Air Monitoring Network Expansion – County Selection

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Air Program
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AMN Expansion Overview

On March 12, 2026, the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) released the Air Monitoring Network (AMN) Expansion: A Prioritization Framework. This document outlines DPR's proposal to expand the AMN through the conversion of existing monitoring sites, the addition of new long-term monitoring sites, and the development of a mobile monitoring station for short-term deployment. Using the updated approach defined in the site selection standard operating procedure (SOP), DPR identified a final list of 29 unique communities in Imperial, San Joaquin, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, and Tulare Counties as proposed monitoring locations. DPR recommended placing four monitoring stations within the communities identified through the ranking process, with no more than one station per county.

Based on the AMN expansion analysis and public comments, Imperial, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tulare Counties have been selected to receive an AMN station.

AMN Expansion Analysis

When evaluating potential locations for an air monitoring station, DPR applies a site selection procedure designed to assess communities across the state.[1] This evaluation produced an initial list of 71 unique communities, identified based on geographic location and proximity to areas with high use of soil fumigants or organophosphate pesticides based on the 2020 – 2024 Pesticide Use Report (PUR) data. These communities were distributed across 14 California counties. After applying additional screening criteria, the initial list was narrowed to 29 unique communities located within five counties: Imperial, San Joaquin, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, and Tulare.

DPR initially prioritized counties for monitoring station placement, from highest to lowest priority, as follows: Tulare, Stanislaus, Imperial, Siskiyou, and San Joaquin (Table 1). Tulare, Stanislaus, and Imperial counties were ranked first, second, and third because they had the highest, second highest, and third highest numbers of high-priority communities, respectively. Although San Joaquin County had one more community on the final prioritization list than Siskiyou County, DPR prioritized Siskiyou due to its greater number of communities on the initial list of 71 unique communities and to address the absence of monitoring stations in the state's northern region.

[1] Communities are defined as any population center recognized by the 2020 U.S. Census. This includes incorporated places, such as towns and cities, as well as census-designated places (CDPs), which are unincorporated rural communities.

Table 1. DPR's proposed list of counties prioritized for future AMN stations, with a rank closer to 1 indicating higher priority.

County	Number of Top 50 Communities	Number of Final List Communities	Priority Category by DPR
Tulare	27	13	1
Stanislaus	13	8	2
Imperial	6	5	3
Siskiyou	6	1	4
San Joaquin	2	2	5

Public Comments

Concurrent with the release of the AMN Expansion document, DPR opened a 60-day public comment period (March 12–May 11, 2026) to solicit feedback on the proposed rankings. DPR appreciates the comments received and has reviewed and considered all comments. Responses to comments are provided in the Response to Comments attachment. Similar comments were grouped together, and a representative comment was selected to reflect each group.

During the comment period, DPR asked the public to rank the prioritization of five counties for placement of an AMN station. Members of the public were also invited to recommend additional counties they believed warranted a monitoring station. DPR averaged the scores submitted for each county and reordered the prioritization list accordingly. Based on this feedback, commenters ranked the counties, from highest to lowest priority, as follows: Tulare, Stanislaus, Imperial, San Joaquin, and Siskiyou.

Consistent with DPR's initial prioritization, Tulare, Stanislaus, and Imperial Counties were ranked first, second, and third. However, commenters placed a higher priority on San Joaquin County than on Siskiyou County. Several commenters expressed concerns about establishing a monitoring station in Siskiyou County. Although Siskiyou County had more communities on the initial list of 71 unique communities than San Joaquin County, only one Siskiyou community remained on the final list. Multiple commenters suggested that DPR deploy the new mobile monitoring station in Siskiyou County rather than install a permanent AMN station. Other counties, such as Kings and Monterey, were recommended for an additional site; however, the number of comments recommending counties outside Tulare, Stanislaus, Imperial, San Joaquin, and Siskiyou was comparatively limited. Monterey County was not selected as the county has a permanent AMN site in Pajaro. Kings County was not selected because ranked communities did not have a school within 1 mile of the community boundary or they did not have other ranked communities within 10 miles of the community boundary (site selection standard operating procedure).

In consideration of the public comments received, DPR has selected Tulare, Stanislaus, Imperial, and San Joaquin counties to receive a new AMN station.

Next Steps

Within each of the four counties, the specific community and site placement (i.e. placement of the air monitor within the county) must be determined. DPR will contact potential AMN placement sites based on the final list of communities. Accordingly, DPR is initiating a second public comment period and requesting feedback on the community ranking for each of the selected counties for placement of the air monitor within the county. Site-specific considerations for the rankings of proposed communities within each county are detailed in the attached Community Ranking document. For each community, maps are provided showing annual average use of fumigants and organophosphates, along with wind roses that provide an overview of wind speed and direction in the area. The maps also identify potential sites within each community. These materials are intended to support public input during the comment period. The ranking document and associated maps are included in the attached document.

The public comment period will be open for 60 days (November 18, 2026 – January 17, 2027). Although DPR will target school sites, DPR will also consider specific non-school sites suggested by the public. Any non-school sites must meet U.S. EPA siting criteria to be considered for placement of a monitoring station. DPR will be reaching out to representatives of communities for meetings and is also open for meetings with other interested parties to hear local input on potential site selections.

DPR will use the final list of communities in each county to target sites. If there is no willing sampling partner or if there are no locations within the site that meet the US EPA siting criteria, DPR intends to contact the sites in the next ranked community until a sampling agreement is in place. Therefore, the top ranked communities may not be selected for a new AMN station. DPR will publish the list of California communities where the AMN stations were installed on the Air Monitoring website.

Timeline

Figure 1: DPR's AMN Expansion Timeline

