



August 31, 2020

California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA. 95814
Attn: AB 617
(vial email to: communityair@arb.ca.gov)

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
1990 E. Gettysburg Avenue
Fresno, CA. 93726
Attn: AB 617
(via email to: AB617@valleyair.org)

Dear AB 617 Representatives,

The City of Arvin is a small rural disadvantaged community in Kern County located in the southern-most portion of California's Central Valley. Arvin's urbanized footprint is a compact one mile east to west and two miles north to south.

Despite its small footprint, Arvin is home to 21,328 people. Agriculture is the primary source of income for over half of its residents. U.S. Census data indicates that 91.3 percent of the residents of Arvin are Latino. Arvin is a particularly disadvantaged community that has more than its share of challenges. The area's household median income in 2014 was \$35,359, significantly lower than the state's average of \$61,489 (CensusReporter.org). 36% of children live below the poverty level and the vast majority (over 91%) of the student population qualifies for the federal Free and Reduced-Price Meal Program (CA Dept. of Education online FRPM data 2015-16). **Significantly, the median age of Arvin's residents is 24.2, significantly lower than the state average of 35.6.**

The town has a CalEnviroScreen 3.0 score in the high ranges from 81 to 95 percent. Particularly onerous are factors like poverty (99th percentile), low educational achievement (97th to 99th), linguistic isolation (89th to 93rd), exposure to ozone (96th to 99%), exposure to PM 2.5 (98th to 99%), exposure to pesticides (98%) and low drinking water quality (91st to 99th%). This proposal for AB 617 is focused on the entire urbanized portion of the City from Arvin High School on the north (south of Sunset Boulevard) to El Camino Real Elementary School in the south and from Comanche Drive in the west to Tejon Highway on the east.

The City of Arvin is making strides on multiple fronts to reduce greenhouse gases, ozone, particulate matter, and energy usage. The community needs more funding to build upon that momentum to have a significant air quality impact. AB617 funding will be a major game changer for this South Kern non-attainment area. Particulate matter and ozone continue to be a significant challenge in the South Kern area, yet Arvin is often overlooked.

Arvin has an established baseline GHG inventory for 2016 and can produce measurable outcomes with AB 617 funding. The city also has the capacity and experience in implementing programs such as Urban greening, Urban Forestry, fleet electrification, and electric charging stations.

Since 2009 Central Valley office of GRID Alternatives has looked into how we could work together and collaborate in providing solar to the community. To date we have solarized 12 homes, providing much needed savings on family's energy expenses so that they can reprioritize for other purposes.

The City of Arvin has been hard hit by the recent impact of Covid-19. Covid-19 has been shown to negatively affect communities who are already plagued by poor air quality due to higher levels of asthma and respiratory conditions in its area residents.

Arvin has spent years building capacity and collaborating with non-profit and equity organizations. Arvin is ripe for the AB 617 Program and will be a shining example of best practices for the San Joaquin Valley Air District and the California Air Resources Board.

Sincerely,



Tom M. Esqueda
Executive Director
GRID ALTERNATIVES
4140 N. Brawley Ave., #108, Fresno, CA 93722