

BOARD MEETING DATE: April 1, 2022

AGENDA NO. 10

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the February 2022 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 February. 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, 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, and improving air quality and minimize economic impacts.

No major events were hosted or sponsored in February.

Community events/Public Meetings

Each year, 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 to 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.

Staff attended and/or provided information and updates at the following February events and meetings:

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

On February 2, staff participated in a virtual agency stakeholder meeting regarding AllenCo Energy. Staff provided updates on monthly compliance activities including surveillance and air monitoring, which did not detect elevated emissions levels. No complaints alleging AllenCo Energy as the source were received since the last meeting.

Orange County Business Council

On February 4, staff provided an agency update at a virtual Government Affairs Committee meeting. The update included South Coast AQMD's Apps and the appointment of Orange County Supervisor Andrew Do to the Governing Board.

San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments

On February 16, staff attended a virtual Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Committee meeting. Staff shared information on Check Before You Burn, Why Healthy Air Matters (WHAM) and other programs.

Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce (HAIC)

On February 17, staff participated in a HAIC Government Affairs Committee meeting. Staff provided updates on South Coast AQMD's Cesar Chavez event and an upcoming Working Group meeting on the Indirect Source Rule for Commercial Marine Ports.

San Fernando Valley Council of Governments

On September 17, staff attended a virtual meeting and provided updates on Check Before You Burn, WHAM and other programs.

Industrial Environmental Association, Vernon Chapter

On February 23, staff participated in a virtual meeting and presented on the Warehouse Indirect Source Rule.

Environmental Justice Update

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

Pacoima Community Initiative

On February 4, staff participated in a virtual monthly meeting. Staff provided an update on the Clean Air Program for Elementary Students (CAPES) and the 8th Annual Cesar Chavez Day of Remembrance event.

Advanced Biofuels USA Webinar – Sponsored by Coalition for Clean Air

On February 8, staff participated in a webinar sponsored by the Coalition for Clean Air, titled, “The Role of Alternative Fuels in California’s Transportation Future.” The webinar focused on the role alternative fuels in lowering greenhouse gases and reducing air pollution.

Special Environmental Justice Advisory Group Meeting

On February 25, a virtual special meeting was held to discuss a SELA United letter regarding Rule 415 and odors from rendering facilities. Members voted to send an identical letter to the South Coast AQMD Board.

AB 617 Update

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

South Los Angeles CSC

On February 3, approximately 70 attendees participated in a virtual AB 617 CSC meeting. The discussions focused on member-identified issues relating to the CERP, including dry cleaners, metals facilities and auto body shops. Break-out sessions were held to provide an opportunity for CSC members to provide input in smaller groups, and multiple Zoom polls were conducted to gather information.

San Bernardino, Muscoy CSC

On February 10, approximately 72 attendees participated in a virtual AB 617 meeting. Meeting topics included updates on the implementation of the CERP and CAMP, automated license plate readers, idling enforcement, Truck Incentives Workshops and concrete batch plants. Aclima also presented on their air monitoring study.

East Los Angeles, Boyle Heights, West Commerce CSC

On February 17, approximately 68 attendees participated in a virtual AB 617 meeting. Meeting and discussion topics included the implementation of the CERP and CAMP, truck traffic priorities and a recap of a poll on the home air filtration project. Aclima also presented on their air monitoring study.

Inland Empire Concerned African American Churches

On February 17, staff attended a clean transportation virtual session. The discussion focused on Sustainable Energy, topics included fuel cell technologies and zero-emission trucks.

Wilmington, Carson, West Long Beach CSC

On February 24, approximately 115 attendees participated in a virtual AB 617 meeting. Meeting topics included implementation of the CERP and CAMP, Dominguez Channel odor event, discussion of a Memorandum of Understanding and proposed indirect source rulemaking for sources at the ports and Truck Incentives Workshops.

Just San Bernardino Community Coalition & Warehouse Worker Resource Center

On February 24, staff attended a virtual townhall meeting hosted by the Just San Bernardino Community Coalition and Warehouse Worker Resource Center and other organizations. The discussions focused on the impacts of warehouses on communities and current efforts to mitigate warehouse growth in the City of San Bernardino.

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.

Girl Scout Troop 2851

On February 2, staff presented to Girl Scout Troop 2851 on South Coast AQMD and air quality issues. Staff participated in a question-and-answer session to assist with a troop project and shared information about the WHAM program.

Communication Center Statistics

The Communication Center handles calls on South Coast AQMD's main line, 1-800-CUT-SMOG®, the Spanish language line, and after-hours calls to those lines. Total calls received in the month of February are summarized below:

South Coast AQMD's Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG®	2,427
South Coast AQMD's Spanish-Language Line	56
Total Calls	2,483

Public Information Center Statistics

The Public Information Center (PIC) handles phone calls for general information. The PIC did not take walk-in requests in February 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 February is summarized below:

Calls Received by PIC	12
Calls to Automated System	277
Total Calls	289

Email Advisories Sent	19,614
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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 February.

- Provided permit application assistance to 226 companies, and
- Processed 81 Air Quality Permit Checklists.

Types of businesses assisted:

Architecture Firms	Engineering Firms	Restaurants
Auto Body Shops	Gas Stations	Retail Operations
Construction Firms	Manufacturing Facilities	Warehouses
Dry Cleaners	Offices	

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 February reports are listed below:

Major Media Interactions	89
Press Releases	12
News Carousel	1

Major Media Topics:

- **Heavy-Duty Truck Regulations:** Staff participated in an interview requested by Grist on federal regulations for heavy-duty trucks.
- **Biogas Facility:** The Daily News requested information on Ralph's biogas facility in Compton. Reporter was directed to the FIND tool online and referred to CalRecycle.
- **On-Target Gun Range:** The San Francisco Chronicle requested copies of the issued Notices to Comply. The reporter was advised of the public records request process for additional enforcement documents. The reporter submitted follow-up questions and staff is waiting for additional information.
- **Emissions:** The New York Times requested clarification on emissions numbers for passenger electric vehicles. A response was provided.
- **PM2.5:** Inside EPA requested comment on a letter to U.S. EPA Region 9 on the San Joaquin Valley PM2.5 SIP. The reporter was referred to CARB.
- **Dust Abatement Measures:** The Los Angeles Times inquired about dust abatement requirements at two facilities. Written responses were provided.
- **Toxics from Oil and Gas Operations:** Matter of Fact with Soledad O'Brien requested statistics on toxics from oil and gas operations in Los Angeles neighborhoods. A written response was provided.
- **Quemetco:** KPCC and Grist submitted questions regarding the Quemetco Draft EIR process, permitting processes and next steps. Written responses were provided.
- **JETSI Project:** Capital & Main requested updates on the JETSI 100 electric trucks project delivery. Written responses were provided, along with contact information for two fleet purchasers.
- **Air Quality in Freight and Port Communities:** Staff participated in an interview with KCET on the importance of the ongoing work to improve air quality for freight and port communities.
- **Modified Hydrofluoric Acid (MHF):** The Daily Breeze requested input from South Coast AQMD on the motion by Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn to phase out MHF in refineries. An update on refineries was provided.

- **Air Pollution “Hot Spots”:** KCET inquired about efforts to monitor and mitigate air pollution in areas designated as “hot spots.” The reporter was referred to CARB.
- **Study of Neighborhood Air near Petroleum Sources (SNAPS) Program:** Matter of Fact with Soledad O’Brien inquired about CARB’s SNAPS Program. The reporter was referred to CARB.
- **Hyperion Treatment Plant:** Pitches were sent to local media outlets regarding South Coast AQMD’s petition for Order of Abatement, resulting in print and broadcast coverage. The Southern California News Group submitted follow-up questions. Written responses were provided.
- **Ports ISR:** Pitches were sent to local media outlets regarding the Ports ISR, resulting in print and broadcast coverage. The Wall Street Journal and Los Angeles Times inquired about the Board review of an ISR for the San Pedro Bay ports. A response was provided.
- **Windblown Dust Advisory:** Pitches were sent to local media outlets regarding three windblown dust advisories, resulting in print and broadcast coverage.

News Releases:

- **South Coast AQMD Issues Windblown Dust Advisory for the entire South Coast AQMD jurisdiction - February 2, 14, and 20 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of three Windblown Dust Advisories.
- **South Coast AQMD Requests Order to Require Hyperion Treatment Plant to Comply with Permit Conditions (English and Spanish) - February 17, 2022:** Informed residents of a request for an administrative order seeking Hyperion’s compliance with South Coast AQMD rules.
- **No-Burn Days - Mandatory Wood-Burning Ban In Effect For Residents Of The South Coast Air Basin (English and Spanish):** 1 No-Burn Day was issued on February 20, 2022.

Social Media Notable Posts:

- **AQ Forecast (2/5):** 1,545 Twitter Impressions
- **Dust Advisory (2/14):** 2,143 Twitter Impressions
- 10.1K Facebook Users Reached in a 24-hour period on Thursday, February 17
- Assist from SoCal Edison Electric Truck Post on 2/17 (tagging South Coast AQMD): <https://www.facebook.com/sce/posts/10158283419451831>

Special Topics:

- **Check Before You Burn:** One No-Burn Day was issued on February 20, 2022. Pitches were sent to local media outlets, resulting in print and broadcast coverage. SoCal News Group requested the number of complaints received in recent years regarding No-Burn Days. Complaint numbers were provided.

News Carousel:

- **Keep Up with the Latest News From South Coast AQMD:** Provides a link to latest edition of the Advisor newsletter.

Outreach to Community Groups and Federal, State, and Local Governments

Outreach was conducted in person and virtually in February utilizing web-based and other technologies to communicate with elected officials or staff from the following cities:

Alhambra	Industry	Rosemead
Anaheim	Irvine	San Dimas
Avalon	La Habra	San Fernando
Big Bear	La Puente	San Gabriel
Brea	Laguna Niguel	San Marino
Buena Park	Long Beach	Santa Clarita
Burbank	Los Angeles	Seal Beach
Carson	Manhattan Beach	Sierra Madre
Claremont	Mission Viejo	South El Monte
Duarte	Monrovia	South Pasadena
El Monte	Monterey Park	Temple City
Fontana	Newport Beach	Vernon
Fullerton	Paramount	Walnut
Garden Grove	Pasadena	West Covina
Glendale	Placentia	Yorba Linda
Highland	Pomona	
Huntington Park	Rancho Cucamonga	

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

- U.S. Senator Diane Feinstein
- U.S. Senator Alex Padilla
- U.S. Representative Tony Cardenas
- U.S. Representative Judy Chu
- U.S. Representative Lou Correa
- U.S. Representative Ted Lieu
- U.S. Representative Grace Napolitano
- U.S. Representative Maxine Waters
- Senator Ben Allen
- Senator Bob Archuleta
- Senator Lena Gonzalez
- Senator Bob Herzberg
- Senator Dave Min
- Senator Anthony Portantino
- Senator Susan Rubio
- Assembly Member Lisa Calderon
- Assembly Member Laura Friedman
- Assembly Member Cristina Garcia
- Assembly Member Eduardo Garcia
- Assembly Member Mike Gipson
- Assembly Member Chris Holden

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

Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce
Big Bear Chamber of Commerce
California High Speed Rail Authority
Clean Power Alliance
Department of Toxic Substances Control
Energy Coalition
Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority
Foothill Transit
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Inland Valley Development Agency
League of California Cities, Los Angeles, Inland Empire and Orange County Divisions
Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, Baldwin Hills Community Standards District
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
Metro
Mountain Transit
Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce
National Park Service
Omnitrans
Ontario International Airport Authority Board
Orange County Council of Governments
Orange County Business Council
San Bernardino Area Chamber of Commerce
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
San Bernardino International Airport Authority
San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative
San Gabriel Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership
San Gabriel Valley Transit
Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce
South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce
Southern California Association of Governments
Valley Industry Commerce Association
Westside Cities Council of Government

In February, staff represented South Coast AQMD and/or provided updates or a presentation to the following community and educational groups and organizations:

California State University, Fullerton
Clean Air Coalition of North Whittier and Avocado Heights
East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice
Edison High School, Huntington Beach
Girl Scout Troop 2851, La Cañada Flintridge
Inland Empire Concerned African American Churches
League of Women Voters, East San Gabriel Valley
Newport Mesa Irvine Interfaith Council
Pasadena City College
Peoples Collective for Environmental Justice
Santa Ana College
Sierra Club, San Bernardino
Trust for Public Land, Los Angeles