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Jan. 29, 2022  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Arroyo Grande City Council Member Jimmy Paulding spearheads new clean air program for South County**

### **Low-income South County residents can get free air purifiers thanks to new Air Pollution Control District program**

**ARROYO GRANDE, CA** – Thanks to efforts by Arroyo Grande City Council Member Jimmy Paulding, a new air quality program will provide High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) purifiers to low-income members of specific South County communities.

Paulding, who also is an Air Pollution Control District Board Member, introduced the idea of a pilot program to assist South County residents who face increased health risks due to smoke exposure from wildfires, blowing dust and sand in the communities of Oceano and the Nipomo Mesa. At Paulding's prompting, the SLO County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) voted to allocate \$100,000 to fund the Clean Air Rooms Pilot Program, which will benefit approximately 600 South County households. HEPA devices can reduce particulate matter by more than 90 percent.

"South County residents' exposure to wildfire smoke has grown significantly over the past several years," Paulding said. "As public servants, we need to do all we can to help the most vulnerable among us, and there's no question that particulate matter is harmful to the lungs and heart. Seniors, young children, pregnant women, farm workers and people with pre-existing conditions are especially vulnerable to the harmful effects of air pollution."

While distribution details are still being finalized, the Air Pollution Control District will partner with non-profit organizations and other community groups to publicize the program and the value of HEPA devices, including in Spanish and Mixteco. Households who provide proof of income eligibility will be able to pick up the devices and receive instructions on their use at a designated site and dedicated weekend day to be determined.

Paulding recognized that the needs of South County mirrored other communities where similar pilot programs have been successfully implemented, such as in Santa Barbara County.

“Many of the most vulnerable households in our community are outdoor agricultural workers who can face both smoke from wildfires and blowing dust,” Paulding said. “HEPA purifiers can dramatically improve the quality of life for them and their families,” Paulding said.

Paulding introduced the pilot program to the APCD Board of Directors, who approved the plan Jan. 26, with intention to expand the program countywide if additional grant funding can be obtained.

Check back with the APCD website for program details as they become available at [slocleanair.org](http://slocleanair.org)

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Jimmy Paulding proudly represents the City of Arroyo Grande as an Arroyo Grande City Council Member. Keep up with Jimmy and the latest news on his campaign for 4th District County Supervisor at [jimrypaulding.org](http://jimrypaulding.org).

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