

BOARD MEETING DATE: May 7, 2021

AGENDA NO. 10

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the March 2021 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. The report includes: Major Events; Community Events/Public Meetings; Environmental Justice Update; AB 617; 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 jurisdiction to promote, educate, and provide important information to the public regarding reducing air pollution, protecting public health, improving air quality and the economy.

A Clean Air Conversation with Community Faith Leaders

Staff hosted “A Clean Air Conversation with Community Faith Leaders: Clean Air is a Matter of Life and Breath” on March 25 for 58 attendees. Panelists included Inland Empire based faith leaders, community members, and academia representatives, who discussed the challenges created by disproportionate air quality impacts on Inland Empire communities and efforts to empower improvements.

Cesar Chavez Day of Remembrance

The 7th Annual Cesar Chavez Day of Remembrance “Yes We Can, United We Will Fight for Clean Air: Sí se puede, unidos lucharemos por aire limpio” was held on March 27 and over 200 people attended. CBSLA reporter Lesley Marin was the moderator for the event. Keynote speaker Paul F. Chavez, union organizer and President & Chairman of the Cesar Chavez Foundation, shared remarks on the legacy of Cesar Chavez’s fight for equality and environmental justice. U.S. Senator Alex Padilla was honored as the recipient of the Richard Alatorre Environmental Justice for All Award.

COMMUNITY EVENTS/PUBLIC MEETINGS

Each year, South Coast AQMD staff engage with thousands of residents and stakeholders, 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 events and meetings:

All American Asphalt

On March 3, staff held a virtual community meeting on All American Asphalt for 135 community members and interested stakeholders. The meeting included presentations on air monitoring by University of California, Irvine, city of Irvine and South Coast AQMD, with updates on compliance and enforcement efforts, and permitting and source test efforts for a control device that the facility had recently installed.

Aliso Canyon Supplemental Environmental Project Fund

On March 9, staff organized and participated in a virtual Aliso Canyon Supplemental Environmental Project Fund briefing for approximately 52 attendees. Discussions focused on establishing a fund for an air quality monitoring network.

Chiquita Canyon Landfill

On March 13, staff participated in a virtual Hearing Board hearing to receive public comments related to the Chiquita Canyon Landfill. Approximately 14 residents and other interested stakeholders attended the hearing.

Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG)

On March 18, staff participated in WRCOG's Technical Advisory Committee meeting. Staff provided information on Prop 1B, Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee requests for proposals and other programs.

San Fernando Valley Council of Governments (SFVCOG)

On March 18, staff provided updates to the SFVCOG's Transportation Committee. Updates included the Environmental Justice Community Partnership (EJCP) Who to Call Guide and the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust for zero-emission transit and shuttle buses.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATE

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

Keeping To Our Word: Accountability to Racial Justice in the Environmental Sector

Staff attended a webinar hosted by the Environmental Law Institute on March 2. The panel discussion focused on how environmental organizations can eliminate racial disparities, which included a presentation of a brief history on racial injustice, challenges and case law.

Environmental Justice Community Partnership (EJCP) Advisory Council

Approximately 35 people participated in an EJCP Advisory Council meeting on March 3. Presentations included a review of the 2020 EJCP accomplishments and an update on AQMP activities. Road 2 Samaria provided an overview on the organization's mission, history and community engagement in the Inland Empire. Staff led a discussion on EJCP quarterly activities to gather input from Advisory Council members.

Mapping Inequality Project

On March 4, staff attended a U.S. EPA webinar featuring a collaboration by the University of Richmond and Virginia Tech titled, "The Mapping Inequality Project."

The project has digitized and made publicly available redlining maps for 200 cities. The purpose of the project is to drive positive change to impact environmental justice and help address systemic racism.

Coachella Valley Unified School District

On March 10, staff met with the Superintendent of Coachella Valley Unified School District regarding Clean Air Program for Elementary School (CAPES). Teachers in their 14 elementary schools will be encouraged to implement the program and air quality flags will be provided to the school district.

Los Feliz Charter School for the Arts

On March 10, staff met with the “Green Team Captain” parent who oversees an environmental club at Los Feliz Charter School for the Arts. Staff shared information on CAPES and participated in a “Courageous Conversations” campus event on environmental justice.

Coachella Valley Environmental Justice Enforcement Task Force Meeting

On March 24, staff participated in the Coachella Valley Environmental Justice Enforcement Task Force monthly meeting to provide updates on upcoming AB 617 meetings and other meetings. Staff also updated the group on CAPES implementation in the Coachella Valley School District and received positive feedback from several community representatives.

Monroe Elementary School, Santa Ana

On March 24, staff met with Monroe Elementary School to confirm participation of 12 teachers in the CAPES program.

AB 617 UPDATE

The following are key AB 617 related activities in which staff participated during March. 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).

Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) CSC

On March 4 approximately 75 people participated in a SELA Incentive Budgeting Workshop, including Mayor Pro Tem Cacciotti. Staff gave a presentation on available incentive funds and project costs, and polled committee members to prioritize the projects they want to incentivize. Committee members stated their preference that incentive funds focus on independent truck owner-operators and small businesses.

Eastern Coachella Valley Area (ECV) CSC

Staff held a CSC meeting for ECV on March 5, with approximately 65 attendees. Riverside County Fire Department Division Chief presented on the Combustible

Materials Task Force. A budget incentives workshop was also held to receive CSC input on the priority order for projects to be funded, as well as a discussion on the CERP and CAMP timelines.

Why Healthy Air Matters (WHAM) and AB 617 Programs

On March 9, staff presented on WHAM to a ninth-grade class at San Bernardino High School. Students learned about South Coast AQMD and air quality issues in their community and region.

South Los Angeles (SLA) AB 617 Community Meeting

Approximately 65 attendees participated in the CSC formation meeting for SLA on March 11. The meeting featured historical background on SLA and information on the AB 617 program, including how to participate and a co-leadership model. There was open discussion on the program and co-leadership model for SLA.

San Bernardino/Muscoy (SBM) CSC

Approximately 40 attendees participated in an SBM CSC meeting on March 18, including Mayor Pro Tem Benoit. Staff provided an overview of the monitoring approach and presented information on available incentive funds, project costs, and potential emission reductions. Staff asked CSC members to prioritize incentive projects and provided an update on the WHAM program. Committee members inquired about monitoring and incentive funding.

ECV CSC

Approximately 30 people participated in an ECV CSC meeting on March 19. Supervisor Perez provided opening remarks. CARB staff provided an overview of the process for Community Air Protection Program incentive fund allocations. Staff recapped the Incentives Budget Workshop held on March 5. Committee members lead breakout discussions, where questions were asked about incentive programs and project types and future rulemaking efforts. Committee members ranked project priorities for discussion at the next meeting.

ECV CSC

Approximately 50 people participated in an ECV CSC meeting on March 25, including Supervisor Perez, who provided opening remarks. The Department of Pesticide Regulation presented on pesticide issues in ECV. The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment gave an overview of the relationship between air pollution and health, exposure types, health effects and risk characterization. Committee members reviewed a summary of the Monitoring Working Team and Budget Working Team meetings. Staff provided the results from the incentives budget prioritization survey and initiated discussion about budgeting for the remaining Year 3 Community Air Protection Program funds.

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.

There were no visits or speaker’s bureau requests.

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 March were:

Calls to South Coast AQMD’s Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG® Line	2,721
Calls to South Coast AQMD’s Spanish-language Line	42
Clean Air Connections	2
Total Calls	2,765

PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER STATISTICS

The Public Information Center (PIC) handles phone calls for general information. The PIC did not take walk-in requests in March because of the COVID pandemic. Email advisories provided information on upcoming meetings and events, program announcements and alerts on time sensitive issues. Information for the month of March is summarized below:

Calls Received by PIC Staff	1
Calls to Automated System	481
Total Calls	482

Email Advisories Sent	55,534
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SMALL 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 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 March.

- Provided permit application assistance to 236 companies;
- Processed 90 Air Quality Permit Checklists; and

Types of businesses assisted:

Architecture Firms	Dry Cleaners	Restaurants
Auto Body Shops	Engineering Firms	Retail Operations
Auto Repair Centers	Gas Stations	Warehouses
Construction Firms	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. The March reports are listed below:

Major Media Interactions	165
Press Releases	18
News Carousel	7

Major Media Topics:

- **Emergency Order on Crematoriums:** The Guardian requested an updated list of crematoriums that applied for exemption. The list was provided, and the reporter was referred to the Los Angeles County Coroner for more information. The Pacific Times submitted a list of questions regarding the Executive Order and written responses were provided.
- **Lawn and Garden Rebate Program:** Colorado Boulevard requested information on the Commercial Lawn and Garden Program and submitted questions. Written responses were provided.
- **Windblown Dust Advisories:** Pitches were sent to local news outlets on March 8, 14, 23 and 29 for windblown dust advisories resulting in coverage by various television, radio and online outlets.
- **Chairman Burke Retirement:** Beverly Hills Weekly requested a high-resolution photo of Chairman Burke, which was provided. Pitches were also sent

to local news outlets with the press release announcing the Chairman's retirement.

- **Low-Cost Monitoring Equipment:** Staff participated in an interview with Sierra Magazine, discussing the use of low-cost sensors.
- **Warehouse ISR:** IWP News requested comment on the CalTax letter regarding the WAIRE program. A copy of the response letter to CalTax will be provided once available. A student reporter from Northwestern submitted written questions on the ISR. Responses are being drafted.
- **Murphy Drill Site:** The Desert Sun requested an interview regarding missing data from leaks at the Murphy drill site in South Los Angeles. Written responses were provided.
- **End of Check Before You Burn Season:** Pitches were sent to local news outlets regarding the end of Check Before You Burn season.
- **All American Asphalt:** A student reporter with Chapman University requested an interview to discuss All American Asphalt. A written response was provided.
- **Special Air Quality Advisory:** Pitches were sent to local news outlets regarding the special air quality advisory and extension, due to prescribed burns in Ontario, resulting in coverage by various television, radio and online outlets.
- **Air Quality and COVID-19:** NBC inquired how pandemic-related stay-at-home orders had impacted air quality in 2020. A written response and link to a related presentation was provided.
- **MHF Regulations:** Drilled submitted written questions regarding the use of MHF at refineries. Written responses were provided.
- **Odors in Long Beach:** The Long Beach Post requested information regarding the source of odors reported in downtown Long Beach. Written responses were provided.
- **WHAM Goes Virtual:** Pitches were sent to local news outlets and reporters regarding the virtual expansion of the Why Healthy Air Matters curriculum.
- **Cesar Chavez Event:** CBS/KCAL requested footage from the virtual Cesar Chavez event. A link to the Zoom recording was provided.
- **Exide:** KCRW/NPR requested background information for a piece on communities impacted by the Exide battery recycling plant and environmental justice. A response is being drafted.

News Releases:

- **Under Volvo LIGHTS program, NFI reaches sustainability milestone - March 3, 2021:** Shared a Volvo press release regarding a transportation electrification milestone reached by the LIGHTS project.
- **Chairman Dr. William A. Burke Announces Retirement from South Coast AQMD Governing Board - March 5, 2021 (English and Spanish):**

Announced Chairman Burke's upcoming retirement from the South Coast AQMD Board.

- **Check Before You Burn Season Closes with 25 No-Burn Days this Winter - March 11, 2021 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents about the end of Check Before You Burn season.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Special Air Quality Advisory and Extension Due to Prescribed Burns in Ontario – March 17-18, 2021 (English and Spanish):** Notified residents of potential smoke conditions in Ontario.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Windblown Dust Advisory for Portions of Riverside County – March 14, 2021 (English and Spanish):** Notified residents of windblown dust conditions.
- **South Coast AQMD Air Quality Education Program Goes Virtual - March 23, 2021 (English and Spanish):** Announced the expansion of the WHAM curriculum to virtual learning.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Windblown Dust Advisory for Portions of the South Coast Air Basin and Coachella Valley (English and Spanish) - March 8, 22, 29 2021:** Notified residents of windblown dust conditions in the South Coast Air Basin and Coachella Valley.

Social Media Notable posts:

1. **Dust Advisory (3/8):** 22,237 Twitter Impressions
2. **Dust Advisory (3/14):** 12,716 Twitter Impressions
3. **Dust Advisory (3/22):** 7,887 Twitter Impressions
4. **Chavez Reminder (3/26):** 6,719 Twitter Impressions
5. **AQ Forecast (3/31):** 7,857 Twitter Impressions

News Carousel:

6. **CARB approves South LA for Community Air Protection Program – March 5, 2021:** Provided information on the addition of South Los Angeles to the AB 617 program.
7. **Emergency Order for Crematoriums Extended for LA, Orange and Riverside Counties – March 7, 2021:** Order for crematoriums extended to March 17.
8. **SoCalGas to Assist Local Fleet Owners in Securing Incentive Funds to Transition to Cleaner Technologies – March 9, 2021:** Provided information on the Carl Moyer program.
9. **Emergency Order for Crematoriums Extended for LA, Orange & Riverside Counties – March 14, 2021:** Order for crematoriums extended to March 24.
10. **Keep up with the Latest News from South Coast AQMD - View the current edition of the Advisor newsletter – March 17, 2021:** Provided link to the current edition of the Advisor.

- 11. Emergency Order for Crematoriums Extended for LA, Orange & Riverside counties, March 24, 2021:** Order for crematoriums extended to April 4.
- 12. Join South Coast AQMD's 7th Annual Cesar Chavez Day of Remembrance – March 27, 2021:** Provided information on the Cesar Chavez Day event and directed users to the signup page.

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

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

Alhambra	Hermosa Beach	Rancho Palos Verdes
Altadena	Highland	Redondo Beach
Anaheim	Huntington Beach	Riverside
Arcadia	Industry	Rolling Hills
Avalon	Inglewood	Rolling Hills Estates
Azusa	Irvine	Rosemead
Baldwin Park	Irwindale	San Bernardino
Beverly Hills	La Cañada Flintridge	San Dimas
Bradbury	Laguna Niguel	San Fernando
Brea	La Habra	San Gabriel
Buena Park	Lake Forest	San Marino
Burbank	La Puente	Santa Ana
Carson	La Verne	Santa Clarita
Castaic	Lawndale	Santa Monica
Claremont	Lomita	Seal Beach
Covina	Los Angeles	Sierra Madre
Culver City	Manhattan Beach	South El Monte
Diamond Bar	Mission Viejo	South Pasadena
Duarte	Monrovia	Stanton
El Monte	Monterey Park	Temple City
El Segundo	Ontario	Torrance
Fullerton	Palos Verdes Estates	Walnut
Garden Grove	Pasadena	West Covina
Gardena	Placentia	West Hollywood
Glendale	Pomona	Yorba Linda
Glendora		
Hawthorne		

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

- U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein
- U.S. Senator Alex Padilla
- U.S. Representative Nanette Barragán
- U.S. Representative Judy Chu
- U.S. Representative Young Kim
- U.S. Representative Ted Lieu
- U.S. Representative Grace Napolitano
- U.S. Representative Jay Obernolte
- U.S. Representative Katie Porter
- U.S. Representative Adam Schiff
- U.S. Representative Maxine Waters
- Senator Ben Allen
- Senator Steven Bradford
- Senator Lena Gonzalez
- Senator David Min
- Senator Anthony Portantino
- Senator Susan Rubio
- Senator Scott Wilk
- Assembly Member Autumn Burke
- Assembly Member Ed Chau
- Assembly Member Laura Friedman
- Assembly Member Mike Gipson
- Assembly Member Chris Holden
- Assembly Member Al Muratsuchi
- Assembly Member Patrick O'Donnell
- Assembly Majority Leader Eloise Reyes
- Assembly Member Blanca Rubio
- Assembly Member Suzette Martinez Valladares

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

Aliso Canyon Fund Community Group
Baldwin Hills Community Advisory Panel
Cal Cities (League of California Cities)
California Department of Housing and Consumer Relations
California Department of Planning and Research
California High Speed Rail Authority
CARB
Clean Cities Coalition
Commercial Real Estate Development Association
DTSC
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Greater Ontario Business Council
Harbor Association of Commerce and Industry
Imperial Irrigation District
Industry Business Council, Los Angeles
Inland Action
Inland Empire Utilities Agency
Inland Valley Development Agency

LA Metro
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning
Los Angeles County Office of Sustainability
Mountain Transit
Northeast Los Angeles Neighborhood Council
Omnitrans
Ontario International Airport
Orange County Business Council
Orange County Council of Governments
Orange County Transportation Authority
Port of Long Beach
Port of Los Angeles
Public Policy Institute of California
Riverside County Board of Supervisors
Riverside County Transportation Commission
Riverside Transit Agency
San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors
San Bernardino County Department of Planning
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
San Bernardino International Airport
San Fernando Valley Council of Governments
San Gabriel Valley City Managers Association
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership
San Gabriel Valley Water Company
Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce
South Bay Cities Council of Governments
South Orange County Economic Alliance
Southern California Association of Governments
Southern California Edison
Southern California Gas Company
Sunline Transit Agency
Valley Industry and Commerce Association
Western Community Energy
Westside Cities Council of Governments
Western Riverside Council of Governments

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

American Lung Association
Basset High School, La Puente
California State University, Long Beach
Clean Air Coalition
Clean Healthy Air, Clean Healthy Altadena
Ganesha High School, Pomona
Glendale High School
Harbor Interfaith Services
Huntington Beach Union School District
Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles
Rancho Santiago Community College District
Santa Ana College
Sisters of Social Service, Los Angeles
STAND-LA
Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Riverside
Watts Clean Air and Energy Committee