



October 16, 2026

California Teachers Association (CTA)
Position Letter: Support for SB-35, the K-12 Smoke Preparedness Act
Introduced by Senator Sasha Renee Perez (D-25)

Dear Senator Sasha Renee Perez,

On behalf of the California Teachers Association (CTA), I am writing to express our support for SB-35, the K-12 Smoke Preparedness Act. This legislation is an important step toward protecting the health and safety of California's students, teachers, and school employees from the harmful effects of wildfire smoke.

Wildfires and poor air quality continue to create challenges for schools throughout California. Exposure to smoke and airborne particles can affect students' health, disrupt attendance, and make it more difficult for students to concentrate and participate in the classroom. Educators and school staff also deserve safe working conditions, especially in communities that regularly experience wildfire smoke.

CTA supports SB-35 because it would establish a three-year pilot program to provide grants to up to 50 public schools for portable HEPA air cleaners, replacement filters, and staff training. We particularly support prioritizing schools with significant smoke exposure, inadequate air filtration systems, and limited resources. This approach recognizes that not all school districts have the same ability to protect their students and employees from poor air quality.

We also appreciate the bill's requirements for maintenance plans, itemized applications, spending accountability, and a final report evaluating the program's costs, challenges, and results. These measures will help ensure that participating schools use the resources responsibly and provide information to guide future decisions about expanding the program.

CTA recognizes that a three-year pilot program will not address every school's air quality needs. However, SB-35 is a meaningful first step toward creating healthier learning environments and improving schools' preparedness for wildfire-related emergencies. We encourage the Legislature to consider the program's results when determining whether additional schools should receive support in the future.

For these reasons, the California Teachers Association supports SB-35, the K-12 Smoke Preparedness Act, and respectfully urges the committee to vote in favor of the bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Karla Alcala
California Teachers Association (CTA)
UC Merced Legislative Simulation