

BOARD MEETING DATE: June 5, 2020

AGENDA NO. 9

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs, and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the April 2020 outreach activities of the Legislative, Public Affairs, and Media Office, which includes Major Events, Community Events/Public Meetings, Environmental Justice Update, Speakers Bureau/Visitor Services, Communications Center, Public Information Center, Business Assistance, Media Relations, and Outreach to Community Groups and Federal, State, and Local Governments.

COMMITTEE: No Committee Review

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
Receive and file.

Wayne Nastri
Executive Officer

DJA:FW:LTO:KH:DM:lm:ar

BACKGROUND

This report summarizes the activities of the Legislative, Public Affairs, and Media Office for April. The report includes: Major Events; Community Events/Public Meetings, Environmental Justice Update, Speakers Bureau/Visitor Services, Communications Center, Public Information Center, Business Assistance, Media Relations, and Outreach to Community Groups and Governments.

MAJOR EVENTS (HOSTED AND SPONSORED)

Each year, South Coast AQMD staff engage in holding and sponsoring several major events throughout South Coast AQMD's four county areas to promote, educate, and provide important information to the public regarding reducing air pollution, protecting public health, improving air quality, and the economy.

No major events were held or sponsored in April due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

COMMUNITY EVENTS/PUBLIC MEETINGS

Each year, South Coast AQMD staff engage with thousands of residents, providing valuable information about the agency, incentive programs, and ways individuals can help reduce air pollution through events and meetings sponsored solely by South Coast AQMD or in partnership with others. Attendees typically receive the following information:

- Tips on reducing their exposure to smog and its health effects;
- Clean air technologies and their deployment;
- Invitations or notices of conferences, seminars, workshops, and other public events;
- South Coast AQMD incentive programs;
- Ways to participate in South Coast AQMD's rules and policy development; and
- Assistance in resolving air pollution-related problems.

South Coast AQMD staff attended and/or provided information and updates at the following April events and meetings:

April 16

Staff participated in a virtual Earth Day event hosted by Altadena Heritage which featured sustainable living tips. Staff provided information on South Coast AQMD operations and resources available during the COVID-19 pandemic.

April 22

Staff participated in the San Bernardino County Department of Education Alliance for Education Virtual Earth Day event. The virtual event utilized the educational web platform NEPRIS to broadcast environmental presentations throughout the day. South Coast AQMD staff presented on air quality issues at the high school level through the "Why Air Quality Matters" program and for elementary students via the Clean Air Ranger Education program.

Staff participated in the "Drive Electric Earth Day" virtual event sponsored by Plug In America, the Sierra Club, and Electric Auto Association. The event took place on Facebook Live and featured guest speakers, short videos, and a live musical performance.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATE

The following are key environmental justice-related activities in which staff participated in April. These events involve communities affected disproportionately from adverse air quality impacts.

CEJA Webinar

Staff participated in the California Environmental Justice Alliance's (CEJA) webinar on April 1, "Designing Equitable Policy: How the Advancement of Environmental Justice and Community Leadership in Your Network." The event focused on environmental justice advocates working toward community health, advancing related civil rights in state, and local decision-making, as well as related legislation.

U.S. EPA TRI Webinar

Staff participated in the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) National Analysis Webinar (Air, Land, Water) hosted by the U.S. EPA on April 3. The webinar introduced the basics of the TRI program, explained key findings from EPA's analysis for the 2018 year, and showed how to get TRI data for any location within the United States.

UCI Environmental Justice Collaboration

Staff collaborated with the University of California Irvine's Center for Land, Environment, and Natural Resources (CLEANR) students and professors to discuss environmental justice programs and AB 617 on April 8. The discussion supported implementation of environmental justice legislation and environmental justice program implementation.

Staff participated in a virtual meeting with Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV) AB 617 Community Steering Committee representatives (Leadership Counsel, Alianza, CCV, Pueblo Unido, Office of Assemblymember Garcia, Loma Linda University and residents of the ECV) to follow-up on the proposed charter, as well as CARB updates and the Technology Assessment Survey.

DV EJ Task Force Meeting

Staff participated in the Eastern Coachella Valley Environmental Justice Task Force virtual meeting on April 22. There was strong participation in the virtual meeting including, Comite Civico del Valle, the State Water Board, Department of Pesticide Regulations, Coachella Valley School Districts, 29 Palms Tribal Environmental Protection Agency, Coachella Mosquito Vector Control, City of Indio, CARB, and the Riverside Agricultural Commissioner. The discussion focused on how Coachella Valley communities are coping with COVID-19, identifying environmental and social justice issues arising due to the pandemic, and identifying needs for assistance. Staff updated the Task Force on how South Coast AQMD is moving forward with AB 617 and announced dates for upcoming AB 617 Community Steering Committee meetings.

SPEAKERS BUREAU/VISITOR SERVICES

South Coast AQMD regularly receives requests for staff to speak on air quality-related issues from a wide variety of organizations, such as trade associations, chambers of commerce, community-based groups, schools, hospitals, and health-based

organizations. South Coast AQMD also hosts visitors from around the world who meet with staff on a wide range of air quality issues.

Due to COVID-19, there were no visits or speaker's bureau requests.

COMMUNICATION CENTER STATISTICS

The Communication Center handles calls on South Coast AQMD's main line, 1-800-CUT-SMOG® line, the Spanish line, and after-hours calls. Listed are the calls received in April:

South AQMD Main Line	2,013
and 1-800-CUT-SMOG®	
Spanish Language Line	26
Clean Air Connections	9
Total Calls	<u>2,048</u>

PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER STATISTICS

The Public Information Center (PIC) handles phone calls and walk-in requests for general information. Information for April is summarized below:

Received by PIC Staff	5
Automated System	<u>436</u>
Total Calls	441

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

South Coast AQMD notifies local businesses of proposed regulations so they can participate in the agency's rule development process. South Coast AQMD also works with other agencies and governments to identify efficient, cost-effective ways to reduce air pollution, and shares that information broadly. Staff provided personalized assistance to small businesses, both over the telephone and via on-site consultation, as summarized below.

- Provided permit application assistance to 223 companies; and,
- Processed 49 Air Quality Permit Checklists.

Types of businesses assisted:

Auto Body Shops	Gas Stations	Furniture Refinishing Facilities
Auto Repair Centers	Restaurants	Construction Firms
Warehouses	Plating Facilities	Architecture Firms
Manufacturing Facilities	Dry Cleaners	Engineering Firms

MEDIA RELATIONS

The Media Office handles all South Coast AQMD outreach and communications with television, radio, newspapers and all other publications and media operations.

- Major Media Interactions: 65
- Press Releases: 5
- News Carousel Write Ups: 2

Major Media Topics for April

- American Lung Association State of the Air Report: An Op-Ed submitted on behalf of Wayne Nastri, Executive Officer was printed in the Los Angeles Daily News and re-printed in other Southern California News Group publications. Mr. Nastri participated in a teleconference with the Lung Association about the report and answered questions from the Orange County Register, Sacramento Bee, and KNX. News pitches were sent to Spectrum News 1, Bloomberg, KNX, KPCC/LAist, Reuters, FOX 11, Telemundo, Univision, AP, KPCC, KCBS/KCAL, KNX, KTLA, NBC Palm Springs, City News Service, KESQ, NBC4, and ABC7. The LAist/KPCC sent questions about the effects of air pollution on San Bernardino and Riverside counties, and written responses were provided.
- Ozone Exceedances and Air Quality: KPCC, NPR, and KNX requested additional interviews as air quality worsened. Staff conducted interviews with all three.
- Pending Permits Under New COVID-19 Permit Process – The Desert Sun requested information on pending permits which fall under the new prioritized permitting process. Written response was sent.
- Budget Actions Due to COVID-19 – LA Times was looking for information on the revenue loss as a result of not increasing CPI fees. Information was sent to reporter.
- Compliance and Rule Updates during COVID-19 – LA Times requested information on the number of inspections in comparison to the same time last year as a result of COVID-19. Reporter spoke to staff.
- Tesoro Refinery – Law360 requested information regarding a Court of Appeals rejection to a challenge of the AQMD's EIS for the Tesoro refinery project. Response was sent to reporter.
- EPA Title Plot Data – LA Magazine submitted questions regarding EPA's title plot data. Response was sent to reporter.
- World Sweeper – Following up from a prior request, responses were sent to World Sweeper Magazine on questions regarding equipment permitting.
- Air Quality Trends – NPR inquired about air quality trends and additional background information. Staff participated in an interview.

- AQI Map – Spectrum News 1 inquired about yellow zones on the AQI map. Response was sent to reporter.
- Regional Air Patterns – Wirecutter requested background information and explanation on regional air patterns. Staff working on response.

Release and Announcements

- The Fight Of Our Lives To Protect Our Community – April 16, 2020 – Letter on COVID-19 Disparities by Governing Board Chairman Dr. Burke for The Sentinel.
- Nunca Ha Sido Tan Importante Luchar Por Un Aire Limpio – April 17, 2020 – Letter on COVID-19 Disparities by Board Members Perez and Delgado for La Opinion.
- Despite some relief from bad air quality, there is a lot of work to do, April 21, 2020 – Op-ed by staff in response to the ALA Report published in the LA Daily News and other Southern California News Group papers.
- South Coast AQMD Responds to American Lung Association State of the Air Report with Air Quality Achievements – April 21, 2020 – Agency response to the ALA State of the Air Report.
- South Coast AQMD awards Volvo Construction Equipment \$2M to test electric heavy equipment in California – April 23, 2020 – Announced a \$2M grant to Volvo Construction to invest in electric, zero-emission construction equipment.

News Carousel Write-Ups

- South Coast AQMD Advisory for Regulated Companies and Other Entities Impacted by COVID-19 – April 15, 2020 – Outlined temporary changes in regulatory activities due to the COVID-19 situation.
- Article – L.A. coronavirus clean air streak has already come to an end. Here's why – April 30th, 2020 – Article published in the LA Times with quotes from Dr. Burke and staff.

Social Media Notable Posts

- World Health Day (4/7): 1,250 Twitter Impressions
- AQ Forecast (4/19): 26,087 Twitter Impressions
- AQ Forecast (4/18): 23,792 Twitter Impressions
- AQ Forecast (4/26): 2,891 Twitter Impressions
- LA Times Article: Burke Quote (4/28): 1,153 Twitter Impressions

OUTREACH TO COMMUNITY GROUPS AND FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Communications was conducted with elected officials or staff from the following cities:

Alhambra	Huntington Beach	San Dimas
Anaheim	Industry	San Gabriel
Arcadia	Irwindale	San Marino
Azusa	Jurupa Valley	Santa Ana
Baldwin Park	La Cañada Flintridge	Sierra Madre
Buena Park	La Habra	South El Monte
Claremont	La Puente	South Pasadena
Coachella	La Verne	Temple City
Cypress	Lake Forest	Tustin
Diamond Bar	Long Beach	Walnut
Duarte	Monrovia	West Covina
El Monte	Monterey Park	Westminster
Fountain Valley	Newport Beach	Yorba Linda
Fullerton	Placentia	
Glendale	Rosemead	

Communications was conducted with elected officials and/or staff from the following state and federal offices:

- U.S. Representative Pete Aguilar
- U.S. Representative Nanette Barragán
- Senator Ben Allen
- Senator Ling Ling Chang
- Senator Lena Gonzalez
- Senator Gerry Hill
- Senator Anthony Portantino
- Senator Susan Rubio
- Senator Henry Stern
- Assembly Member Tyler Diep
- Assembly Member Tom Daly
- Assembly Member Phillip Chen
- Assembly Member Ed Chau
- Assembly Member Cristina Garcia
- Assembly Member Blanca Rubio

Staff represented South Coast AQMD and/or provided updates or a presentation to the following governmental agencies and business organizations:

Alhambra Chamber of Commerce
Association of California Cities, Orange County
Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce
Building Industry Association, Orange County
California Hydrogen Business Council
California Fuel Cell Partnership
Greater Lakewood Chamber of Commerce

Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce
Mountain Transit Board
Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce
Omnitrans
Orange County Business Council
Orange County Community Relations Collaborative
Riverside Board of Supervisors
Riverside County Department of Waste Resources
Riverside County Waste Management
San Bernardino Chamber of Commerce
San Bernardino Board of Supervisors
San Bernardino County Regional Parks
San Bernardino County Small Business Resources
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
San Bernardino International Airport
San Gabriel Valley City Managers Association
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership
Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce
Southern California Association of Governments
Western Community Energy
Western Riverside Council of Governments

Staff represented South Coast AQMD and/or provided updates or a presentation to the following community and educational groups and organizations:

Active San Gabriel Valley
Asian Pacific Islander Forward Movement
CHA CHA Altadenians for Clean, Healthy Air
Chapman University
Lideres Campesinas
Plug-in America
Rowland Heights Unified School District
Santa Ana College
Santa Ana Unified School District
Sierra Club
Sustainable Claremont
University of California, Irvine
Walnut Unified School District