

BOARD MEETING DATE: May 1, 2020

AGENDA NO. 9

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the March 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

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## **BACKGROUND**

This report summarizes the activities of the Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Office for March 2020. 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)**

Every year South Coast AQMD staff engage in holding and sponsoring a number of major events throughout the 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.

### **March 21**

South Coast AQMD cancelled its "Cesar Chavez Day of Remembrance: Safeguarding Communities Through Clean Air" event due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As necessary,

confirmed attendees for the event were promptly notified via email and telephone call of the event cancellation.

## **COMMUNITY EVENTS/PUBLIC MEETINGS**

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 March 2020 events:

### **March 6 & 7**

Staff exhibited at the second annual STEA<sup>2</sup>M Fair at the Pomona Fairplex which drew more than 23,000 attendees. The event focused on science, technology, engineering, art, agriculture, and math to inspire youth with hands-on science activities and information. Staff demonstrated how air pollution is formed in the South Coast Air Basin with a dry ice experiment and provided information on air quality issues and South Coast AQMD.

### **March 7**

Staff exhibited at the Los Angeles County Public Health Resource Fair held at Avocado Heights Park. Attendees were provided with information on air quality issues and South Coast AQMD, how to report air quality complaints through 1-800-CUT-SMOG and the website, and the apps for iPhone and Android.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATE**

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

### **March 4**

The Environmental Justice Community Partnership (EJCP) Advisory Council held their first quarterly meeting for 2020. The Advisory Council discussed 2019 Accomplishments and 2020 Goals and Objectives. Staff presented on compliance issues related to auto body shops, including the types of equipment used, permit requirements, applicable rules and the inspections process. Additionally, Vallerie Gonzalez, EJCP

Member and Manager for the Center for Sustainable Energy, presented on the Solar on Multifamily Affordable Housing program. The next EJCP Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for June 3, 2020.

### **March 25**

AB 617 staff participated in a multi-agency discussion on the Salton Sea Management Plan with the State Water Board. Agencies provided preliminary comments on the Plan. South Coast AQMD's main concerns were regarding outreach to the residents, specifically those impacted in the North Shore area. South Coast AQMD will follow up on the issues of concern discussed with the State Water Board.

AB 617 staff participated in a meeting with Dr. Paul English, to discuss his newest project in the Eastern Coachella Valley – a survey on asthma, respiratory, and cardiovascular diseases. He is requesting an opportunity to collaborate with the AB 617 Community Steering Committee in the future.

### **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.

### **March 6**

Staff organized and implemented briefing and tour for approximately 40 attendees representing business and non-profit organizations, largely from the Chinese-American community. The event included a presentation on South Coast AQMD with a focus on incentive programs, a display of electric landscaping equipment, and a tour of alternative fuel vehicles and related charging and fueling stations.

### **March 11**

Staff presented to an economics class at the University of Southern California. The lecture focused on how the costs and benefits of air pollution control are calculated for planning and rules development.

### **COMMUNICATION CENTER STATISTICS**

The Communication Center handles daily and after-hour calls on South Coast AQMD's main line, 1-800-CUT-SMOG® and Spanish language telephone line. The total number of calls received in March is summarized below.

South Coast AQMD's Main Line and	
1-800-CUT-SMOG®	2,851
Spanish-Language Line	<u>17</u>
Total Calls	2,868

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER STATISTICS**

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

Calls Received by PIC Staff	162
Calls to Automated System	<u>462</u>
Total Calls	634

Visitor Transactions	64
Email Advisories Sent emails	17,969

## **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 provides personalized assistance to small businesses, both over the telephone and via on-site consultation, as summarized below.

- Provided permit application assistance to 258 companies;
- Conducted seven free on-site consultations; and
- Processed 46 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. The March reports are listed as follows:

- Major Media Interactions: 58
- Press Releases: 8
- News Carousel Write Ups: 4

## **Major Media Topics for March**

- Rendering Plant Odors – Public Service Community Student Newspaper reached out to see if students could schedule an interview regarding odors from Farmer Johns rendering plant. Awaiting questions from student.
- Voter District Authorization Bill – Los Angeles Times requested a status update and details on our Voter District Authorization bill. An update was sent to the reporter.
- Alt Car Expo – Auto Features requested slides and information from staff presentation. Information was provided to the reporter.
- Emissions in Paramount – Spectrum News sent questions requesting information on emissions data in Paramount. Information was provided to the reporter.
- Aliso Canyon – Documentarian Jake Viramontez requested an interview to discuss air sample data that was collected/analyzed during the Aliso Canyon incident. Due to ongoing subpoenas, staff was unable to currently participate.
- Ports MOU – Inside EPA requested a copy of the staff presentation given at the Governing Board meeting regarding the Ports MOU. A copy was provided.
- CalMatters – Requested an update on South Coast AQMD’s lawsuit with Moreno Valley over the World Logistics Center. Provided reporter with a copy of the settlement agreement.
- Capital & Main – Reporter requested information on why remediation stopped at 1078 Hicks Avenue and any possible inspections. Information was sent to the reporter.
- Quemetco – Southern California News Group inquired about Quemetco’s applications for permits. Responses to the reporter’s questions were provided.
- Replace Your Ride – Auto Features followed up on a previous inquiry, requesting the number of vehicles replaced as part of the Replace Your Ride program. Information was provided to the reporter.
- The Right to Breathe – LA Times requested information on all costs associated with the making and marketing of the Right to Breathe Documentary to date. Staff is gathering the information.
- Street Sweeper Certification – World Sweeper submitted written questions about South Coast AQMD’s street sweeper certification process. Questions were provided and draft responses are being reviewed.
- The San Gorgonio Pass – A local author wanted to know how much air pollution travels from LA/Inland Empire through the San Gorgonio Pass into Coachella Valley. Information was provided and the author was also directed to the data on the webpage.

- Air Quality Effects of COVID-19 – Many requests have been received about the air quality impacts related to the COVID-19 quarantine measures.
- Staff participated in interviews with LA Times, On Air with Ryan Seacrest, ABC7, KCRW, the Laist/KPCC, Southern California News Group, and KNX. Additional interviews with NPR and Reuters TV are also scheduled for early April.
- Real News Network, NBC, Gizmodo, CBS Radio, Long Beach Business Journal, Arizona PBS, Agency France Presse (AFP), the Malibu Times, California Energy Markets, KCET, and KNX submitted questions and were sent responses via email.
- A total of 23 inquiries have been received on COVID-19 and air quality impacts, since March 16.
- Permitting Assistance – Staff pitched our expedited permitting press release to 13 news outlets. Picked up by Labor and Government News, City News Service, My News LA, and Pasadena City website.
- Enhanced Forecasting and Compliance Efforts Improved Check Before You Burn Program this Winter – March 5, 2020 – Provided a season’s end update regarding the 2019–2020 Check Before You Burn initiative.
- Governor Newsom Appoints Environmental Lawyer Gideon Kracov to South Coast AQMD Governing Board – March 6, 2020 – Announced Board Member Kracov’s appointment to the Governing Board.
- South Coast AQMD Meeting and Scheduled Changes Due to COVID-19 – March 13, 2020 – Announced transition to virtual meetings or cancellations to meetings due to coronavirus.
- Cambios en el Horario de Reuniones de South Coast AQMD debido a COVID-19 – 13 de marzo del 2020.
- South Coast AQMD Building Closed to the Public Due to COVID-19 – March 17, 2020 – Announced additional operations changes due to coronavirus.
- Edificio De South Coast AQMD Cerrado Al Publico Debido a COVID-19 – 17 de marzo del 2020
- South Coast AQMD Continues to Accept and Process Permit Applications – March 21, 2020 – Informed residents and businesses that the permit application process would continue despite the building closure and provided alternative means of submitting a permit while the facility remained closed.
- South Coast AQMD Expediting Permits to Aid COVID-19 Efforts – March 25, 2020 – Informed residents and businesses of new permit expediting policies for companies changing over production to aid in combatting COVID-19.

### **News Releases and Announcements**

- Electronic payment available – March 24, 2020 – Informed website visitors that despite building closure, electronic payments are still available.
- Planning and Rule Development Changes Due to COVID-19 – March 31, 2020 – Informed residents and businesses about potential upcoming changes to rulemaking and planning activities.
- Keep up with the latest news from South Coast AQMD – March 31, 2020 – linked website visitors to the most recent edition of the Advisor.

### **Media/Google Campaign: Right to Breathe**

- During the month of March, the Right to Breathe Google Ads played 4.02M times (Impressions), received 2.22M Views (counted when users watch at least 30 seconds of the ad), and were clicked 5.82K times.
- Over the course of the 2019–2020 Google Ads campaign, beginning April 1, 2019 and concluding on March 31, 2020, the Right to Breathe Google Ads attained 49.1M Impressions, received 23.9M Views, and were clicked 89.1K times.

### **Social Media Notable Posts**

- Governing Board Meeting Facebook Live (3/6): 2,017 Facebook Users Reached
- Stationary Source Meeting (3/19): 1,476 Twitter Impressions

### **OUTREACH TO COMMUNITY GROUPS AND FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

Field visits and/or communications in March 2020 were conducted with elected officials or staff from the following cities:

Alhambra	Glendale	San Dimas
Arcadia	Glendora	San Fernando
Azusa	Huntington Beach	San Gabriel
Baldwin Park	Industry	San Marino
Big Bear Lake	Irwindale	Sierra Madre
Burbank	La Cañada Flintridge	South El Monte
Chino Hills	La Puente	South Pasadena
Claremont	La Verne	Temple City
Colton	Monrovia	Walnut
Diamond Bar	Monterey Park	West Covina
Duarte	Newport Beach	Yucaipa
El Monte	Paramount	
El Segundo	Rosemead	

Visits and/or communications were conducted in March 2020 with elected officials and/or staff from the following state and federal offices:

- U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein
- U.S. Representative Nanette Barragán
- U.S. Representative Judy Chu
- U.S. Representative Gil Cisneros
- U.S. Representative Grace Napolitano
- U.S. Representative Norma Torres
- Senator Ling Ling Chang
- Senator Lena Gonzalez
- Senator Anthony Portantino
- Senator Susan Rubio
- Assembly Member Ed Chau
- Assembly Member Phillip Chen
- Assembly Member Chris Holden
- Assembly Member Blanca Rubio

Staff represented South Coast AQMD in March 2020 and/or provided updates or a presentation to the following governmental agencies and business organizations:

Ascon Community Members Group, Huntington Beach  
CALSTART  
Chino Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Coachella Valley Association of Governments  
Department of Toxic Substances Control  
Gateway Cities Council of Governments  
Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce  
LA Metro  
Lake Arrowhead Communities Chamber of Commerce  
League of California Cities  
OFO Transportation Express  
Omnitrans  
Pasadena Chamber of Commerce  
Port of Long Beach  
Riverside County Transportation Authority  
San Bernardino Board of Supervisors  
San Bernardino Chamber of Commerce  
San Bernardino City–County Manager Technical Advisory Committee  
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority  
San Gabriel Valley City Managers Association  
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership  
San Gabriel Valley Energy Wise Partnership  
South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce  
Western Riverside Council of Governments



Staff represented South Coast AQMD in March 2020 and/or provided updates or a presentation to the following community and educational groups and organizations:

Asian Pacific Islander Forward Movement  
CHA CHA Altadenians for Clean, Healthy Air  
Chinese American Association of Southern California  
Chinese Hope Communication  
Chinese Mongolian Association  
Huntington Beach Unified School District  
Little Lake Cities School District (Santa Fe Springs)  
Rowland Heights Unified School District  
Torrance Air Advisory Committee  
U.S. Chinese Women Organization