




air pollution control district
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Agenda Item: D-8
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Continued Item: No

Board Agenda Item

TO: Air Pollution Control District Board

FROM: Aeron Arlin Genet, Air Pollution Control Officer 

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SUBJECT: Waiver of Competition for the Purchase of Air Quality Sensors

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (District) to purchase air quality sensors and related parts from PurpleAir, Inc. for the District's low-cost air quality sensor network, as a sole source procurement without being required to conduct a formal bid process, for a total cost not to exceed \$60,000, including tax and shipping.

BACKGROUND:

The District currently maintains and operates a network of 46 PurpleAir low-cost air quality sensors throughout Santa Barbara County. The sensors are configured to measure particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter (PM_{2.5}) and have been successfully used to assess wildfire smoke impacts and to help District staff better communicate health impacts to communities impacted by wildfire smoke. The cost of low-cost air quality sensors are a fraction of the cost of traditional air pollution monitors, which allows air monitoring to be feasible in many more locations throughout the county. The real-time air monitoring data from the PurpleAir sensors is publicly accessible and displayed on the Environmental Protection Agency's AirNow Fire and Smoke map: <https://fire.airnow.gov/>.

DISCUSSION:

In December 2024, the District was awarded \$20,000 from an Air Quality Sensors Grant under the Inflation Reduction Grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to purchase and install 40 low-cost air quality sensors throughout Santa Barbara County. In addition, on June 26, 2025, your Board approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the District and the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) to administer a PurpleAir air quality sensor deployment program, utilizing \$39,790.79 in EPA Clean Air Act Section 103

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passthrough grant funds. As a result of these two grants, the District plans on purchasing and installing over 140 low-cost air quality sensors throughout Santa Barbara County over the next couple of years, with the majority being purchased from PurpleAir, Inc.

The District is in the process of researching other low-cost air quality sensor options but plans on purchasing the majority of the sensors from PurpleAir, Inc. due to their compatibility with the District's existing low-cost air quality sensor network, District staff training and familiarity with the sensors, inclusion on the AirNow Fire and Smoke map, and a requirement in the MOU with CAPCOA to install PurpleAir sensors.

Since the two grant awards for low-cost air quality sensor equipment exceeds the District's authority to issue a purchase order without completing a bid process, the District requests a competitive bid waiver to move forward with the purchase of equipment from PurpleAir, Inc. If approved by your Board, the District will install the low-cost air quality sensors at locations throughout Santa Barbara County.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The District's expenses for the purchase of the PurpleAir sensors will be paid for in advance out of our general fund and then reimbursed by CAPCOA and EPA. All labor for administration of this program is included in the District's Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget that was adopted by your Board on June 26, 2025. That budget includes implementation funds from the Community Air Protection Program to reduce air pollution emissions and exposures in neighborhoods most impacted by air pollution. There are no fiscal impacts to the proposed budget.