April 2023 after Tesoro violated a previous court order requiring it to reduce air pollution at its local petroleum refinery. According to the settlement, Tesoro failed to limit air emissions of nitrogen oxides, a pollutant that contributes to smog and particulate matter.

“Front line communities near the refinery are disproportionately impacted by many sources of air pollution and deserve to receive greater benefits from the assessed penalty,” said John Gioia, Chair of the Board of Supervisors. “Our proposed plan will not only help reduce the health inequities caused by this pollution but will also help build resilience to the disproportionately greater impacts that climate change is having on these vulnerable populations.”

“The Air District has worked closely with Contra Costa Health to reduce health inequities for residents who are especially vulnerable to air pollution,” said Dr. Philip Fine, executive officer of the Air District. “Our joint proposal to the U.S. EPA and Department of Justice would make a significant difference in improving the health outcomes for residents impacted by this pollution – these residents should benefit from providing at least 40 percent of the penalty funds for much-needed health and air quality improvement initiatives.”

The joint funding proposals supported by Contra Costa County and the Air District include:

- **Expanding the In-home Asthma Mitigation and Energy Efficiency Program:** Supports conducting asthma trigger and energy efficiency assessments and improvements for Contra Costa Health Plan MediCal clients:
- **Distributing portable air purifiers to homes:** Supports the distribution of portable home air purifiers and replaceable filters through two asthma mitigation programs and the Public Health Nursing program;
- **Installing HVAC systems and extend County library hours to serve as cooling centers:** Supports upgrading HVAC systems to provide cleaner air and extending library hours in target communities where residents could go during poor air quality incidents, such as wildfire smoke events;
- **Installing HVAC systems and portable air purifiers in schools:** Supports expanding the number of school districts surrounding and downwind of the refinery that receive air purifiers;
- **Sheltering unhoused during extreme weather events, industrial fires, or releases:** Supports offering hotel vouchers to the unhoused population during a short-term incident that impacts air quality. This could include providing necessities such as transportation and staffing costs, as well as relocate an unhoused encampment downwind of a known hazardous material facility that could impact the health of residents if a release occurs;
- **Strengthening community outreach for air quality and hazardous materials awareness and response to releases:** Supports community outreach efforts to educate the community regarding hazardous materials incidents, including signing up for alerts;
- **Supporting the Air District and Contra Costa Health with equipment or training:** Supports funding related to regulatory topics, responding to hazardous materials incidents, communications training, technical trainings, and environmental enforcement trainings.

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