

**Air Resources Board: Office of the Ombudsman
Summer 2006**

The Office of the Ombudsman at the Air Resources Board provides a different experience for someone who is interested in the complexities of environmental policy. This office is responsible for dealing with industry and anyone who is affected by an air quality regulation. They are in direct communication with trucking companies, auto manufacturers, and consumer product manufacturers, all of whom are often unhappy with regulations that the agency is enacting. Another important role that this office does is that is responsible for the Air Quality Education Program (AQEP), an outreach effort to teach children and educators about the importance of protecting our air.

As an intern, my duties involved primarily work on AQEP. I participated in outreach events and gave presentations to small and large audiences. I helped develop lesson plans that worked within the current framework of established standards. We traveled to various sites, including colleges, and hosted booths that taught basic lessons about air pollution. The work on the education aspect was very interesting, rewarding, and allowed me to connect with many people from different agencies and schools, but I was able to do other projects as well. I worked on the Ombudsman's webpage, which I updated and in one case, redesigned entirely. I participated in training for using a hydrogen fuel cell car and several writing projects, such as legislative summaries and analysis. The work was varied and the supervisors were very accommodating – they were eager for me to learn about topics that I found interesting, and gave me time to meet with other divisions to explore all available options.