

**SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT
MEDIA RELEASE**

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American Lung Association report verifies Central Valley air quality woes

On May 1, the American Lung Association will release the State of the Air 2002 report. The report confirms what the Valley Air District has been saying for over a decade: we have a significant air pollution problem in Central California.

The Valley Air District commends the American Lung Association for producing the State of the Air 2002. The report is a valuable and credible tool that examines ozone air quality data for 1998-2000 and grades counties using a weighted average based on how often the air quality reaches "unhealthful" categories indicated on the EPA's Air Quality Index for ozone pollution. It will help Valley residents understand the severity of the air pollution problem facing the San Joaquin Valley.

While the State of the Air report points to the Valley's problems, it does not specifically chronicle the Valley's improvements. Although Valley air is still unhealthy, the region has seen noteworthy air quality improvements over the past decade. From 1985 to 1989, the San Joaquin Valley failed the federal one-hour ozone standard an average of 60 days per year. For the most recent period 1996 to 2000, the Valley missed the standard an average of 33 times each year - a 45 percent improvement.

Unfortunately, these improvements have not come quickly enough to meet the federal health-based standard for ozone. Air Pollution Control Officer David L. Crow explained that one significant challenge in the Valley's air pollution problems is the District's legal inability to directly control emissions from mobile sources such as passenger and heavy-duty vehicles and other non-industrial engines, including lawnmowers and boats.

"The District has very little authority over mobile sources, which represent 60 percent of the Valley's smog problem. In reality, our agency only has legal jurisdiction over business and industry. Other state and federal agencies regulate mobile sources," Crow said.

Crow said that the growing population in the last ten years has swelled the number of miles Valley residents drive each day to 83 million. "Concerned Valley residents who want to see air quality improve will need to take an active role in reducing air pollution by driving less. They should also encourage local governments and private developments to provide alternative modes of travel such as rail, bike and pedestrian," he stated.