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Clean Air Day A Reminder of San Diego's Not So Clean Air

Wednesday, October 7, 2020

By [Erik Anderson](#)



Photo by [KPBS Staff](#)

Above: A sunny sky shines over downtown San Diego on July 25, 2020.

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Today is Clean Air Day, a day to focus on the air we breathe, how it affects our health and what we can do to keep it clean. This year our awareness is heightened by the weeks of smoke from wildfires that have hung over the county, we had unhealthy smoke billowing over the south bay after the fire on ... [Read more →](#)

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California is observing clean air day at a time when San Diego's air quality remains among the dirtiest in the nation.

Local air quality is ranked as the sixth dirtiest in the nation when it comes to ozone pollution. Ozone is a key component in the creation of smog.

San Diego County Supervisor Nathan Fletcher sits on the state's air resources board. He pointed out that pollution does not affect all county residents the same.

"A child in Barrio Logan is eight times more likely to have asthma than a child in La Jolla. And that is morally wrong," Fletcher said. "I think we can all agree that no one's child should be that much more likely to develop asthma. We know it leads to respiratory and heart ailments and knows from a study out of Harvard University that you're much more likely to die of COVID, a respiratory illness if you live in one of these communities with higher levels of pollution."

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Fletcher praises Gov. Gavin Newsom's call to stop selling gas-powered vehicles in the state by 2035.

"That has the potential to be transformative in terms of air pollution," Fletcher said. "In particular on ozone which is where we are particularly bad. And one of the lead drivers of asthma."

Fletcher also praised the Metropolitan Transit System, where he is the board chair, for the agency's effort to clean the air.

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The agency is working to get rid of its diesel fleet.

"We are one of the few transit agencies in California that are completely transitioning out of diesel busses," Fletcher said. "There are only a handful of them left and they will be gone in the next few months. And so even the busses which we are replacing, which is the right thing to do, we want zero emissions, are cleaner burning than most other transit agencies in the country."



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Erik Anderson
Environment Reporter



I focus on the environment and all the implications that a changing or challenging environment has for life in Southern California. That includes climate change, endangered species, habitat, urbanization, pollution and many other topics.

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