

**State of California
Air Resources Board
Board Item Summary**

Item # 21-1-6: Public Meeting to Consider the San Joaquin Valley Agricultural Burning Assessment

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends the California Air Resources Board (CARB or Board) concur with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's (District) agricultural burning prohibition postponements, as set forth in the District 2020 Staff Report and Recommendations on Agricultural Burning (2020 Report), through August 31, 2021. Staff are also recommending the Board delegate the Executive Officer the authority to provide concurrence as required beyond the initial six-month period through January 1, 2025, provided that the District implement additional measures as detailed in the CARB Staff Recommendations with the aim of facilitating a near-complete phase-out of agricultural burning by January 1, 2025.

Discussion:

Agricultural burning is prohibited in the San Joaquin Valley (Valley) under Senate Bill (SB) 705 (Florez 2003, codified at California Health and Safety Code 41855.5 *et seq.*). Under SB 705, the District can postpone the burn ban for some crop categories and materials if the District determines certain criteria detailed under SB 705 apply, and CARB concurs with the District's determinations. While the District has phased out agricultural burning pursuant to SB 705 for many crop categories and materials, burning continues for some categories where alternatives to burning have been more challenging to implement.

The District adopted the 2020 Report on December 17, 2020. The 2020 Report includes new agricultural burn prohibitions beyond those already in effect in the Valley and requests CARB concurrence on proposed postponement of burn prohibitions for the remaining crop categories and materials. CARB's previous concurrence, granted for the District's 2015 determinations, expired on December 31, 2020 before CARB staff could complete its review of the 2020 Report. In order to fully assess the 2020 Report and ensure an effective public process, on January 3, 2021, CARB provided concurrence to postpone the agricultural burn ban for limited circumstances to avoid economic loss to farmers for a limited period through February 24, 2021.

The District has made considerable progress in reducing agricultural burning since the passage of SB 705, and the 2020 Report is a significant step in the right direction. In particular, the District's Alternatives to Open Burning of Agricultural Material Incentive Program, since its inception in November 2018, has borne out the feasibility of soil incorporation and highlighted the important role incentives play in making alternatives accessible to Valley agricultural operators. CARB believes that partnerships between the District, CARB, other State and federal agencies, the agricultural industry, and Valley

residents and other stakeholders can continue and accelerate this transformation, paving a viable path to near-complete phase-out of agricultural burning in the Valley by January 1, 2025.

Summary and Impacts:

Not applicable.