



Handbook for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts

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For projects locating near a source of odors where there is currently no nearby development and for odor sources locating near existing receptors, the determination of significance should be based on whether odor complaints from the public have occurred in the vicinity of a similar facility at a similar distance.

Although distance between an odor source and a receptor is the primary factor in determining the significance of an odor impact, the prevailing wind direction should also be considered. Since odors more or less travel downwind of a source, a receptor that is upwind of a source may not experience the same impact as a receptor that is at a similar distance from the source, but is downwind.

5.5.8 Evaluating Project Alternatives

An analysis of alternatives should discuss whether any of the alternatives would eliminate or reduce any significant impacts on air quality to less-than-significant levels. Conversely, if an alternative creates a new significant impact, the impact must be addressed, though in less detail than in the project analysis. If a quantitative analysis for a particular project impact was performed, a quantitative analysis of one or more alternatives may be performed for purposes of comparison.

5.5.9 Assessment of Plans and Multiple Phased Projects

Planning documents such as city and county general plans, specific area plans and redevelopment plans should also be evaluated for their potential air quality impacts. For general plans, the evaluation of the plan's air quality impacts should focus on an analysis of the plan's consistency with the most recently adopted AQAP and/or SIP. To evaluate local plan consistency with the regional air quality plans, the Lead Agency should consider the following: the local plan's consistency with AQAP and SIP population and vehicle use projections, the extent to which the plan implements AQAP and SIP transportation control measures, and whether the plan provides buffer zones around sources of odors and toxics.

A Program EIR is appropriate for phased projects or a series of individual projects that comprise a larger project with significant impacts. A Program EIR ensures consideration of the cumulative impacts of the entire project, as opposed to a case-by-case analysis of the project's individual components. The air quality analysis for a phased project should analyze the temporary impact of construction activities for each phase of the larger project. For the operational air quality impact analysis of phased projects or specific plans, the full analysis may have to rely on assumptions regarding actual specific land uses. In many cases, specific uses are not necessarily known. The Lead Agency should use its best judgment to forecast the most likely land uses that will be built during each phase of the project. Emissions should be estimated for these forecasted uses. Emissions for all phases of a project should be totaled to determine the project's total impact upon build-out.

5.5.10 Evaluating Project Greenhouse Gases

In AB 32, the Legislature recognized California's particular vulnerability to the effects of global warming, making legislative findings that global warming will "have detrimental effects on some of California's largest industries, including agriculture, wine, tourism, skiing, recreational and commercial fishing, and forestry." (H&SC section 38501, subd. (b)). Residents of the District

will be affected by many of these climate change effects, particularly given the importance to Yolo and Solano Counties of their agricultural economy, economic dependence on tourism, recreational fishing, and recreational boating. The Legislature also found that global warming will “increase the strain on electricity supplies necessary to meet the demand for summer air-conditioning in the hottest parts of the State.” (H&SC, section 38501, subd. (b)). Since Yolo and Solano Counties are among the parts of the State that experience hot weather, this area is at a greater likelihood of suffering from any electricity shortages that are manifestations of global warming. It may also experience economic and public health damages related to changes in vegetation and crop patterns, lower summer reservoirs, and increased potential for flooding and air pollution that hotter temperatures can produce.

AB 32 mandates that emissions of greenhouse gases must be capped at 1990 levels (H&SC, section 38530). Considering that about 40% of greenhouse gas emissions come from motor vehicles, projects that generate new vehicle trips can be in conflict with AB 32 goals. While there are no specific thresholds associated with greenhouse gases, it is still recommended to at least include a qualitative discussion of greenhouse gases in air quality analyses for sizable projects. The issue of greenhouse gases is increasingly becoming an area of comment on draft environmental documents. The EIR’s for several transportation plans and general plans have received comments from the State Attorney General asking that an analysis of greenhouse gases be included. In order to pro-actively address this issue, Lead Agencies should consider preparing such an analysis for larger projects as part of their full analysis.