

BOARD MEETING DATE: October 2, 2020

AGENDA NO. 11

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the August 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 Natri
Executive Officer

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BACKGROUND

This report summarizes the activities of the Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Office for August. 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.

Environmental Justice Community Partnership Inter-Agency Task Force Staff Training

On August 19, staff hosted a virtual training session for 80 participants from cities, Los Angeles County, local districts and other government agencies who are responsible for working and responding to complaints in environmental justice communities throughout our region. The training included discussions on collaborating with partner agencies, empathy, best practices and complaint protocols. Presentations and panel discussions included: Keywords to Address Complaints Efficiently; Virtual Inspections - A New Reality Due to COVID-19; Communicating and Assisting the Public; and Complaint Processes - Steps Taken to a Resolution. Attendees included 211 Los Angeles County, My311LA, California Office of the Attorney General, California Safe Schools, Cal Recycle, County of Los Angeles, Department of Toxic Substances Control, East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice, Los Angeles Sanitation District, Los Angeles Department of Public Works, Los Angeles County Fire Department/CUPA, Los Angeles County Fire Department/Health and Hazardous Materials Division, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance, Pacoima Beautiful and Sierra Club.

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 August events and meetings:

AllenCo Meeting

On August 5, staff participated in a Los Angeles County Department of Public Health AllenCo interagency and stakeholder conference call. The meeting was attended by

Esperanza Community Housing, Mount Saint Mary's University, California Geologic Energy Management, City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, Department of Conservation, CalEPA, CARB and staff from Senator Feinstein. Staff provided an update on the deployment of the remote trigger sampler and related issues.

Good Afternoon Long Beach

Staff attended the virtual Long Beach Chamber of Commerce event on August 11 to provide information on the \$27 million VW Settlement Fund administered by South Coast AQMD for Zero Emission Class 8 Freight and Port Drayage Trucks. Meeting attendees included business and governmental organizations.

Western Community Energy

Staff attended the virtual Western Community Energy Board meeting on August 12, to present on the \$27 million VW Settlement Fund administered by South Coast AQMD for Zero Emission Class 8 Freight and Port Drayage Trucks. The meeting was attended by government, members of the public, community organizations and business representatives.

UCLA Luskin School of Public Policy Conference

Staff attended a UCLA virtual conference entitled "Insights on Solving the Climate Crisis" on August 25. The conference featured a discussion by U.S. Representatives Jared Huffman, Mike Levin and Julia Brownley on the Congressional Climate Action Plan for a Clean Energy Economy. The panel focused on how the Congressional plan could relate to California policy, and the opportunities and challenges to transitioning to a green economy.

Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) Conference on Governance

On August 27, staff participated in the online WRCOG conference, "Navigating Virtual Governance and the Brown Act.". The event, hosted by the Inland Empire Regional Chamber of Commerce, discussed the impacts of COVID-19 on governance, transparency, public participation and access to the internet.

Orange County Council of Governments (OCCOG) Board Meeting

On August 27, staff supported Council Member Rodriguez during the OCCOG Board meeting. In addition to the Board Member's report, staff provided a presentation on South Coast AQMD's iPhone and Android apps.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATE

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

Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice

On August 5, staff participated in a webinar, “Meaningful Engagement in Environmental Justice without Public Meetings,” that discussed public engagement during COVID-19. The panel included staff from various federal agencies including Department of Energy, Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Highway Administration and others.

Polluting and Providing: The Dirty Energy Dilemma

Staff participated in a live stream hosted by Commonwealth Club of California and Climate One on August 11. The panel discussed how the renewable energy industry can transform into a model of diversity and equity, and provide affordable energy for all.

Environmental Justice Community Partnership (EJCP) Inter-Agency Task Force (Task Force) Meeting

Staff hosted the quarterly EJCP Task Force meeting virtually on August 12 and provided information on the upcoming Task Force training. California Safe Schools gave a presentation on the Who to Call Guide, a printed and virtual community resource guide on environmental concerns. Task Force members requested information on emPOWER, a Los Angeles County-wide outreach program whose mission is to overcome barriers to sustainable energy usage commonly experienced in low-income and working-class communities of color.

Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles (PSR-LA)

Staff met with PSR-LA on August 12. The discussion included AB 617, partnership opportunities and community engagement.

Advocacy and Activism at Work: Clean Air, Climate, and Equity Webinar

On August 19, staff attended a webinar hosted by the American Lung Association’s Healthy Air Campaign. The webinar featured a screening of “Unbreathable: The Fight for Healthy Air,” which focused on the progress of improving air quality since the enactment of the Clean Air Act, and the obstacles to eliminating air pollution and saving lives. Key themes presented advocated for environmental justice and a livable climate.

Advancing Racial Equity in Government: What’s Next?

Staff participated in a virtual event hosted by the SoCal Policy Forum, in partnership with Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) on August 20. The conversation focused on racial equity in local government across Southern California. The meeting included discussion on how the regional movement started; what racial equity in local government means; and benchmarks in the upcoming year and beyond. Community leaders, elected officials, executives and government agencies attended the meeting.

Environmental Justice Advisory Group (EJAG) Meeting

At the EJAG quarterly virtual meeting on August 28, staff provided an overview of South Coast AQMD's small business assistance and incentive programs. An EJAG member gave a presentation on COVID-19 impacts on environmental justice communities. Staff provided an update on Environmental Justice Community Partnership programs such as the Annual Conference, Community Bus Tour and K-12 air quality educational outreach.

AB 617 UPDATE

The following are key AB 617-related activities in which staff participated during August. These events, workshops and meetings involve AB 617 communities to support the Community Steering Committees (CSC), Community Air Monitoring Plans (CAMPs) and Community Emissions Reduction Plans (CERPs).

CARB AB 617 Consultation Group Meeting

On August 5, staff participated in a CARB AB 617 Consultation Group meeting. CARB provided an update on stipends for CSC members. Local air districts were asked to provide a stipend to CSC members who are residents. At future meetings, the Consultation Group will discuss equity, racism and other issues.

AB 617 Community ID (Year 3 Selection) Meeting

Staff held an AB 617 Community ID meeting on August 12 for stakeholders interested in the Year 3 process for the program. Staff provided an overview on South Coast AQMD and background on the AB 617 program. Discussion focused on the process for designating future AB 617 communities. Representatives of South Los Angeles and East Santa Ana communities expressed interest in Year 3 AB 617 opportunities.

Wilmington, Carson, West Long Beach (WCWLB) CSC

Staff held the third quarterly AB 617 CSC meeting for the WCWLB Community on August 13. There were 90 attendees participating in the virtual meeting. Staff provided updates on the implementation of the CERP and CAMP. Agenda topics included the AB 617 Annual Progress Report, an overview on best available retrofit control technology, updates on CERP actions related to refineries and ports, and CSC community member stipends. CARB provided an overview of their Technology Clearinghouse. The meeting was attended by community members, government representatives, staff from elected officials' offices, businesses and other stakeholders.

East Los Angeles, Boyle Heights, West Commerce CSC

On August 19, approximately 60 people participated in a CSC meeting for Boyle Heights, East Los Angeles, West Commerce. Assembly Member Cristina Garcia provided opening remarks and Mayor Mitchell participated in the meeting. South Coast AQMD staff presented an update on the railyard and warehouse indirect source rules, air monitoring, the Automatic License Plate Reader system for trucks, and stipends for

CSC community members. Staff also presented an overview of the CERP Annual Progress Report. CARB staff presented on rail enforcement and Los Angeles County staff presented an overview of the Los Angeles County's Green Zone Ordinance.

San Bernardino, Muscoy CSC

The San Bernardino, Muscoy CSC was attended by approximately 20 people on August 20. Mayor Mitchell participated in the meeting. Staff provided updates on the implementation of the CERP and CAMP. Agenda topics included an update from Omnitrans, overview of the AB 617 Annual Progress and Monitoring Report, sensor deployment, the ALPR system for trucks, a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meeting update, and CSC Member stipends. CARB provided an enforcement update.

Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV) CSC

On August 26, approximately 50 people participated in the ECV CSC meeting. Supervisor Perez and Assembly Members Cristina Garcia and Eduardo Garcia provided opening comments. Board Member Kracov also attended the meeting. Staff presented an update on the Coachella Valley ozone plan and an overview of the open burn program. Committee members provided updates on the last TAG meeting and the committee charter. A vote on the CSC Charter was deferred until the draft document could be translated into Spanish. Staff provided an update on CSC community member stipends and committee members requested the budget for the AB 617 program.

South East Los Angeles (SELA) CSC and Workshop on Metal Processing and Greenspaces

On August 27, approximately 80 people participated in a SELA CSC meeting. Assembly Member Cristina Garcia provided opening remarks and Board Member Kracov participated in the meeting. Staff presented information on the top two CSC air quality priorities which are metal processing facilities and green spaces. Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning staff presented an overview of the proposed Green Zones Program. Committee members emphasized that South Coast AQMD should coordinate with other public agencies, especially land use agencies, on compliance efforts and CERP development.

Rule 1109.1 Workshop for WCWLB

On August 27, staff attended the Rule 1109.1 - NOx Emission Reduction for Refinery Equipment, working group meeting for the WCWLB AB 617 community. The meeting was attended by several WCWLB CSC Members. Staff provided updates on the rule development process and answered questions from stakeholders.

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 the COVID-19 pandemic, there were no requests for the Speaker’s Bureau and Visitor Services in August.

COMMUNICATION CENTER STATISTICS

The Communication Center handles calls on South Coast AQMD’s main line, the 1-800-CUT-SMOG® line, the Spanish line, and after-hours calls to each of those lines. Total calls received in the month of August were:

Calls to South Coast AQMD’s Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG® Line	2,511
Calls to South Coast AQMD’s Spanish-language Line	35
Clean Air Connections	8
Total Calls	2,554

PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER STATISTICS

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

Calls Received by PIC Staff	9
Calls to Automated System	1,061
Total Calls	1,070

Email Advisories Sent	27,339
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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 virtual on-site consultation, as summarized below for August.

- Provided permit application assistance to 216 companies; and,
- Processed 57 Air Quality Permit Checklists.

Types of businesses assisted:

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

MEDIA RELATIONS

The Media Office handles all South Coast AQMD outreach and communications with television, radio, newspapers and all other publications, and media operations. August reports are listed below:

Major Media Interactions	293
Press Releases	36

Major Media Topics

- **Smoke Advisory Graphic File:** Staff has been sending SpectrumNews1 a graphic file of air quality maps used daily on weather forecasts.
- **Wildfires and Smoke Advisory Extensions:** Smoke advisories were issued or extended thirty-five times during August. Pitches were sent to local news outlets for each advisory, resulting in extensive coverage on all major local channels. KPCC conducted an interview with staff to discuss air quality impacts, and CBS 2/KCAL 9 conducted an interview with staff about air quality and health impacts.
- **Wildfires/Facemasks:** Kaiser Health News provided questions regarding the use of facemasks during wildfire season. Responses were sent.
- **Petroleum Storage:** Inside Climate News emailed written questions about bulk petroleum storage practices for a larger national news story. Responses were sent.
- **Air Quality Effects of COVID-19:** E&E News reached out looking for information regarding health effects and air pollution that have come as a result of COVID-19. Information was provided.
- **VW Settlement Funding:** Pitches were sent to 13 news outlets regarding the VW settlement press release. KTLA had two specific inquiries. FreightWaves inquired regarding which companies had applied for funding. Responses were sent.
- **PRR Request:** HIS Markit inquired about how to make a public records request. Instructions were sent to the reporter.
- **Ozone and Special Air Advisory:** Due to the heat wave and wildfires, a special air quality advisory was issued or extended four times. Pitches were sent to local news outlets for each advisory, resulting in coverage from KNX, KCRW,

KABC, KFI-AM, KPCC, KNX, KCBS, KCAL9, NBC4, FOX 11, Telemundo, Univision, and KESQ Palm Springs. LA Times requested a copy of the Ozone Advisory. Staff participated in an interview with KESQ that aired on CBS, NBC and FOX affiliates in Palm Springs. Staff also participated in an interview with KPCC.

- **LA City Council/China Shipping:** Random Lengths News requested comments regarding the port terminal decision and followed up with a request for transcripts. Responses were sent to reporter.
- **Story Correction:** A written response was sent to Truthout regarding misinformation on the agency's COVID response efforts as part of a recent interview with environmentalists.
- **Heat waves effects on air pollution:** E&E News requested a phone interview on how heat waves affect air pollution and exacerbate the effects of wildfire smoke. Staff participated in the interview
- **Regulations on ships at berth:** CalMatters requested information on the CARB vote regarding ships at berth. Staff participated in a phone interview. Additional information was requested and sent to the reporter after the interview.
- **Hexavalent chrome emissions in Paramount:** Environmental Health News requested information regarding hexavalent chrome emissions data in Paramount. Responses were sent.
- **Methane Leak:** Reuters asked about South Coast AQMD's knowledge regarding the methane leak occurring at the Los Angeles DWP Valley Generating Station. A statement was sent to the reporter.
- **LACMA Demolition:** Architect's Newspaper requested updates on the LACMA demolition project. Responses were sent to the reporter, and reporter submitted additional follow-up questions. An additional written response was sent. The reporter requested additional documents and information on submitting a public records request was sent.
- **Air quality update:** Spectrum News 1 had questions regarding the air quality forecast for 8/21. A response was provided.
- **Dust complaints:** CalMatters reached out for dust complaint information from almond harvests near Shafter. The reporter was referred to San Joaquin Valley APCD.

News Release and Announcements

- **Smoke Advisory Extensions Due to Apple Fire** - August 1-9, 2020: Smoke advisory was issued and extended eight times. (9 releases)
- **\$27 Million Now Available for Zero-Emission Trucks in California** - August 7, 2020: Announced Board approval of new VW funding.
- **Smoke Advisory Due to Ranch Fire, Ranch Fire 2, North of Azusa** - August 13-21, 2020: Advisory issued due to smoke impacts of the Ranch Fire. Advisory was issued and then extended eight times. (9 releases)
- **Smoke Advisory Due to Lake Fire** - August 13-17 and 20-23, 2020: Advisory issued due to smoke impacts of the Lake Fire. The advisory was issued and then extended eight times. (9 releases)
- **Smoke Advisory due to Lake and Holser Fire** - August 18-19, 2020: Advisory issued due to smoke impacts of both the Lake and Holser Fires. The advisory including the Holser fire was extended once. (2 releases)
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Ozone Advisory** - August 14 and 17, 2020: Ozone advisory due to heat wave. (2 releases)
- **Special Air Advisory Due to Elevated Ozone and PM2.5 Levels** - August 19-22, 2020: Poor air quality in many parts of the Basin due to heat wave and wildfires. Advisory was continued three times. (4 releases)

Social Media Notable Posts

- Apple Fire Smoke Adv Ext (8/1): 15,402 Twitter Impressions
- Apple Fire Smoke Adv Ext (8/2): 17,655 Twitter Impressions
- Apple Fire Smoke Adv Ext (8/3): 14,217 Twitter Impressions
- Apple Fire Smoke Adv Ext (8/9): 9,135 Twitter Impressions
- Ranch Fire Smoke Advisory (8/13): 29,963 Twitter Impressions
- AQ Forecast (8/16): 30,898 Twitter Impressions
- AQ Advisory Update (8/21): 41,151 Twitter Impressions
- AQ Advisory Update (8/20): 40,015 Twitter Impressions

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

In light of COVID-19, outreach was conducted virtually in August, utilizing web based and other technologies to communicate with elected officials or staff from the following cities:

Alhambra	Industry	Rosemead
Arcadia	Irvine	San Bernardino
Avalon	Irwindale	San Dimas
Azusa	La Cañada Flintridge	San Gabriel
Baldwin Park	La Habra	San Marino
Bradbury	La Puente	Santa Ana
Buena Park	La Verne	Santa Monica
Carson	Laguna Niguel	Sierra Madre
Claremont	Long Beach	South El Monte
Commerce	Los Alamitos	South Gate
Covina	Los Angeles	South Pasadena
Cudahy	Mission Viejo	Temple City
Diamond Bar	Monrovia	Tustin
Duarte	Monterey Park	Walnut
El Monte	Pasadena	West Covina
Fullerton	Placentia	Yorba Linda
Garden Grove	Pomona	
Glendora	Riverside	

Communication conducted in August with elected officials and/or staff from the following state and federal offices:

- U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein
- U.S. Senator Kamala Harris
- U.S. Representative Nanette Barragán
- U.S. Representative Karen Bass
- U.S. Representative Raúl Grijalva
- U.S. Representative Grace Napolitano
- Senator Bob Archuleta
- Senator Susan Rubio
- Assembly Majority Leader Ian Calderon
- Assembly Member Cristina Garcia
- Assembly Member Eduardo Garcia
- Assembly Member Eloise Gomez Reyes

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

211 Los Angeles County
Asian Business Association of Orange County
Association of California Cities, Orange County
Association of California Water Agencies
Cal Recycle
CARB
California Fuel Cell Partnership
California League of Cities
California Special Districts Association
California Department of Transportation
Coachella Valley Association of Governments
Department of Toxic Substances Control
Fountain Valley Chamber of Commerce
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce
Inland Empire Regional Chamber of Commerce
Inland Valley Development Agency
LA Metro
Las Virgenes-Malibu Council of Governments
Long Beach Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles City Attorney, Environmental Justice
Los Angeles City Fire Department
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
Los Angeles County Department of Public Works
Los Angeles County Fire Department
Los Angeles Department of Sanitation
Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board
Mountain Transit Board
MyLA311
Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance
Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce
North Orange County Chamber of Commerce
Office of California Attorney General
Omnitrans
Orange County Business Council
Port of Long Beach
Riverside Board of Supervisors
Riverside Transit Agency, Transportation NOW
San Bernardino Board of Supervisors

San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
San Bernardino International Airport
San Gabriel Valley City Managers Association
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
San Gabriel Valley Public Affairs Network
Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce
Santa Fe Springs Chamber of Commerce
South Bay Cities Council of Governments
South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce
SCAG
U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Green Business Council, Los Angeles
Western Community Energy Board
Western Regional Council of Governments

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

Altadenans for Clean Healthy Air (CHA CHA)
American Green Zone Alliance
American Lung Association
Azusa Pacific University
Baldwin Hills Community Action Partnership
California Safe Schools
California State University, Long Beach
California State University, San Bernardino
Coalition for Clean Air
Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice
East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice
Esperanza Community Housing
Inland Empire Health Plan
Mount Saint Mary's University
Pacoima Beautiful
People Not Pozos
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Los Angeles
Sierra Club