



WATTS CLEAN AIR & ENERGY
COMMITTEE



December 15th, 2021

Liane M. Randolph
Chair, California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
P.O. Box 2815, Sacramento, CA 95812

RE: AB617 South LA Community Steering Committee Community Co-leads Support for CERP and CAMP Development Timeline Extension

To the chairs and members of the board,

Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles (PSR-LA) is an environmental health and justice based organization that works with a wide range of organizations and community advocates dedicated to improving air quality and public health by supporting implementing policies that address climate change and achieve environmental justice for the communities of California. We have over a decade of experience working in the South Los Angeles community on a range of issues: toxics, air pollution and climate change, land use and community development, displacement, and oil and gas extraction. Our work builds power for collective action to protect human health and the environment.

On July 2019, PSR-LA launched our South Central Los Angeles Project to Understand Sources of Air Pollution and Health Impacts (SCLA-PUSH) in collaboration with our long time community partners Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE) and Watts Clean Air and Energy Community (Watts Clean Air). The project aims to build the capacity of South LA organizations and community residents to better understand the state of air quality and health in their community, and to engage in air monitoring and data analysis to advance community-driven solutions in air quality policy. Our strong partnership in South LA is rooted in our commitment to the principles of environmental justice and achieving social justice.

SCOPE brings over a decade of historical social justice work in South Los Angeles addressing issues of poverty, environmental racism, and chronic disinvestment using a bottom-up approach to creating systemic change. SCOPE's proven model of community organizing is anchored by community residents engaging their neighbors to build a unified voice and advance a community led agenda. Watts Clean Air brings together years of experience working on local and statewide climate equity, air quality and water advocacy issues. Watts Clean Air works to help the community gain access to careers in the growing green energy industry, create an environmental platform for disadvantaged communities to voice their concerns about the health disparities that exist and impact their quality of life, and advocate for a just transition.



On February 25th, 2021 the community of South Los Angeles was officially selected as an AB617 community to start the development of both a Community Emissions Reduction Plan and a Community Air Monitoring Plan (CERP and CAMP). This major success would have not been possible without the support of our SCLA-PUSH project, the strong community engagement, and our dedicated community members and Air Quality Ambassadors, many of who are now serving their community by being part of the AB617 South Los Angeles Community Steering Committee (AB617 SLA CSC).

PSR-LA, SCOPE, and Watts Clean Air are now co-leading the AB617 SLA CSC in collaboration with the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The co-leadership model was developed to ensure the process for identifying air quality priorities and emissions reduction strategies was grounded in the community. A major barrier to achieving meaningful community engagement in this process is the time constraints due to the fast paced timeline for the development and approval of the CERP and CAMP. The continued impacts of the pandemic on community engagement, zoom fatigue, onboarding a facilitator later in the process, the pause SCAQMD took to regroup the process, among other factors have contributed to a delayed CERP and CAMP development for South LA.

We, the community leaders of the SLA AB617 CSC, strongly support a timeline extension for the development and finalization of our CERP and CAMP. We strongly support SCAQMD request to extend South LA CERP and CAMP finalization date for approval to June 2022. This extended timeline will allow us to ensure community voices are leading the AB617 South LA process with dedicated time and capacity. By having this extended CERP and CAMP development timeline, we will be able to implement a more integrative and innovative approach for the community engagement process and create co-learning spaces for both community members and regulatory agencies that can amplify co-governance in the decision making process. We will be able to work with SCAQMD, the AB617 South LA co-leaders, and community members to build and create new ways for interacting and collaborating that will be effective in determining the actions for the CERP and CAMP.

We urge you to support this timeline extension for the AB617 SLA CSC CERP and CAMP development, so we can have adequate time to ensure the process is guided and grounded in the community's needs and vision of a cleaner and healthier South LA.

Sincerely,

Martha Dina Arguello
Executive Director
Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles

Paula Torrado Plazas



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