



Smog blankets the Suisun Marsh as cows roam near Cordelia Street in Suisun City, Tuesday, Aug. 16, 2022. (Aaron Rosenblatt/Daily Republic)

Fairfield high schoolers to be part of Youth Air Protectors program

By **Todd R. Hansen**

FAIRFIELD — Sustainable Solano is launching a program designed to improve air quality but also engage youth.

Youth Air Protectors is a high school-based program.

“The Youth Air Protectors program will engage high school students around air pollution. Each team of students will make a five-month commitment to the program, with the first group starting work this fall,” organizers said in a statement.

“Youth Air Protectors will collect air quality data in Fairfield, analyze the sustainability of Fairfield’s urban planning and reflect on how environmental hazards disproportionately impact different communities. Students will play a pivotal role in spreading air quality awareness in Fairfield through community education and air sensor distribution and will help spearhead the movement for a more walkable and sustainable future through city beautification projects,” the statement said.

The program is funded with a three-year, \$260,000 grant from the California Air Resources Board and is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide initiative that puts billions in cap-and-trade dollars toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving public health and the environment.

Sustainable Solano was one of 33 community organizations and five Native American tribes that received a total of \$10 million in grants for projects to help reduce air pollution with community-focused solutions. It targets disadvantaged communities, and has the added goal of strengthening the economy.

“Residents of Fairfield are dealing with an environmental burden that, in large part, remains unseen by the naked eye — poor air quality. Fairfield is affected by air pollutants from the traffic along Interstate 80 and Highway 12, as well as the seasonal damage to air quality from wildfires. City residents have increased rates of asthma and higher rates of cardiovascular disease, both of which are directly linked to poor air quality,” the statement said.

The ultimate goal is to collect the data and then “assist the people of Fairfield in shaping an Air Quality Action Plan that will serve as a blueprint for continued efforts in addressing air quality within the city and as a model for other cities,” the statement said.

For more information on the air quality program or to apply for the Youth Air Protectors, visit <https://sustainablesolano.org/air-quality/>.

Sustainable Solano is a countywide nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting initiatives such as sustainable landscaping, local food, resilient neighborhoods, youth leadership, sustaining conversations and community gardens for the good of the whole.

Printed in the August 19, 2022 edition on page A3 | Published on August 18, 2022 | Last Modified on August 18, 2022 at 3:44 am

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