

State Air Resources Board will include El Dorado, Placer counties

By Jim Sanders, Sacramento Bee

The Sacramento region will get a seat on the California Air Resources Board under legislation signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown this week.

Assembly Bill 146 will expand the ARB from 11 to 12 members, with the new seat reserved for a representative from the Sacramento, Placer, Yolo-Solano, El Dorado or Feather River air districts.

Sacramento Democratic Assemblyman Roger Dickinson, who proposed AB146, noted that the Sacramento region had been the largest major metropolitan area in California not assured a seat on the state air board.

Key duties of the Air Resources Board include controlling vehicle emissions and reducing greenhouse gas emissions as required under landmark legislation passed in 2006.

As part of that mission, the board is about to launch a controversial carbon trading market for allowances to emit greenhouse gases in California.

The Sacramento region has struggled for years to meet federal air quality standards for ozone and particulates, so the issue of representation on the ARB has been particularly acute to local officials.

All ARB members are appointed by the governor and are confirmed by the Senate. Board members serve part time, except for the chair.

Rural counties had opposed Dickinson's bill, arguing that giving the Sacramento region an ARB seat would exacerbate an imbalance giving urban air districts far more power than rural districts on the board.