



March 22, 2016

Mr. Alan Abbs  
Executive Director  
California Air Pollution Control Officers Association  
1107 Ninth Street, Suite 1005  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**SUBJECT: BUSINESS COALITION COMMENTS ON UPDATES TO CAPCOA'S  
1992 AIR TOXICS HOT SPOTS PUBLIC NOTIFICATION GUIDELINES**

Dear Mr. Abbs:

The undersigned organizations applaud the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association's (CAPCOA) decision to update its 1992 Air Toxics Hot Spots Public Notification Guidelines (Notification Guidelines). This action is a critical element of the comprehensive state and local air toxics program updates necessitated by the revised air toxics health risk assessment (HRA) guidelines issued last year by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). The new HRA guidelines represent a paradigm shift in a mature program which in turn presents significant new risk communication challenges for the air districts and regulated facilities. We appreciate the opportunity to work with CAPCOA to address these challenges and to offer recommendations for updating the Notification Guidelines in advance of CAPCOA's issuance of a draft document.

As CAPCOA is aware, the vast majority of industrial and commercial facilities in California have worked diligently to reduce their emissions over the past few decades such that current risk to surrounding receptors is lower than historical risk, regardless of how risk is measured. As CAPCOA has acknowledged, application of the HRA guidelines to many existing stationary sources will increase risk estimates up to three times or more and public notifications will be more widespread in the near future. In the vast majority of cases, these increased risk estimates will be due exclusively to changes in the risk assessment methodology, not to actual increases in facility air toxics emissions. Moreover, OEHHA's HRA methodology is complex and detached from local air toxics regulatory programs. It is not well understood by the public. Comparisons between existing estimates, developed under the prior risk assessment methodology, and new estimates are improper but inevitable.

Given this backdrop, a business-as-usual approach to risk communication (using existing messaging and templates) will convey the misperception that the public is at greater risk from stationary sources of air toxics emissions. Absent additional information, a reasonable person would assume that something has changed at the facility level to increase air toxics risk. A

worst-case scenario is the perception that communities have been exposed for decades to a higher risk than was previously disclosed and the air district and the facility failed to take action to mitigate that risk.

ARB and local air district board members have expressed concern about the impact of OEHHA's HRA guideline changes on businesses and the importance of exercising care in how risk is communicated to avoid unnecessary and counter-productive public alarm. We share this concern. Accordingly, we propose that CAPCOA develop a new template for facility and industrywide notification letters that captures important messages already identified by ARB, CAPCOA and some local air districts. The approach we propose will help notice recipients understand why facility risk estimates have increased despite significant state and local progress on reduction of air toxics emissions and what the new estimates mean in real world terms.

Since many individuals will be receiving notices for the first time, CAPCOA should employ a user-friendly question and answer format with additional background information describing what health risk is and what it is not (e.g., a predictor of actual harm), how the approach to estimating health risk has changed under the updated OEHHA HRA guidelines (i.e., identify new assumptions, associated uncertainties and what effect they have on the risk estimate) and what a facility risk estimate means to the average individual (e.g., how does the facility risk estimate compare to other commonly understood risks). In addition, individual facilities that can document a reduction in air toxics emissions over time should have the option to disclose that information in a notification letter, along with the impact of those reductions on air toxics risk. Such comparisons should include the baseline risk estimate and the current risk estimate using the same risk assessment methodology. Comparisons between risk estimates developed under the prior methodology and risk estimates developed under the new methodology will mask actual reductions in facility air toxics risk.

To address the above concerns, we recommend that the updated Notification Guidelines include the attached draft template letter, based on current air district notification letters. In addition to the Q&A format of the letter, which we believe is an improvement over the templates provided in the 1992 Public Notification Guidelines, we have added the following recommendations to capture the concepts discussed above and during the December 10, 2015 CAPCOA industry stakeholders meeting.

- A new section entitled "*Why am I receiving this notice?*" with language adapted from the template letter for cancer risk in the 1992 CAPCOA Public Notification Guidelines. This language provides important context for the notice, especially for individuals who may be receiving one for the first time.
- Language from the ARB/CAPCOA Risk Management Guidelines (issued July, 2015) describing progress to date on statewide reductions of toxic air pollutant emissions despite population growth.

- Language clarifying that the percent contribution of various toxic air pollutants identified in the notice is to the facility risk estimate, not the facility's contribution to background risk in the neighboring area.
- As suggested by air district representatives during the December 10, 2015 CAPCOA industry stakeholders meeting, include language indicating that health effects estimates (i.e., cancer potency factors and non-cancer reference exposure levels) used in the risk assessment include default assumptions that tend to increase facility risk estimates relative to real world conditions.
- Language identifying new exposure assumptions in the OEHHA HRA guidelines that tend to increase facility risk estimates relative to real world conditions.
- A new section entitled "*Does this notice mean that my health risk from this facility has increased?*" which includes basic information explaining why the new facility risk estimate has increased relative to the prior estimate (e.g., changes in the HRA guidelines, actual increases in facility emissions, etc.). As noted above, this section is necessary to prevent the misperception that individuals receiving the notice are at greater risk as a result of changes at the facility.
- Language indicating that the air district has requirements in place to reduce exposure to toxic air pollution, including that most new or modified sources of toxic air pollutants must implement emission controls in order to obtain permits.

We share the sensitivity of air district representatives to the length and content of the notification letter. To ensure effective risk communication, the letter should be as brief as possible and should seek to simplify complex subject matter in a manner that is relevant to the target audience. Accordingly the template letter, including our proposed changes, is limited to just over two pages in length and avoids use of technical terminology. The additional length relative to prior templates and notification letters currently in use is necessary to provide a frame of reference for understanding changes in facility risk estimates.

Additionally, we understand that the Risk Notification Guidelines are advisory and that some District's may elect to use different methods for notification. In that regard, we look forward to working with CAPCOA on developing alternative methods of notification.

Finally, we are aware that some stakeholders have suggested use of an intermediary group to be the public interface on Hot Spots notification based on the assertion that communities around Hot Spots facilities "don't trust the facilities or the air districts." We note that such delegation of authority may not be permissible under the Hot Spots statute. Moreover, we urge CAPCOA to reject this approach, especially where the proposed "intermediaries" are advocacy groups and not objective third parties, because it has the potential to bias risk communication messaging in ways that undermine public confidence in the air districts and favor the outcomes sought by those advocacy groups.

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The Coalition appreciates your consideration of our recommendations and looks forward to working with CAPCOA on developing the updated Public Notification Guidelines. We would be happy to schedule a subsequent meeting to discuss these recommendations at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Anthony Samson, Policy Advocate  
California Chamber of Commerce

On Behalf of the Following Organizations:

African-American Farmers of California  
Agricultural Council of California  
Almond Hullers and Processors Association  
American Chemistry Council  
Associated General Contractors- California  
Associated General Contractors- San Diego  
Bay Area Council  
Bay Planning Coalition  
Big Bear Chamber of Commerce  
Building Industry Association of Fresno and Madera Counties  
California Association of Sanitation Agencies  
California Attractions and Parks Association  
California Cement Manufacturers Environmental Coalition  
California Building Industry Association  
California Business Properties Association  
California Cement Manufacturers Environmental Coalition  
California Citrus Mutual  
California Construction and Industrial Materials Association  
California Cotton Ginners Association  
California Cotton Growers Association  
California Farm Bureau Federation  
California Fresh Fruit Association  
California Hospital Association  
California League of Food Processors  
California Manufacturers and Technology Association  
**California Metals Coalition**  
California Paint Council  
California Refuse Recycling Council  
California Small Business Alliance  
California Society for Healthcare Engineering, Inc.

California Trucking Association  
Can Manufacturers Institute  
Cathedral City Chamber of Commerce  
Cerritos Chamber of Commerce  
Chambers of Commerce Alliance of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties  
Chemical Industry Council of California  
Coastal Energy Alliance  
Construction Industry Air Quality Coalition  
Culver City Chamber of Commerce  
Dairy Cares  
Delano Chamber of Commerce  
Dinuba Chamber of Commerce  
Elk Grove Chamber of Commerce  
El Monte/South El Monte Chamber of Commerce  
Folsom Chamber of Commerce  
Gateway Chambers Alliance  
Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Riverside Chamber of Commerce  
Hayward Chamber of Commerce  
Indio Chamber of Commerce  
Industrial Association of Contra Costa County  
Industrial Environmental Association  
Industry Manufacturers Council  
Inland Empire Economic Partnership  
Irvine Chamber of Commerce  
Kern County Farm Bureau  
Kern County Taxpayers Association  
Laguna Beach Chamber of Commerce  
League of California Cities  
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce  
Los Angeles County Business Federation  
Malibu Chamber of Commerce  
Manufacturers Council of the Central Valley  
Metal Finishers Association of Northern California  
Metal Finishers Association of Southern California  
Milk Producers Council  
NAIOP – Southern California  
National Federation of Independent Business  
National Tank Truck Carriers, Inc.  
Nisei Farms League  
North Orange County Chamber of Commerce  
Norwalk Chamber of Commerce  
Ontario Chamber of Commerce  
Orange County Business Council  
Pasadena Chamber of Commerce

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Rancho Cordova Chamber of Commerce  
Richmond Chamber of Commerce  
Rural County Representatives of California  
Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce  
San Bernardino County Solid Waste Management Division  
San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce  
San Francisco Chamber of Commerce  
San Gabriel Valley Legislative Coalition of Chambers  
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership  
San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce  
San Rafael Chamber of Commerce  
San Ramon Chamber of Commerce  
Seawright Custom Precast  
Solid Waste Association  
Southwest California Legislative Council  
Southwest Riverside County Association of Realtors  
Styrene Information & Research Center  
Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce  
Tulare Chamber of Commerce  
Tulare Kings Hispanic Chamber of Commerce  
Valley Industry and Commerce Association  
West Coast Lumber & Building Material Association  
Western Agricultural Processors Association  
Western Growers Association  
Western Plant Health Association  
Western States Petroleum Association  
Western United Dairymen  
Western Wood Preservers Institute  
Wilmington Chamber of Commerce

**Attachment 1**  
**Sample Hot Spots Public Notification Letter**  
**(Cancer Risk)**

**Why am I receiving this notice?**

State law requires that *[facility name]* notify you of possible health risks resulting from routine emissions of substances identified by the state as toxic air pollutants from their facility. Approximately *[number]* of homes or businesses are receiving this notice.<sup>1</sup>

**What are toxic air pollutants?**

Chemicals that cause cancer, birth defects or other health effects are known as toxic substances. When these toxic substances are released in the air, they are called toxic air pollutants.

**Where do toxic air pollutants come from?**

Toxic air pollutants come from a variety of sources. These sources include chemical plants and large manufacturers as well as cars and trucks and smaller businesses. Many products used at home, such as cleaners and paint thinners also contain toxic air pollutants.

The *[district name]* and the state are taking many steps to reduce emissions of toxic air pollutants. Over the last 25 years, California has reduced statewide emissions and related health impacts from exposures to toxic air pollutants by about 75 percent, while the number of residents and vehicles grew by about 30 percent each.

**What toxic air pollutant(s) does *[facility name]* emit?**

Under normal operation, this facility emits the toxic air pollutant(s) listed below. The possible health effects of exposure to those pollutants and their percent contribution to the overall facility risk estimate are listed below:

<b>Pollutant</b>	<b>Possible Health Effects</b>	<b>Percent Contribution to Facility Risk Estimate</b>
Benzene	Cancer	

Cancer and non-cancer health effects estimates are frequently based on studies in animals exposed to much higher levels of toxic air pollutants than the levels emitted by this facility.

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<sup>1</sup> Businesses receiving this notice should post it in an area(s) where it is most likely to be viewed by employees.

### **What is the cancer risk from this facility?**

For chemicals that may cause cancer, a calculation called a “health risk assessment” was done. This is the best method officials currently have for estimating the chance that breathing small amounts of a chemical over a long period of time will cause cancer. Because the odds are generally small, they are written as a “number of chances in one million” of getting cancer.

The health risk estimate conservatively assumes that a person is continually exposed for 30 years at a single location to the *[substance(s)]* emissions that came from *[facility name]* in *[year]*. Most people do not stay in one location for that amount of time, so their actual risk is likely to be lower.

Based on the risk assessment, people who live in the area shown on the Facility Risk Map would have their chance of getting cancer increased by up to about *[number]* of chances in one million because of *[substance(s)]* emissions from this facility, and people who work in the area shown would have their chance of getting cancer increased by up to about *[number]* of chances in one million. The attached Facility Risk Map shows the risks at various locations.

### **How was the health risk from this facility determined?**

The health risk assessment relied on data collected for *[year]* and submitted to *[district name]*. Guidance from the state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment was used to determine how the levels of air pollution from this facility may impact people's health. This guidance was updated in March 2015 to include new assumptions that increase risk estimates. For example, the updated guidance increases estimated exposures by requiring the use of higher breathing rates, which in turn results in higher estimated health risks among exposed populations.

### **Does this notice mean that my health risk from this facility has increased (if applicable)?**

***Option A (facility emissions have decreased or are unchanged):*** The emissions of toxic air pollutants from *[facility name]* have *[decreased by XX%/are unchanged]* over the past *[number]* of years. This means that your actual exposure to toxic air pollutants from *[facility name]* is *[lower/ unchanged]*. The increased health risk estimate for *[facility name]* is due to the new assumptions in the updated state guidance.

***Option B (facility emissions have increased):*** The emissions of toxic air pollutants from *[facility name]* have *[increased by XX%]* over the past *[number]* of years due to *[reason]*. The *[emissions increase is/new assumptions in the updated state guidance are]* the largest contributor to the increased health risk estimate for *[facility name]*.

### **How does the risk from this facility compare to other risks?**

The cancer risk from this facility is relatively small compared to the average overall risk for people living in the United States. Currently, according to the American Cancer Society, about four out of ten people will get cancer sometime during their lifetime. In other words, the odds of getting cancer at some time in your life are about 400,000 chances in one million.<sup>2</sup>

### **What is the cancer risk from toxic air pollution in general?**

The average cancer risk in [*California/district name*<sup>3</sup>] from all pollutants emitted from all sources (cars, trucks, factories, power plants, home products, etc.) is about [*number*] of chances per million.

### **What is being done to reduce the health risks from this facility?**

The state law requiring issuance of this public notice is one step in getting facilities throughout the state to reduce toxic emissions resulting from their operations. The [*district name*] and other agencies have also developed other programs designed to prevent pollution and reduce exposure to toxic air pollution. For example, the [*district name*] requires most new or modified sources of toxic air pollutants to implement emission controls in order to obtain permits.

### **How can I get more information?**

A copy of the [*facility name*] health risk assessment report is available for your review at ...

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<sup>2</sup> Air districts may choose to include different information on how risks from the facility compare to other voluntary and involuntary risks.

<sup>3</sup> If district-specific data is available.