

BOARD MEETING DATE: September 4, 2020

AGENDA NO. 12

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the July 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 July. 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 hosted or sponsored in July 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 July events and meetings:

#### **AB 2588 Public Notification Meeting for Equilon Enterprises, LLC, Shell Oil Production, US (Equilon)**

Staff held an AB 2588 public notification meeting for Equilon in Carson on July 22. Equilon is a bulk gasoline and chemical distribution terminal facility. Information was provided on the AB 2588 Toxic Hotspots program, the facility Health Risk Assessment, the potential impact emissions may have on public health, and what is being done to reduce emissions both now and in the future. Meeting attendees participated in a public comment session with questions and answers.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATE**

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

#### **Global Environmental Health Day**

Staff participated in the Global Environmental Health Day hosted on July 1 by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences entitled "Science at the Cutting Edge of Global Environmental Change and Health." The virtual convening served as an opportunity to bring together a global community of colleagues to explore areas of interest and discuss new ideas, to form collaborations and share common goals.

### **Congressional EJ Stakeholder Update**

Staff participated in the Congressional EJ stakeholder update conference call on July 1, which was led by House Natural Resources Chair Raul Grijalva, Representative Donald McEachin and House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis Chair Kathy Castor. Chair Castor discussed the Climate Crisis Action Plan, which aims to put the country on a path to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Chair Castor and select committee staff incorporated the community's feedback.

### **Riverside County Health Coalition**

Staff attended Riverside County Health Coalition's first virtual meeting on July 15. The panel addressed the impacts of COVID-19, including structural racism impacts on communities and the need for change. Over 70 people participated including educational, public health, non-profits and government agencies.

### **American Lung Association, "Air Quality and COVID-19: Connections, Health Impacts and Racial Disparities"**

Staff attended a webinar held by the American Lung on July 15. This webinar focused on COVID-related health risks and efforts to mitigate them. Recent research suggests that individuals who have experienced long-term exposure to fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) may be more susceptible to contracting COVID-19 and may have higher mortality rates.

### **Healthy Air Alliance Roundtable**

Staff participated in the Healthy Air Alliance roundtable on July 23 with faith, community, and policy leaders to discuss health, environmental, and justice inequities across California. Staff participated in the roundtable discussion moderated by Jamarah Hayner, a community leader and president of the Healthy Air Alliance. The purpose of the roundtable was to bring a group of policy, community, and religious leaders together to discuss solutions to assist disadvantaged communities.

### **Agents of Change: Amplifying Voice of Future Leaders**

Staff participated in a webinar, entitled, "Agents of Change: Amplifying Voices of Future Leaders in Environmental Health and Justice," hosted by the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health and Environmental Health News on July 30. Environmental health leaders explored the intersection of research, health, diversity and justice. "Agents of Change" is an ongoing series featuring the stories, analyses and perspectives of next generation environmental health leaders who are from historically under-represented backgrounds in science and academia.

### **League of California Cities African American Caucus Town Hall Meeting**

Staff participated in a virtual townhall meeting entitled "Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis" on July 31. Panelists included Riverside Council Member Gabby Plascencia; Moreno Valley Council Member Dr. Carla Thornton; Corey Jackson, CEO,

SBX Youth & Family Services; and, Dr. Priya Batra, Inland Empire Health Plan Senior Medical Director for Family and Community Health. Panelists discussed examples of structural barriers that African American people have been faced with for centuries with the goal of providing insight and solutions to these ongoing issues.

#### **AB 617 UPDATE**

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

#### **Los Angeles County Regional Planning Green Zones Program**

Staff attended the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning Green Zones Program Community meeting for the unincorporated East Los Angeles area on July 6. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed Green Zone program ordinance and changes to regulations for industrial businesses. .

#### **Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV) AB 617 CSC Charter Working Group Meeting**

Staff held the second ECV CSC Charter Working Group meeting with 40 attendees on July 15. The CSC members provided suggestions, comments and changes to various elements of the charter, specifically adding 15 goals; specifying CSC and agency roles and responsibilities; organizing timelines; and clarifying the voting process. The charter will continue to be a living document.

#### **ECV Charter Working Group Meeting**

Staff held the third ECV Charter Working Group meeting with more than 45 attendees on July 22. The meeting focused on the live editing of the proposed CSC charter. CSC members provided suggestions, comments and changes to various elements of the charter, specifically discussing meeting schedules, agendas, CSC communications, meeting materials, Brown Act elements, and stipends.

### **Southeast Los Angeles AB 617 Workshop and CSC**

Staff held the South East Los Angeles Workshop and CSC meeting with 110 attendees on July 23. The meeting featured a workshop on truck traffic and rail. South Coast AQMD and CARB staff presented on the development of a CAMP and CERP strategies to address emissions from truck traffic, freeways, rail yards, and locomotives

### **ECV Charter Working Group**

Staff held the ECV Charter Working Group with 60 participants from the community and stakeholder groups on July 29. Staff led the live editing and discussion of the proposed CSC charter. CSC members voted to adopt the charter.

### **ECV Workshop and CSC Meeting**

Staff held the fourth ECV CSC meeting featuring a workshop on the Salton Sea, pesticides, and air monitoring on July 29. Agencies involved in the Salton Sea provided presentations to the CSC including, the Imperial Irrigation District, CARB, University of California, Riverside, Department of Pesticides Regulation, Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner, and South Coast AQMD.

### **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 July.

### **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 July were:

Calls to South Coast AQMD's Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG® Line	2,708
Calls to South Coast AQMD's Spanish-language Line	23
Clean Air Connections	8
Total Calls	2,739

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER STATISTICS**

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

Calls Received by PIC Staff	2
Calls to Automated System	850
Total Calls	852

Email Advisories Sent	6,339
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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 on-site consultation, as summarized below for July.

- Provided permit application assistance to 345 companies;
- Processed 110 Air Quality Permit Checklists; and,
- Provided assistance in the filing of two requests for variances.

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. July reports are listed:

Major Media Interactions	112
Press Releases	7
News Carousel Write-Ups	3

## Major Media Topics

- **Windblown Dust Advisory:** Pitched Coachella Valley news outlets regarding the dust advisory in their area.
- **Consultant Contracts:** Financial Investment News reached out to see if the Deferred Compensation committee approved the contract with Benefit Financial Services Group for consultant services at its June 9 meeting. Responded to reporter.
- **Fireworks Particulate Advisory:** Pitches were sent to local news outlets regarding the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend fireworks particulate advisory. Staff participated in interviews with KNX, KPCC, and the LA Times, and participated in an additional interview with KNX. The advisory was covered on dozens of additional outlets including: Spectrum 1, KABC Radio, City News Service, CBS, KCAL 9, KTLA, ABC, Laist, and Press-Enterprise.
  - **Fireworks Particulate Advisory Extension:** Pitches to local news outlets regarding the extension of the July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks particulate advisory. Coverage included: KABC Radio, KCRW, and Telemundo LA, Univision LA.
- **4<sup>th</sup> of July Air Quality Press Release:** Pitches were sent to local news outlets regarding the press release detailing the weekend fireworks and their effect on PM2.5 levels. KPCC requested an interview and spoke with staff. Coverage included: KNX, KABC AM, KPCC, KFI, FOX, Good Day LA, KTLA, ABC 7, CBS, and NBC.
- **Soledad Fire Smoke Advisory:** Pitches to local news outlets regarding the Soledad Fire smoke advisory. Coverage included: KFI, KNX, KABC AM, CBS “This Morning”, NBC, Fox Good Day LA, KTLA and ABC.
- **VW Funding:** Motorship Magazine reached out with questions regarding VW funding solicitation for airport ground support and port cargo handling equipment, forklifts, marine vessel engines and shore power projects. Reporter was sent responses and referred to the Bay Area AQMD for additional questions.
- **AQI Map Files:** Spectrum News 1 reached out for an update on the AQI Forecast Map KML files for use in weather reports. Staff connected the requestor to the IM department.
- **Disneyland Fireworks:** LA Times submitted written questions on Disneyland’s fireworks and any past air monitoring and compliance related history. Response was sent to the reporter. **Ozone Standards:** CalMatters submitted written questions regarding South Coast AQMD’s position on U.S. EPA’s decision to not change the federal standard for ozone. Response was sent to the reporter.
- **PM 2.5 Attainment:** Pitched interview with LA Times to discuss recent deadline for 2006 PM2.5 standard and to discuss progress made in the Basin in the past decades. Interview was conducted with staff.

- **Smoke Plume Graphics Request:** The San Diego Union Tribune requested feedback on a smoke plume modelling process, due to a fire in the area. The reporter was referred to the San Diego APCD.
- **Elevated AQI in Coachella Valley:** KESQ inquired on an AQI reading of 1886 in Coachella Valley and wanted to confirm it was an error. Confirmed with reporter that the reading was due to AC failure at the monitoring station.
- **Asbestos Removal:** LA Times inquired about asbestos removal and any resulting settlement from Royal Park/Center Lake Hotel. Response was provided.
- **AB 617:** City News Service submitted written questions about the AB 617 program in Eastern Coachella Valley. Responses were sent.
- **Airport MOUs:** An op-ed was pitched to the LA Times, then SoCal News Group, regarding Airport MOUs. Staff is awaiting a response from SoCal News Group.
- **Fireworks and Air Quality:** The Beachcomber inquired about air quality, fireworks and the areas worst-affected. Information and a copy of previous press releases were sent to the reporter.
- **Wilmington Refinery Flare:** LA Times inquired about a flaring incident at Wilmington refinery. Reporter was provided a response.
- **Story Correction:** Contacted Truthout regarding misinformation on the agency's COVID response efforts, as part of a recent interview with environmentalists. Working with the reporter to provide a written response.
- **General Air Quality Information:** A student reporter reached out with questions regarding air pollution for a high school publication. Response was provided.
- **Santa Clarita Valley Air Quality:** SCV Signal requested an interview on poor air quality in the Santa Clarita Valley. Interview was conducted with staff.
- **Delta Fuel Dump:** Pasadena Weekly requested an update on the Delta jet fuel dump in January. Response was sent to the reporter.
- **Smoke Advisory for Dam Fire:** Staff pitched the smoke advisory to 13 news outlets.

#### News Release and Announcements

- **South Coast AQMD Issues Particulate Advisory due to 4th of July Fireworks - July 2, 2020:** Notified residents of expected poor air quality due to fireworks.
- **South Coast AQMD Extends Particulate Advisory Due to Fireworks - July 5, 2020:** Residents notified of extended poor air quality due to fireworks
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Smoke Advisory Due to Soledad Fire South of Agua Dulce - July 5, 2020:** Notified residents smoke advisory due to fire.



- **4th of July Fireworks Celebrations Lead to Highest PM2.5 Levels in Over a Decade - July 8, 2020:** Notified residents of PM levels reached during the holiday.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Smoke Advisory Due to Dam Fire North of Azusa - July 30, 2020:** Notified residents smoke advisory due to fire.
- **South Coast AQMD Continues Smoke Advisory Due to Dam Fire North of Azusa - July 31, 2020:** Notified residents of smoke advisory due to fire
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Smoke Advisory Due to Apple Fire North of Cherry Valley - July 31, 2020:** Notified residents smoke advisory due to fire.

#### **News Carousel**

- **2020 Independence Day Weekend Air Quality – July 10, 2020:** Provided a link to air quality monitoring data from the Independence Day weekend.
- **There’s Still Time to Submit Applications for Carl Moyer Heavy-Duty Equipment Funding – July 23, 2020:** Informed residents of the opportunity to apply for Carl Moyer funding.
- **Wildfire Smoke and Ash Health and Safety Tips:** Provided link to the Wildfire Tips page.

#### **Social Media Notable Posts**

- Dust Advisory (6/28): 27,742 Twitter Impressions
- Particulate Advisory Extension (7/5): 34,974 Twitter Impressions
- Smoke Advisory (7/5): 34,387 Twitter Impressions
- Independence Day Weekend AQ Page (7/10): 24,998 Twitter Impressions
- AQ Forecast (7/21): 5,071 Twitter Impressions
- AQ Forecast (7/28): 2,429 Twitter Impressions

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

In light of COVID-19, outreach was conducted in July virtually to communicate with elected officials or staff from the following cities:

Alhambra	Fullerton	Placentia
Arcadia	Glendale	Pomona
Azusa	Glendora	Rancho Cucamonga
Baldwin Park	Hawthorne	Rosemead
Bellflower	Industry	San Dimas
Bradbury	Irwindale	San Fernando
Brea	La Cañada Flintridge	San Gabriel
Buena Park	La Habra	San Marino
Burbank	La Puente	Santa Clarita
Carson	La Verne	Santa Fe Springs
Claremont	Los Angeles	Sierra Madre
Covina	Mission Viejo	South El Monte
Diamond Bar	Monrovia	South Pasadena
Duarte	Monterey Park	Temple City
El Monte	Ontario	West Covina
Fountain Valley	Pasadena	Yorba Linda

Communication was conducted in July 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 Karen Bass
- U.S. Representative Tony Cardenas
- U.S. Representative Kathy Castor
- U.S. Representative Judy Chu
- U.S. Representative Paul Cook
- U.S. Representative Tyler Diep
- U.S. Representative Raul Grijalva
- U.S. Representative Donald McEachin
- Senator Bob Archuleta
- Senator Steve Glazer
- Senator Holly Mitchell
- Senator Susan Rubio
- Assembly Majority Leader Ian Calderon
- Assembly Member Reggie Jones-Sawyer
- Assembly Member Blanca Rubio

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

Aliso Canyon Disaster Health Study Community Advisory Committee  
Angeles National Forest  
BizFed  
CARB  
California Municipal Utilities Association  
California Public Utilities Commission  
California Special Districts Association  
CALSTART  
CAPCOA  
Coachella Valley Association of Governments  
Gateway Cities Council of Governments  
Greater Riverside Transportation Now  
Fountain Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Huntington Beach Chamber of Commerce  
Inland Valley Development Agency  
Inland Empire Regional Chamber of Commerce  
League of California Cities  
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors  
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH)  
Los Angeles County DPH Aliso Canyon Health Study Scientific Oversight Committee  
Los Angeles World Affairs Council  
Mission Viejo Chamber of Commerce  
Mountain Transit Board  
Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce  
Omnitrans  
Ontario International Airport Authority  
Orange Chamber of Commerce  
Orange County Board of Supervisors  
Orange County Business Council  
Pasadena Chamber of Commerce  
Phoenix Motors  
Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council  
Riverside County Board of Supervisors  
Riverside Transit Agency Transportation NOW  
San Bernardino Council of Governments  
San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors  
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority  
San Fernando Valley Council of Governments  
San Gabriel Valley City Managers Association  
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments

San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership  
Santa Fe Springs Chamber of Commerce  
South Bay Council of Governments  
South Orange County Economic Coalition  
Southern California Association of Governments  
Southern California Clean Cities Coalition  
Sunshine Canyon Landfill Community Advisory Committee  
Temple City Parks and Recreation  
Western Community Energy Board  
Western Riverside Council of Governments

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

Altadenans for Clean Healthy Air (CHA CHA)  
American Lung Association  
Asian Pacific Islander Forward Movement  
Cerritos College  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Coalition for Clean Air  
Esperanza Community Housing  
Healthy Air Alliance  
Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma  
Los Angeles Unified School District  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
People Not Pozos  
Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council  
Sierra Club  
STAND – L.A.  
University of California, Irvine