



**Jim A. Yovino**  
Superintendent

# fresno county superintendent of schools

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Via E-mail: [eberg@dir.ca.gov](mailto:eberg@dir.ca.gov)

Eric Berg  
Deputy Chief of Health

RE: Comment on Proposed Regulation Section 5141.1: Protection from Wildfire Smoke

Dear Deputy Chief Berg:

I am submitting the following comments both in my capacity as the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools and on behalf of the public school districts of Fresno County. While we greatly commend your agency's efforts to protect employees from the effects of wildfire smoke, we also ask that you consider the potential impact of the proposed regulations upon public schools.

### **Respiratory Protective Equipment**

Public schools present unique working environments because of the ongoing presence of children. If our schools are required to provide employees with N95 respirators if AQI exceeds 150, they would also have to give the children respiratory devices in an effort to ward-off the same risks. We have been advised that the N95 respirators are not designed for children. If there are alternative devices specifically designed for children, schools will need more time to prepare for securing the funding and purchasing of such equipment.

### **MERV 13 Filters**

Schools districts face a litany of statutory and regulatory requirements whenever any type of construction or modernization projects are undertaken for public school buildings. Many schools' HVAC systems will have to be upgraded for the capacity of MERV 13 filters. Designing, financing and implementing such projects could take years. We ask that you take these timing and funding logistics into consideration when formulating the final regulations.

### **AQI Issues Specific to San Joaquin Valley**

As you are aware, the San Joaquin Valley has some of the worst air pollution in the entire country. In Fresno County, our AQI exceeds 150 on many days throughout the year even without the presence of wildfire smoke. We ask that the final regulations take into account geographical locations and the precarious situations the regulations will impose upon those school districts throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

### **Training**

The final regulations should specify the time frames regarding training requirements, frequency, and whether the training should be provided on an ongoing basis.

Again, we fully appreciate your efforts to protect California employees from the hazards of wildfire smoke. We just ask that you consider the unique circumstances of California public schools and an extended time frame in which school districts will be expected to complete full implementation.

Sincerely,

Jim A. Yovino  
Fresno County Superintendent of Schools

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