

SENATE THIRD READING
SB 352 (Reyes and Bryan)
As Amended September 10, 2025
Majority vote

SUMMARY

Codifies the Bureau of Environmental Justice (Bureau) within the Department of Justice.
Requires air monitoring in a location selected by the Air Resources Board (ARB) to remain active for a minimum of five years, which can be extended for additional five-year periods.
Requires ARB to update its air monitoring plan.

Major Provisions

- 1) Codifies the continued existence of the Bureau in the Department of Justice.
- 2) Requires, subject to available funding, air monitoring in a specified location to be active for no fewer than five years, with an option for a district and ARB to agree to extend active monitoring for additional five-year periods, as necessary.
- 3) Requires, subject to available funding, ARB to update the monitoring plan regarding the availability and effectiveness of toxic air contaminant and criteria air pollutant advanced sensing monitoring technologies and existing community air monitoring systems by July 1, 2026, and no fewer than every five years thereafter. Requires the monitoring plan to be approved by ARB before implementation.
- 4) Requires air districts to provide ARB with the air quality data produced by community air monitoring systems subject to the availability of funding.
- 5) Requires ARB, by March 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, in consultation with air districts, to report to the appropriate subcommittees of the Senate and Assembly Budget Committees the progress ARB and the air districts have made to implement the community air monitoring requirements. Requires the report to include:
 - a) The status of implementation in each selected community;
 - b) Best practices identified;
 - c) Enforcement activities;
 - d) Any outcome data available; and,
 - e) A report of expenditures made.
- 6) Requires the chair of the ARB and the executive directors or air pollution control officers of the relevant air districts to appear before the relevant policy committees or budget subcommittees, upon request of the chair of the committee, to present on the progress of implementing the community air monitoring requirements.
- 7) Specifies that if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this bill has costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made, as specified.

COMMENTS

- 1) *Bureau of Environmental Justice.* Attorney General Becerra established the Bureau within the California Department of Justice in 2018. The Bureau's goal is to protect people and communities that endure a disproportionate share of environmental pollution and public health hazards by increased oversight, investigation, and enforcement of the law. In 2021, Attorney General Bonta expanded the Bureau to increase efforts to ensure compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, enforce illegal discharges to air and water, reduce exposure to lead and other toxics, clean up drinking water, and challenge federal governmental actions that repeal or reduce public health and environmental protections. This bill codifies the Bureau to ensure that it continues to exist and operate under future Attorney Generals to ensure that frontline communities continue to have the protections it provides.
- 2) *Community air monitoring.* AB 617 (Cristina Garcia), Chapter 136, Statutes of 2017, established the Community Air Protection Program, which encompassed a variety of requirements and programs to reduce air emissions on pollution-burdened communities. AB 617 increased data collection and reporting, expedited pollution control retrofits, increased civil and criminal penalties for specified air pollution violations, enhanced community monitoring, established a statewide emissions reduction strategy targeting pollution-burdened communities, and established community emissions reduction programs.

This bill strengthens the community air monitoring requirements established by AB 617 by requiring community air monitoring systems to be active for a minimum of five years. The bill further requires ARB to update the monitoring plan and requires enhanced reporting from ARB and air districts. This bill also increases reporting to the Legislature on the progress made to implement community air monitoring systems.

According to the Author

SB 352 will promote environmental justice by codifying the Bureau of Environmental Justice in the Department of Justice. The past and ongoing work of the Bureau is extremely important to California residents, but there is no guarantee that future Attorney Generals will continue to have the Bureau of Environmental Justice. Codifying the Bureau of Environmental Justice will give these communities a guaranteed ally in the fight against environmental injustice and ensure that there will always be a dedicated entity in the state to take up these issues.

The bill would also promote accountability and transparency by requiring additional reporting from CARB and the air districts regarding the expenditure of funds pursuant to AB 617. AB 617 (2017) authorized CARB and the air districts to identify communities disproportionately impacted by air pollution and established a process to incorporate community input into community emission reduction plans. While the goal of the program was to empower communities with identifying local solutions, there has been delays in implementation. Additional oversight is needed to ensure that we are maximizing state dollars while maintaining a commitment to our most vulnerable. Informing the Legislature on the progress of this program is crucial for lawmakers to be able to make informed decisions on how state funding is being used and to be able to respond to barriers to implementing the emission reductions plans.

Arguments in Support

Brightline Action states that SB 352 "increases ongoing funding for [ARB's] Community Air Protection to support community-led initiatives to reduce local pollution" and "enacts new reporting requirements for [ARB] and local air districts to increase [the program's] effectiveness and positive impact in frontline communities."

Arguments in Opposition

The City of Ontario writes that "the proposed legislation would create duplicative efforts and cost the state unnecessary funding."

FISCAL COMMENTS

Unknown

VOTES**SENATE FLOOR: 38-0-2**

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Limón, Reyes

ASM AGING AND LONG-TERM CARE: 7-0-0

YES: Ellis, Ahrens, Ávila Farías, Arambula, Jeff Gonzalez, Blanca Rubio, Sharp-Collins

ASM EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: 7-0-0

YES: Ransom, Hadwick, Arambula, Bains, Bennett, Calderon, DeMaio

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Ahrens, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache

ABS, ABST OR NV: Sanchez, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

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