

Historic South Central

Harvard Park

Exposition Park

Watts



# South LA

## Toolkit

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AB617

Community  
Air Protection  
Program

This toolkit was created by Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles (PSR-LA) for the South Central Los Angeles Project to Understand Sources of Air Pollution and Health Impacts (SCLA-PUSH). The SCLA-PUSH is a collaborative initiative aiming to mobilize stakeholders to assess the scale and gravity of local air pollution in the South Los Angeles community in order to identify viable community-driven solutions to reduce pollution.

## PROJECT GOALS

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### Build our Community Capacity

Understand the character of air pollution, its health impacts, and the government regulatory process



### Mobilize our Collective Power

Conduct community-driven science to address systemic failures in air pollution data collection



### Ensure Resources

Advocate for South LA communities to receive a fair share of resources available to improve air quality and community health, and ensure efforts lead to real / actual emissions reductions



### Advance a Just Transition

Lead a community-centered just transition toward cleaner air and healthier communities in South LA

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#### Contributions



This South Los Angeles AB617 Community toolkit is for YOU—for community residents, advocates, and decision makers to learn about air pollution in South Los Angeles, the AB617 Community Air Protection Program, and opportunities to **take action** and **participate** in the AB617 process. Together, we can bring cleaner, healthier air to our community.

Hi! I'm Iretha,

a resident of South Los Angeles. Like you, I'm curious to learn how I can help improve our air.



Hey everyone!  
My name is Ruth.

I grew up in Sur de Los Angeles. I'm a community leader trained by the SCLA-PUSH project, and now I am serving my community as an Air Quality Ambassador in the South Los Angeles AB617 program. I am excited to walk you through how we can improve the air in South LA.

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# SECTION 1:

## OUR COMMUNITY: What's up with the air in South Los Angeles?

### Community Survey

Through our work with SCLA-PUSH project, we have been able to understand residents' knowledge, experience, and concerns about air pollution and work together with the community to better assess the air quality issues in South LA.



Recently, we collected 1,356 surveys from residents about their concerns regarding air quality and their knowledge of AB617.



That's my first question. What is AB617?

AB617 is the state bill that made the California Air Resources Board create the Community Air Protection Program (CAPP) to help communities most impacted by air pollution. The AB617 Program selects communities on a yearly basis to develop and implement plans to reduce air pollution. There are currently 19 communities in the state working on their plans. South LA is one of these communities.

Wow, I didn't know there was such a program! So, what did South LA residents know about air pollution?

**50%** of residents said they know little about the air quality in their neighborhoods.

Overall, they rated the air quality as average.

Oh, lots of folks still don't know! We need to spread the word.

What did residents say about the sources of pollution?

They were most concerned about air pollution from these top 3 sources:

**24%**  
cars / trucks

**23%**  
auto body shops

**19%**  
oil drilling sties

I bet they had some good solutions!

They did!

17%

chose more pollution enforcement

16%

chose improving green spaces and the built environment

15%

chose establishing new air quality regulations and legislation

Because the AB617 process is managed by the Southern California Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), I'm going to focus on the data they use to regulate **stationary sources of air pollution in South LA**. We'll talk about mobile sources, such as cars and trucks, later. Here's how they do it.

## The Data

**Permitting:** SCAQMD requires most commercial buildings and facilities – potential stationary sources of air pollution to receive a permit. There are over 3,000 permitted facilities in the South LA AB617 area, from gas stations to dry cleaners to oil wells to manufacturing facilities and more.

**Self-Reporting:** SCAQMD requires some of the facilities in South LA to self-report how much air pollution they emit each year through the **Annual Emission Reporting (AER) program**. These facilities, generally the biggest polluters in the area, are supposed to estimate how much air pollution they have produced. The data that they report to SCAQMD are then used to calculate air pollution in the South LA area.

Here's the catch. Even though many of the 3,000+ permitted facilities in South LA may produce air pollution, **only a few dozen are actually required to self-report to SCAQMD!**

***In fact, only 36 facilities out of 3,000+ in South LA have reported emissions to SCAQMD in the past five years.***

This means we have a big gap between what SCAQMD is using to calculate air pollution and what is really happening in the community.

However, the data from these 36 sources is useful. For example, it tells us that the most-common pollutants in South LA include the following:

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), Nitrogen Oxides (NOx), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Particulate Matter (PM), and Ammonia (NH3).

Are those bad?

Yes!

All of those pollutants contribute to health harms such as asthma, heart problems, brain development issues; and elderly, pregnant women, and children are at greater risk. Imagine what we might find if all 3,000+ sources had to report?

Wow.  
We really need more data!

We do! Through community air monitoring and ground truthing efforts, SCLA-PUSH research found that the air quality agency's data on permitted polluting facilities doesn't match what actually exists in the community. ***We proved that we need more data and stronger regulatory actions.***

Out of all the sources, we identified the top 4 industries that concerned community residents—auto body shops, dry cleaners, metal manufacturing, and oil and gas sites.

Based on the permits from SCAQMD in 2022, there are approximately the following number of sites of each industry of concern in South LA:



\* Does not include the Inglewood and Baldwin Hills Oil fields surrounding and within close proximity to South LA. The 11 oil and gas sites include approximately 800 wells.

See them for yourself!



Learn more about our SCLA-PUSH project and community data here.

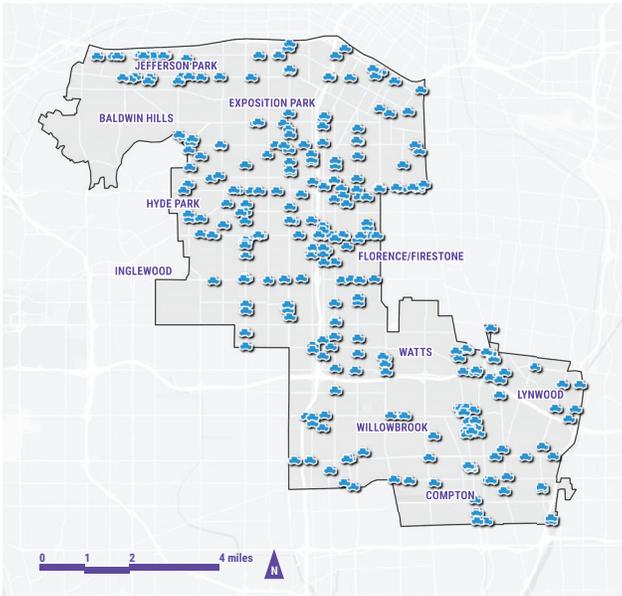
The next page shows maps of the locations of all the permitted auto body shops (top left), dry cleaners (top right), metal manufacturing facilities (bottom left), and oil and gas wells and fields (bottom right) in South LA, created using the SCAQMD permit data.

# Maps of Industries of Concern in South LA

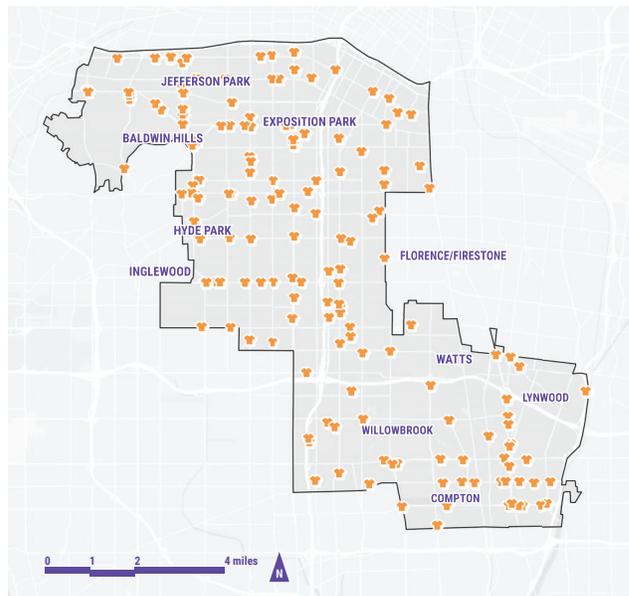
The maps on this page are separated by the 4 primary industries of concern in South LA. The black border on each map indicates the boundary of South LA defined by SCAQMD and the AB617 program.

Do you notice any patterns in the locations of these facilities?

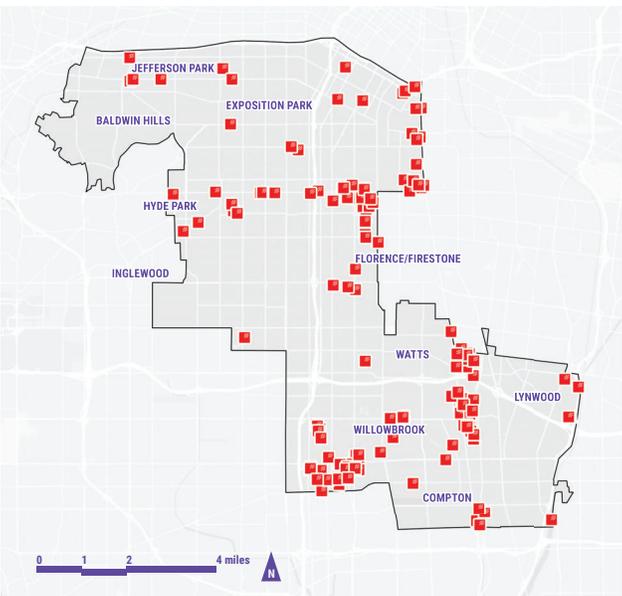
What kind of industries and facilities are in your neighborhood?



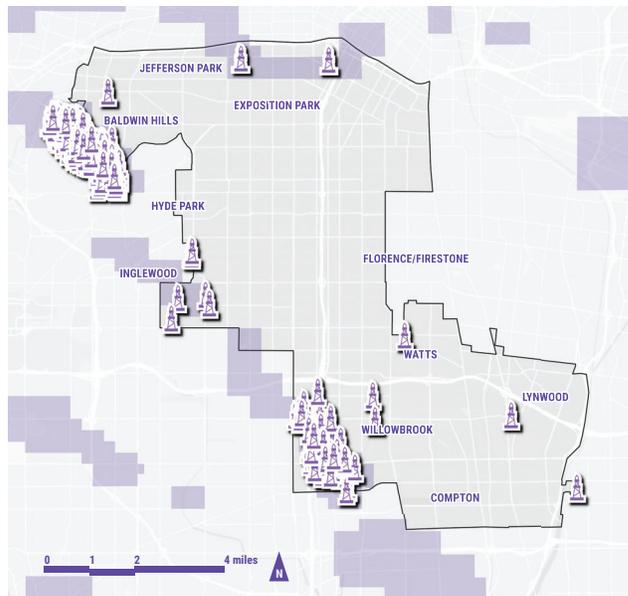
 Auto Body Shops



 Dry Cleaners



 Metal Manufacturing Facilities



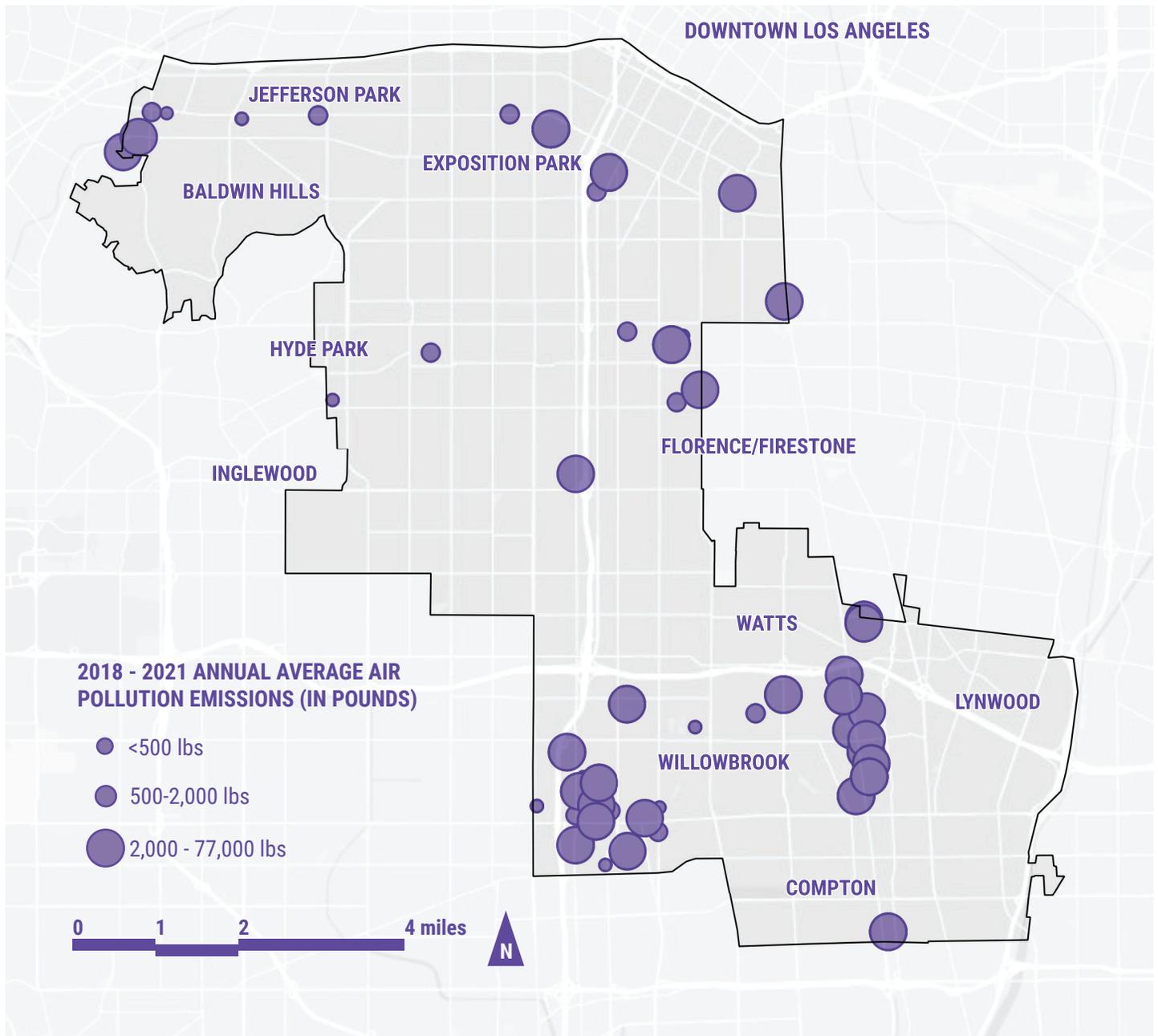
 Oil and Gas Sites

 Oil and Gas fields

## Map of Emissions Reported to SCAQMD

This map shows the locations of all the facilities in South LA that are required to self-report their air pollution to SCAQMD through the Annual Emissions Reporting (AER) program.

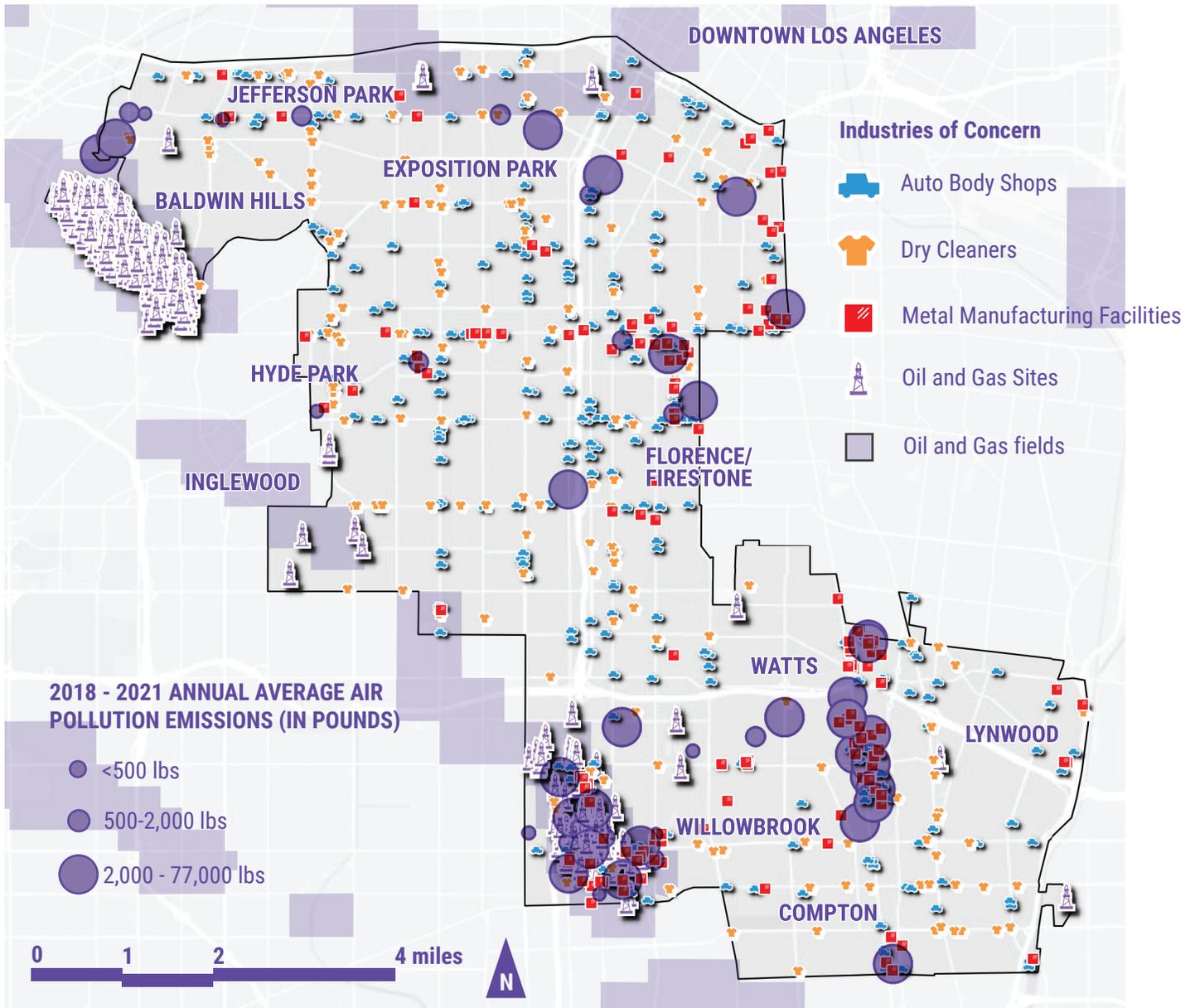
The purple circles represent that average amount of air pollution (in pounds) that each facility reported in 2018-2022, ranging from less than 500 pounds of air pollution per year (smallest circles) to more than one ton of air pollution per year (largest circles).



How does this map compare to the locations of the facilities identified by community members?

## Combined Industries and Emissions Map

The map on this page shows the combination of all the maps on pages 7 and 8. You can see the density of industries permitted in South LA. Remember, only facilities at the center of each dark purple circle report air pollution to SCAQMD. Because most facilities are not required to report, we don't know whether or how much they emit air pollutants. You can see there is a big data gap! But we are working with the community and the regulatory agency to try to fix that!



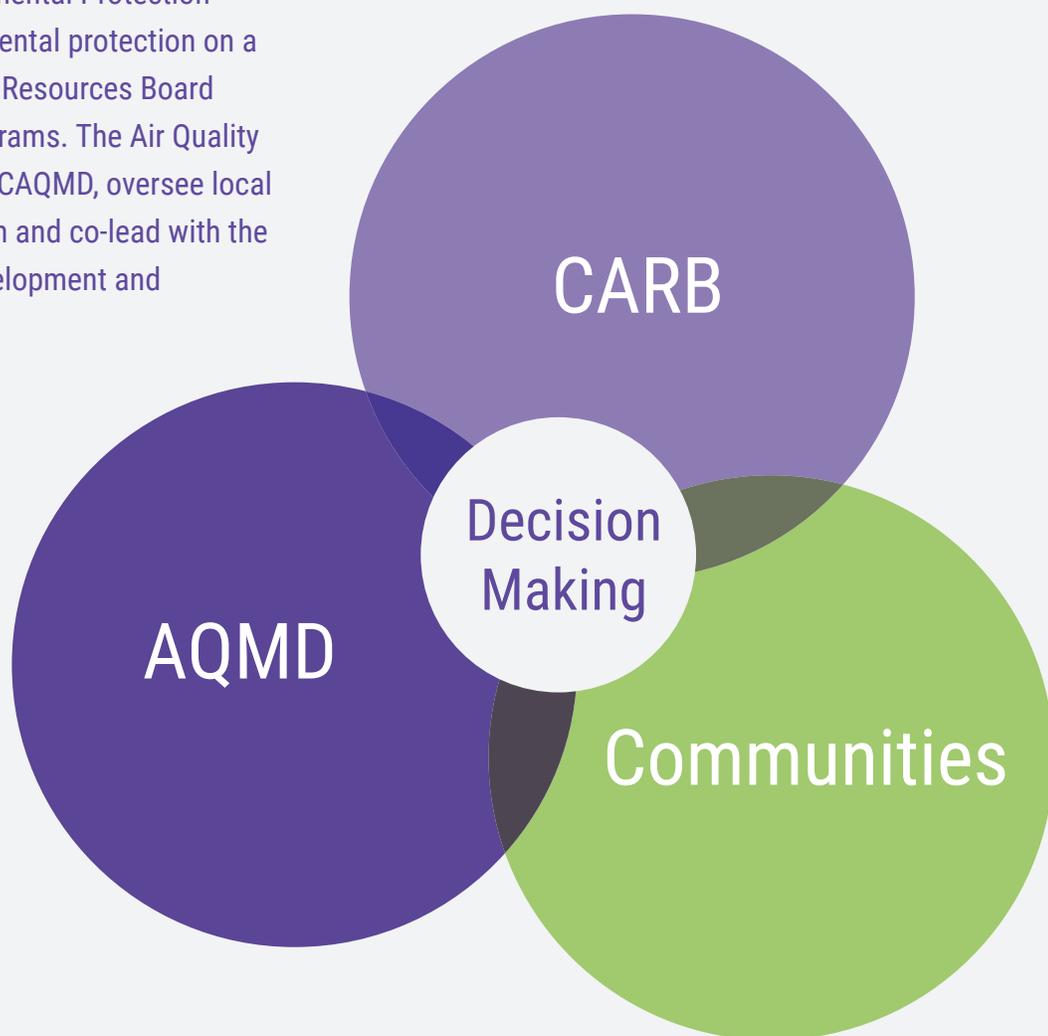
## SECTION 2:

# The AB617 PROGRAM: What's being done about air pollution in South Los Angeles?

### So how does the AB617 program work?

The California AB617 program refocuses resources on improving air quality at the local level in environmental justice communities and creates a direct and streamlined process for regulatory agencies to work with communities to develop solutions.

**Here is a picture of how AB617 decision-making authority overlaps.** The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversees environmental protection on a national scale. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) oversees the AB617 programs. The Air Quality Management Districts, such as SCAQMD, oversee local stationary sources of air pollution and co-lead with the AB617 communities on plan development and implementation.



In 2021, we officially became an AB617 community program! This was a huge SCLA-PUSH community-led win!

Wow! How exciting!



What I love most about AB617 in South LA is the co-leadership model. Grassroots organizations are working in shared leadership with SCAQMD to develop and implement our Community Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP). This collaborative leadership ensures that the AB617 implementation is more accessible and the process and priorities are community-driven.

### The community co-leads include:



Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles (PSR-LA)



Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE)



Watts Clean Air and Energy Committee (WCAEC).

- PSR-LA, SCOPE, and WCAEC have a track record of success and over 20 years of experience working in SLA organizing, building relationships, and advocating for solutions to the ongoing health threats linked to environmental justice issues in the community. They co-lead with SCAQMD.
- SCAQMD serves as the technical advisor and agency co-lead in this co-leadership model.





Wow, so communities are empowered to define solutions and make decisions about how to improve their air!

## The Process

Every year, communities have the opportunity to be selected by the state to become an AB617 community and develop an air quality improvement plan.

After we were selected as an AB617 community, the community co-leads set up the South LA AB617 Community Steering Committee to create our Community Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP). In 2022, the CERP was approved by SCAQMD and CARB. The planning process was fun!

We worked with the committee, which includes mostly community residents, some small business owners, some community-based organization staff, and some local government staff. Here are the committee’s tasks:



**Develop ideas to address the problems and how we could put those ideas into action.**



**Identify air quality priorities (e.g., oil and gas, mobile sources, air monitoring, metal facilities, auto body shops, etc.)**



**Strategize to address the air quality priorities**



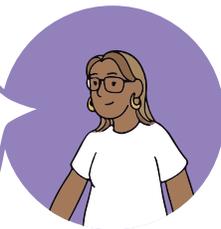
**Implement strategies**



Learn more about the South LA AB617 Community Steering Committee

What’s next?

We are going to implement the CERP plan. This is what we need your help with!



# South LA Timeline To the AB617 Community Air Protection Program



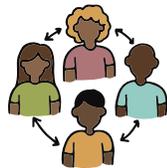
2017

**AB617 Signed into law**

2019



**SCLA-PUSH Launched**



2020

**Building Community Power**

2021



**February:** South LA Officially Selected as an AB617 Community



2022

**June:** Community Emissions Reduction Plan approved by the SCAQMD Governing Board

**August:** Community Emissions Reduction Plan approved and finally adopted by the CARB Governing Board

**September:** CERP Implementation Begins  
Community Steering Committee Meeting

**April:** South LA AB617 Community Steering Committee  
Yearlong planning and development process for the Community Emissions Reduction Plan and Community Air Monitoring Plan



2023 - 2027

**Continuation of the South LA CERP Implementation**  
Opportunities for community engagement in the plan implementation

# SECTION 3:

## THE SLA CERP: South LA Community Emission Reduction Plan

### The Plan

The South Los Angeles Community Emission Reduction Plan, CERP for short, outlines goals and actions by our community steering committee, SCAQMD, and CARB to reduce air pollution in the South LA community. This plan includes actions to reduce pollution and/or exposures, and it will be implemented in partnership with community members over the next several years.

**The Community Steering Committee identified the following air quality priorities to be addressed by the CERP:**



Mobile sources, such as cars and trucks



Auto body shops



General industrial facilities, such as dry cleaners and auto body shops



Metal facilities, where there is welding, melting, and recycling of metals



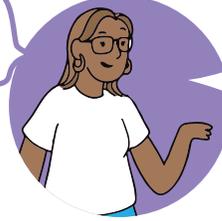
Oil and gas industry, such as gas stations and oil wells

But you can't just tell people to stop polluting.



How can we help them find ways to reduce toxic emissions without closing businesses and losing jobs?

Exactly!



That is one of the main reasons the plan needs to be community-driven. The community knows what the community needs!

### In general, the CERP recommends these actions:

- Educate the community and businesses about how to reduce exposure to air pollution and reduce emissions
- Develop regulations/rules to capture new sources of air pollution, such as more self-reporting requirements
- Enforce new rules to ensure compliance and that new industrial practices reduce emissions
- Provide incentives to accelerate the adoption of cleaner technologies
- Conduct community air monitoring to keep tabs on the emissions

Now, there is something you must be aware of. Some of these actions are important steps, but we need ALL of these actions if we are to reach our ultimate goals of eliminating emissions and achieving clean air. For example, adding air filters to schools can immediately protect children. However, ultimately, we need regulations to create health protective zones around schools so that toxic oil wells are nowhere near our children.



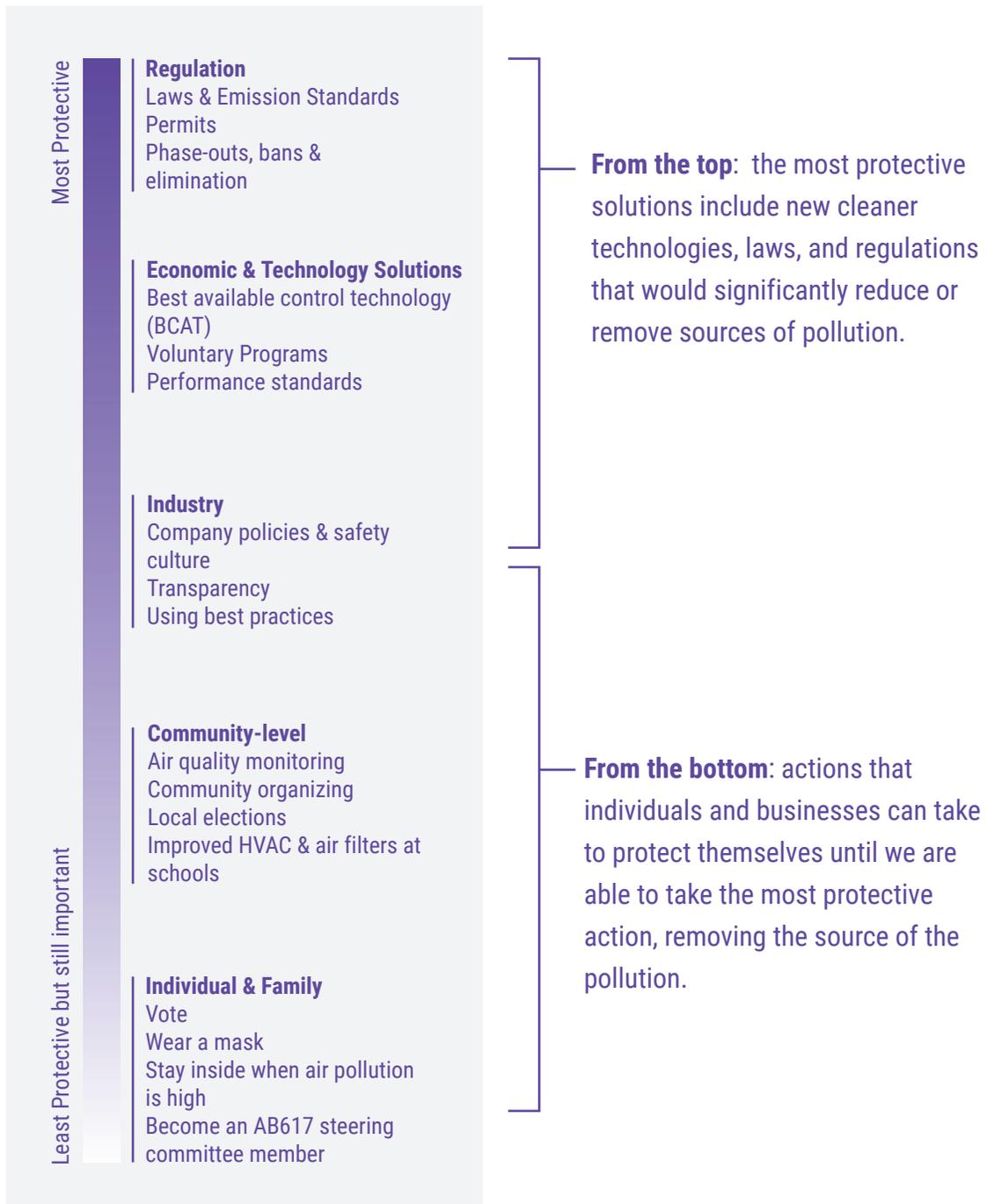
Learn more about the  
South LA AB617 CERP

Oh wow! I was not aware of this.  
How do I know which actions are  
more effective to protect me and  
my family?



## Air Quality Improvement Solutions: Most to Least Protective

Here is a diagram that makes it easier to understand. It shows policy solutions organized from most to least protective.





## Auto Body Shops

Here is an example of how we will work with auto body shop owners to reduce use of toxic paint and transition to healthier best practices for businesses to be a good neighbors.

Most Protective

### Regulation

- Pass regulations that allow time for shops to phase out toxic paint and eventually ban shops from using it.
- Advocate for a 500-foot protective distance from auto body shops and homes.
- Advocate for rule amendments: Initiate rule development process to amend Rules 1151 and 1171 to consider including best management practices as requirements for auto body shops
- Include substitution of harmful toxic materials in rule 1151, and zero emissions equipment, and processes in and processes in auto body shops

### Economic & Technology Solutions

Provide financial incentives to help shops voluntarily switch to non-toxic paints and coatings and water-based cleaners

### Industry

Advocate for the paint industry to produce more affordable and better quality non-toxic paints

Least Protective but still important

### Community-level

- Measure air near auto body shops
- Ask shops to use filters or close their shop door when school children are walking home

### Individual & Family

- Wear masks while working in the shop
- Vote when bills such as SB1137 come up that create health protective zones to keep industries away from homes and schools



## Oil and Gas Sites

Oil drill sites are often located within communities, near lower-income families. These communities suffer the harmful health effects of toxic emissions and pollution.

South LA residents should know about these important CERP actions because they will directly affect community air quality. In addition to conducting air measurement surveys near oil and gas facilities, we need to engage communities, get data, and enforce rules and regulations. This example does not include gas stations.

Most Protective

### Regulation

- Enforce SCAQMD Rule 1148.2 that requires the public is informed about chemicals used in ALL oil wells operations, no exceptions
- SB1137 CA law requires oil and gas sites to be at least 3,200 feet away from schools, hospitals, homes, etc.
- Pass policies to phase out oil drilling

### Economic & Technology Solutions

- The City of Los Angeles will be phasing out oil drilling over the next 20 years. In the meantime, communities will continue to be exposed to health harms of oil and gas operations. The most immediate action is to create financial incentives for oil and gas to electrify their operations and fleet.

### Industry

- Measure air near oil and gas facilities to characterize emissions and identify any potential elevated emissions
- Send timely community notifications and reports from ALL oil wells operations
- Set targets and confirm with community how efforts will lead to actual emissions reduction and how community members will be engaged

### Community-level

- Create a comprehensive community air monitoring system and data of air pollution coming from oil and gas
- Conduct real-time, targeted air monitoring with the goal of reducing emissions
- Ensure air monitoring efforts will fill in the data gaps and lead to air policy enforcement of specific targets such as oil wells

### Individual & Family

- Stay indoors when receive a notice of a gas chemical leak at an oil well

Least Protective but still important

## What about other industries of concern?

I can tell that we need stricter regulations. So many of the solutions focus on community education and finding data, but not stopping the pollution. It seems like we need to push harder for zero emissions technology and best practices for facilities to become good neighbors.

That's right! While we need strong community education and engagement, we also need to invest in solutions that will reduce pollution in our community, and help small businesses to thrive.

Something to note is that metal recycling facilities aren't regulated, and these are not required to report emissions. Getting Metal facilities to use enclosures, sprinkler systems, stacks, and closed systems will help significantly to improve air quality.

Here are two more examples that are part of the South LA CERP.



### Metal Facilities

CERP ACTIONS	Solution Type	What We Want
Identify and prioritize air quality issues related to metal processing facilities	Community and Industry level	Identify air quality priorities to enforce best practices and innovations to reduce pollution from metal manufacturing facilities.  Ex: Enclose facilities, add sprinkler systems, trap emissions in stacks, use less toxic chemicals for metal manufacturing (instead of hexavalent chromium)
Provide the Community Steering Committee with an informational handout or presentation with detailed emissions data and an overview on pollutants and toxics that may be found in the community (e.g., hexavalent chromium, lead, nitric oxides)	Community level	Expand emissions reporting requirements to identify data gaps, so SCAQMD can do a better job of informing the community and enforcing rules



### Dry Cleaners

CERP ACTIONS	Solution Type	What We Want
Initiate rule development process to amend Rule 1102 to consider establishing a new emission standard reflecting zero-emission technologies for new dry-cleaning systems	Regulation	Promote Professional Wet Cleaning, which is a zero-emissions technology for cleaners as a Best Available Control Technology that can be enforced in the permitting process for new dry cleaners
Identify incentive opportunities to transition to community-identified alternatives (e.g., professional wet cleaning, other zero-emission technologies)	Economic and Technology	Create a small, community-based business/general industries incentive fund program to promote the use of Professional wet cleaning as a pilot just transition model in South LA

# SECTION 4:

## COMMUNITY ACTION: What can you do to help improve the air in South Los Angeles?

I am excited to know that there is so much hope and action. What can I do to help?

Join SCLA-PUSH!

We need community members to help with the AB617 South LA CERP implementation process. Help us to amplify community voices and solutions to ensure that community needs are at the center of decision-making.



With your support and engagement, we can ensure the co-leadership model of the South LA Community Steering Committee is effective and driven by community efforts. The CERP implementation must embrace the work done by SCLA-PUSH and amplify the roles of the community-based organizations (CBOs) in a direct way to elevate community voices. And for that we need you, because your voice, community leadership, and experiences matter!



# Want to become an AB617 Community Steering Committee Member?

Together we can make a difference! More of us need to learn about this program and ground it in our stories and love for our community. We need elected officials and stakeholders to engage.



I want to support my community and become an Air Quality Ambassador and a Steering Committee member.

How can I do that?



Fill out an application to become a South LA AB617 Community Steering Committee member

## Contact

### SCLA-PUSH

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The work to date on the AB617 South LA implementation would not have been possible without the persistence and work of the community co-leads PSR-LA, SCOPE, and Watts Clean Air, in collaboration with SCAQMD, our SCLA-PUSH partners, and the AB617 SLA Community Steering Committee.

We are also thankful to the Climate Community Investment Program and the AB617 Community Air Protection Program for making this possible.

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