



SACRED PLACES INSTITUTE
FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Chair Delgado, Committee Chair McCallon, and Members of the Governing Board
South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD)
21865 Copley Drive
Diamond Bar, CA 91765
Email: vdelgado@aqmd.gov
lmccallon@aqmd.gov
Clerk of the Board, cob@aqmd.gov

RE: Strong Support for Appliance Rule Amendments to Rules 1111 and 1121

Dear Chair Delgado, Committee Chair McCallon, and Members of the Board:

Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples (SPI) is a California Indigenous-led, grassroots environmental justice organization based in the unceded ancestral homelands of the Tongva people, also known as Los Angeles, California. Our mission is to build the capacity of Native Nations and Indigenous Peoples to protect sacred lands, waters, and cultures. Through all our work, we support Native Nations and their ability to re-establish relationships with their ancestral homelands and waters. Our focus is on creating systems that prioritize Indigenous knowledge and protocols, grounded in intergenerational respect, reciprocity, and connection.

Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples supports South Coast AQMD's efforts to clean up appliance pollution by creating zero-NOx standards. Air pollution disproportionately impacts Indigenous communities and communities of color, who have long suffered from environmental injustices, including exposure to toxic emissions from fossil fuel combustion in homes and buildings. Amending Rules 1111 and 1121 to achieve zero-NOx for furnaces and water heaters would mark the most significant emissions reduction effort in over three decades—an important step toward healthier air for all people in our region.

The 2022 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) clearly states that “[t]he only way to achieve the required NOx reductions is through extensive use of zero-emission technologies across all stationary and mobile sources.” Transitioning away from fossil fuel-burning appliances is not just a regulatory issue—it is a matter of public health, environmental justice, and climate responsibility. Indigenous peoples have always been stewards of the land, water, and air, and we call on South Coast AQMD to uphold its responsibility to protect these vital resources by moving forward with strong zero-NOx standards.

After more than a year of review, the staff proposal represents a compromise—allowing consumers to continue purchasing fossil fuel products if they choose while also accelerating the shift toward zero-emission appliances. However, this plan can and should be strengthened in two key ways:

1. Increase compliance percentage targets for manufacturers to ensure the swift and meaningful adoption of clean alternatives.
2. Ensure mitigation fees are aligned with actual emissions impacts, so that polluters are held accountable for the harm they cause.

For too long, Indigenous communities have been forced to bear the burden of pollution while industry delays action. We urge South Coast AQMD to adopt these rules in May and send a clear market signal that will help phase out fossil fuel burning in buildings. Clean air is a human right, and it is time to prioritize community health over polluter profits.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ciara Morning Star Belardes', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Ciara Morning Star Belardes
Director of Education and Community Outreach
Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples