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San Joaquin Valley communities will be eligible for federal grants for projects that improve the Valley's air quality and public health under a congressional bill introduced on Wednesday.

The bill, introduced by Reps. Jerry McNerney, D-Stockton, and Jim Costa, D-Fresno, would target areas with poor air quality and above-average child asthma rates.

To be eligible for federal grants, the area must meet specified national ambient air quality standards for ozone, have particular emission levels from agricultural sources, meet or exceed national asthma rates, and suffer from high unemployment rates, according to a news release from McNerney's office. The area from San Joaquin County to Kern County fails to meet national air quality standards, McNerney added.

The bill will go to Congress for its consideration.