

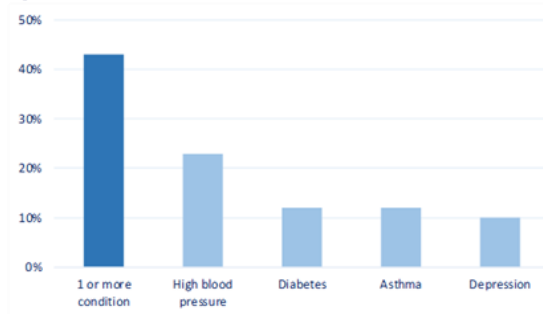
SEPTEMBER 2023

## FACT SHEET—Clearing the Air: Fresno Health Impact Assessment 2023 Community Survey

South Fresno residents experience high rates of health issues and air and noise pollution, and express strong support for public interventions to mitigate environmental issues.

The Community and Labor Center conducted a representative survey of 1,766 south Fresno residents. Findings suggest high rates of self-reported chronic health conditions (43%), trouble resting due to air pollution (61%) and truck traffic/noise (49%), and support for public investment re-routing truck traffic (85%).

Figure 1. South Fresno Residents' Chronic Health Conditions



Source: UC Merced Community and Labor Center analysis of Fresno Health Impact Assessment Study, Community Survey

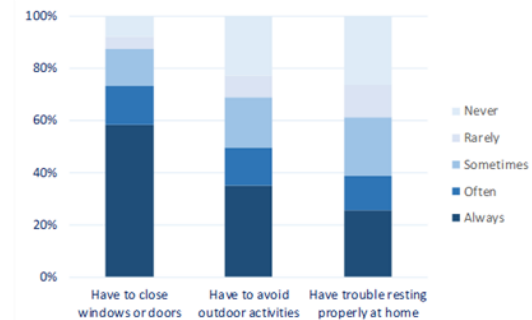
**Background.** Fresno County is characterized by some of the nation's greatest environmental inequalities. In 2022, Fresno ranked highest for short-term particle pollution and second-highest for year-round particle pollution.<sup>1</sup>

In 2017, the State of California established the Community Air Protection Program (CAPP). Under AB 617, the CAPP "requires community-focused action to reduce air pollution and improve public health" in communities most impacted by air pollution.<sup>2</sup>

In 2022, the UC Merced Community and Labor Center was commissioned by the City of Fresno, under CAPP, to conduct a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) in a south Fresno neighborhood near a proposed major warehouse expansion site.

<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.lung.org/research/sota>

Figure 2. As a Result of Air Pollution, South Fresno Residents



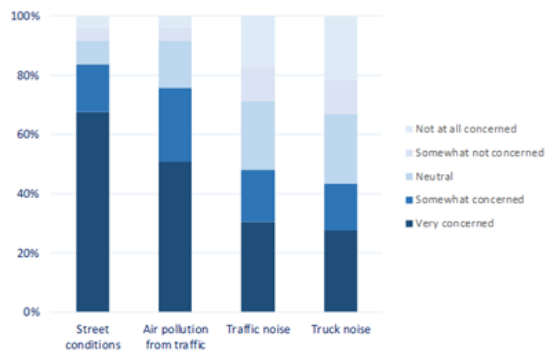
Source: UC Merced Community and Labor Center analysis of Fresno Health Impact Assessment Study, Community Survey

As a part of the Fresno HIA, in 2022 the Center conducted a random sample survey of 1,766 south Fresno residents on environment, health and civic engagement. The aim of the survey was to better understand local community health and to inform potential strategies to reroute trucks out of the existing residential zones and other sensitive receptors.

**Key Findings.** The south Fresno community survey finds high rates of **chronic health conditions**; the vast majority of residents are concerned about the **environment**; **air pollution and truck noise** negatively impact health, quality of life, and work; a high level of support for **rerouting traffic** away from local streets; and a **willingness to engage** in public discussions on these issues.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/news/community-emissions-reduction-program-arvinlamont-ab-617-community-approved-california-air>.

Figure 3. South Fresno Residents' Environmental Concerns



Source: UC Merced Community and Labor Center analysis of Fresno Health Impact Assessment Study, Community Survey

**Chronic Health Conditions.** Over two in five (43%) residents were diagnosed with at least one chronic health condition including: stroke, heart failure, heart attack, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, asthma, emphysema, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or depression (see Figure 1). The most prevalent chronic health conditions include high blood pressure (23%), diabetes (12%), asthma (12%), and depression (10%).

**High Air Pollution.** The California Environmental Protection Agency (2023) finds high concentrations of particle pollution are associated with increased hospitalizations, asthma attacks, cardiovascular disease, lung cancer, COPD, heart attacks, and premature death.<sup>3</sup>

Our findings suggest that unhealthy levels of local air pollution impact south Fresno residents' health and quality of life. The majority of residents expressed regularly (sometimes, often or always) having to close their windows or doors (88%) and having to avoid outdoor activities (69%) due to air pollution in their area (see Figure 2).

Over three in five (61%) south Fresno residents reported regularly having trouble resting properly at home due to air pollution. Nearly half (49%) reported regularly having trouble resting properly at home due to traffic and truck noise.

### High Support for Government Investments.

Residents were highly supportive of government investments that address their environmental concerns. Over four in five (85%) residents supported investments of public funds to build new roads that redirected truck traffic away from local streets.

More than nine in ten (91%) of residents who reported they regularly could not rest due to air pollution, traffic or truck noise supported investments in rerouting traffic. This was a much higher rate than those who did not have trouble resting due to those same issues (76%).

When we asked how important it was for the government to address several environmental issues on a scale from one ("very unimportant") to five ("very important"), the vast majority responded it is somewhat or very important to address poor street conditions (88%), air quality (84%), climate change (79%), and noise pollution (64%).

**Environmental Concern.** Most south Fresno residents reported being concerned about environmental conditions. When asked about their concern on a scale from one ("not at all concerned") to five ("very concerned"), the vast majority expressed "some" or "very high" concern over poor street conditions (84%), air pollution from traffic (76%), and traffic noise (48%) and truck (44%) noise (see Figure 3).

**Civic Engagement.** At the same time, many residents expressed willingness to take action. Nearly one-third of respondents said they would be willing to attend local meetings to discuss climate change adaptation strategies (32%), truck traffic and air pollution (31%) and the impact of labor unions in creating better jobs and standards (34%).

### Mission Statement

The UC Merced Community and Labor Center conducts research and education on issues of community, labor and employment, in the San Joaquin Valley and beyond.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/pm-pollution/health-and-environmental-effects-particulate-matter-pm>