



CENTER ON RACE, POVERTY & THE ENVIRONMENT
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AIR QUALITY 101



- What causes air pollution?
- How does air pollution affect my health?
- What can I do about this?

Air pollution refers to harmful chemicals, gases, particulate matter or biological materials that damage human health and the environment.

The major pollutants from human activities include: **Sulfur Oxide** (*coal & petroleum combustion*), Nitrogen Oxide or **NOx** (*high temperature combustion, see table below*), **Carbon Monoxide** (*car exhaust*), Carbon Dioxide (*combustion and deforestation*), VOCs (*dairies, cars, see below*), **Particulate Matter** (*car emissions, combustion*).

How does air pollution affect my health?

- Ozone and fine particulate matter pollution cause premature death, exacerbate respiratory conditions, including asthma, increase hospitalizations and emergency room visits, contribute to cardiac illnesses, and increase school and work absenteeism. (American Lung Association, *State of the Air*: 2009).

TOP Sources of OZONE Pollution (VOCs + NOx):

5 Biggest Sources of VOCs

Category	Tons Per Day	Percentage
Confined Animal Facilities	65.4	14.4 %
Composting Green Waste	51	11.2 %
Car Emissions	31.1	6.8 %
Oil and Gas Production	27.9	6.1 %
Pesticides	23	5.1 %
All Sources	454.1	100 %

5 Biggest Sources of Nox

Category	Tons Per Day	Percentage
Diesel Trucks	234.4	40.7 %
Mobile Off-road Equipment	11.3 %	11.3 %
Mobile Agricultural Equipment	64	10.3 %
Light Duty Trucks	28.9	4.6 %
Cars	21.8	3.5 %
All Sources	624	100 %

Sources: San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution District 2007; Dept. Pesticide Regulation 2009

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