

BOARD MEETING DATE: March 4, 2022

AGENDA NO. 12

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the January 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 January. 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 the economy.

Martin Luther King (MLK) Jr. Day of Service 2022

The 9th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service event was hosted virtually on January 15. There were approximately 225 attendees via Zoom, Facebook, and YouTube. The event was attended by South Coast AQMD Board Members, elected officials, and members of the public.

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 January events and meetings:

San Bernardino County Transportation Authority

On January 6, staff participated in and provided updates to the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority City Manager Technical Advisory Committee on the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service event and Check Before you Burn Program.

Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce

On January 11, staff participated virtually and provided agency updates to the Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee on the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service event and Check Before You Burn Program.

South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce

On January 12, staff participated virtually and provided updates to the South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce on the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Service event and importance of the Check Before You Burn Program.

Big Bear Valley Chamber of Commerce

On January 13, staff participated virtually and provided updates to the Big Bear Valley Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee on VW mitigation funds and the upcoming Carl Moyer program.

Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce (HAIC)

On January 13, staff participated virtually in the HAIC Government Affairs Committee. Updates were shared regarding the Marine Ports Committee agenda and Community Consultation meeting on approaches to reducing emissions from marine port operations.

San Fernando Valley Council of Governments

On January 12, staff participated virtually and provided updates to the San Fernando Valley Council of Governments Board on the Check Before You Burn Program and deployment of electric trucks under the Joint Electric Truck Scaling Initiative.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATE

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

Environmental Justice Advisory Group (EJAG) Meeting

On January 28, EJAG held a virtual quarterly meeting. The group appointed a member to serve on an Advisory Council for the 2022 Air Quality Management Plan. Staff also presented on Proposed Rule 2306 - Indirect Source Rule for New Intermodal Facilities. A letter signed by three community organizations and local elected officials regarding odor issues at rendering facilities was brought to the attention of the Advisory Group. A future special EJAG meeting will be convened to have a full discussion on odor complaints related to rendering facilities.

AB 617 UPDATE

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

South Los Angeles CSC Meeting

On January 13, approximately 50 attendees participated virtually in the CSC meeting. Discussions were focused on air quality priorities for oil and gas facilities and mobile sources.

Southeast Los Angeles CSC Meeting

On January 20, approximately 45 attendees participated virtually in the CSC meeting. Agenda topics included a CERP implementation update on general industrial facilities, a recap of how to file a complaint and an introduction to the JETSI program.

Truck Incentives Workshop

On January 26, approximately 75 participants attended the second of three workshops for AB 617 communities, to guide the development of a Truck Incentive Project Plan. The next meeting is scheduled for March 2022.

Eastern Coachella Valley CSC Meeting

On January 27, approximately 45 attendees participated virtually in the CSC meeting. Agenda topics included home air filtration systems and highlights on the implementation of the CERP and CAMP. Members also shared updates from the Budget, Monitoring, and Outreach Working Teams.

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.

Whittier College

On January 13, staff virtually presented an overview on South Coast AQMD and air quality issues to an Environmental Studies class of 25 students. Staff also shared information on the Air Quality Sensor Performance Evaluation Center, Facility Information Detail, internships and the types of careers offered at South Coast AQMD.

COMMUNICATION CENTER STATISTICS

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

Calls to South Coast AQMD’s Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG®	2,304
Calls to South Coast AQMD’s Spanish-language Line	45
Total Calls	2,349

PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER STATISTICS

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

Calls Received by the PIC	7
Calls to Automated System	222
Total Calls	229

Email Advisories Sent	47,102
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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 January.

- Provided permit application assistance to 220 companies; and
- Processed 74 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 January reports are listed below:

Major Media Interactions	199
Press Releases	20
News Carousel	1

Major Media Topics:

- **Draft Heavy-Duty NOx Rule:** Inside EPA inquired about documents provided at a January 18 meeting with the White House Office of Information & Regulatory Affairs. Meeting presentations were provided.
- **2021 Executive Orders Regarding Crematoriums:** Time requested dates of 2021 Executive Orders regarding cremations in Los Angeles County. Written responses were provided.
- **AB 617:** CalMatters submitted a list of questions regarding AB 617. Written responses were provided to initial inquiries and additional follow-ups in progress.
- **MATES V:** CalMatters inquired if data from the MATES V Data Visualization Tool was available in a spreadsheet. The requested information was provided.
- **Port Pollution:** Forbes requested information on port pollution increases, specifically whether we had any statistics to share from the final quarter of 2021. Reporter was referred to CARB.
- **Hyperion:** LA Times inquired about violations that were issued to the Hyperion Water Reclamation Facility in connection with the July 11-12, 2021, sewage spill into the Santa Monica Bay. Responses in progress.
- **Rendering Plant Odors:** LA TACO and KPCC inquired about odors from Rendering Plants in Vernon. Responses were provided.
- **Gun Ranges:** The San Francisco Chronicle submitted follow-up questions regarding investigation of the On Target Gun Range in Laguna Niguel. Responses in progress.
- **Indirect Source Rule:** Staff participated in an interview with the Desert Sun on the implementation of the Warehouse Indirect Source Rule and impacts on new warehouses proposed in the Coachella Valley.
- **Agency Digital Technology:** Staff participated in an interview with Interface Magazine on the agency's technology, use of cloud, data, and cybersecurity.
- **Ethylene Oxide Emissions:** Capital & Main requested information on facilities that emit ethylene Oxide. Response in progress.
- **Replace Your Ride:** Spectrum News 1 requested information on the Replace Your Ride program. Waiting on additional information from reporter.
- **All American Asphalt:** Pitches were sent to local media outlets regarding an NOV issued to All American Asphalt, resulting in print and broadcast coverage. Epoch Times and OC Register sent additional follow-up questions. Responses were provided.
- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service 2022:** Pitches were sent to local media outlets regarding South Coast AQMD's Martin Luther King, Jr. event, resulting in print and broadcast coverage. LA Sentinel requested additional information, which was provided.
- **Windblown Dust Advisory:** Pitches were sent to local media outlets informing them of two windblown dust advisories, resulting in extensive print and broadcast coverage.

- **Check Before You Burn:** Five No-Burn Days were called during January. Pitches were sent to local media outlets for each. This resulted in extensive coverage from local tv, radio, and print outlets throughout the month. Staff participated in an interview with OC Register for additional information.
- **Carson Odors:** Grist requested raw data pertaining to the investigation and whether any companies were investigated. Fence line monitoring data was provided

News Releases:

- **No-Burn Days - Mandatory Wood-Burning Ban In-Effect For Residents Of The South Coast Air Basin (English and Spanish):** Five No-Burn Days were issued on January 4, 7, 13-14 and 31.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Windblown Dust Advisory for the entire South Coast AQMD jurisdiction - January 21 and 27, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of two Windblown Dust Advisories.
- **South Coast AQMD to host 9th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Event - January 14, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents about the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.
- **Notice of Violation Issued to All American Asphalt in Irvine for Causing a Public Nuisance - January 14, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents about NOV issued to All American Asphalt.
- **Notice of Violation Issued to Animal Rendering Plant in Vernon, Calif., for Odors Impacting Surrounding Community - January 20, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents about NOV issued to Vernon rendering plant.

Social Media Notable posts:

- **No Burn Day Extension (1/13):** 3,382 Twitter Impressions
- **Windblown Dust Advisory (1/21):** 33,705 Twitter Impressions

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

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

Alhambra	Hemet	Montclair
Anaheim	Hermosa Beach	Monterey Park
Arcadia	Hidden Hills	Newport Beach
Avalon	Highland	Palos Verdes Estates
Azusa	Huntington Beach	Pasadena
Baldwin Park	Industry	Placentia
Big Bear Lake	Inglewood	Pomona
Bradbury	Irvine	Rancho Palos Verdes
Brea	Irwindale	Redondo Beach
Buena Park	La Cañada Flintridge	Rolling Hills
Calabasas	La Habra	Rolling Hills Estates
Carson	La Puente	Rosemead
Claremont	La Verne	San Dimas
Colton	Laguna Niguel	San Gabriel
Covina	Lake Forest	San Marino
Diamond Bar	Lawndale	Santa Ana
Duarte	Lomita	Seal Beach
El Monte	Long Beach	South El Monte
El Segundo	Los Angeles	South Pasadena
Fullerton	Malibu	Torrance
Garden Grove	Manhattan Beach	Walnut
Gardena	Mission Viejo	West Covina
Hawthorne	Monrovia	Yorba Linda

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

- U.S. Senator Alex Padilla
- U.S. Representative Tony Cárdenas
- U.S. Representative Judy Chu
- U.S. Representative Lou Correa
- U.S. Representative Grace Napolitano
- Senator Bob Archuleta
- Senator Steven Bradford
- Senator Anthony Portantino
- Senator Susan Rubio
- Assembly Member Lisa Calderon
- Assembly Member Laura Friedman
- Assembly Member Mike Gipson
- Assembly Member Chris Holden
- Assembly Member Suzette Martinez Valladares

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

Beach Cities Health District
Big Bear Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners
California Department of Transportation
California High Speed Railroad
California Natural Resources Agency
Clean Power Alliance
Energy Coalition
Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority
Foothill Transit
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Industry Business Council, Los Angeles
Inland Valley Development Agency
Irwindale Chamber of Commerce
LA Metro
Las Virgenes-Malibu Council of Governments
League of California Cities, Los Angeles County Division
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Los Angeles County Department of Planning
Los Angeles County Department of Water and Power
Los Angeles County Sanitation District
Los Angeles Department of Public Health
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
Mountain Transit
Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce
Omnitrans
Ontario International Airport
Orange County Board of Supervisors
Orange County Business Council
Orange County Transportation Authority
Riverside County Board of Supervisors
Riverside County Department of Public Health
Riverside Transit Agency
San Bernardino Chamber of Commerce
San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors
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 Council of Governments

San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership
San Gabriel Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District
Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce
South Bay Cities Council of Governments
SCAG
Southern California Edison
Southern California Gas Company
Sunline Transit Agency
Sunshine Canyon Landfill Community Advisory Committee
Valley Industry Commerce Association
Westside Cities Council of Government

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

Active San Gabriel Valley
Asian Pacific Islanders Forward Movement
Bassett Unified School District
California State University, Fullerton
California State University, San Bernardino
Clean Air Coalition of North Whittier and Hacienda Heights
Hacienda La Puente Unified School District
League of Women Voters, West San Gabriel Valley Chapter
Pasadena City College
Pasadena Neighborhood Connections
Santa Ana College
Taking Responsibility and Control, La Puente
Trust for Public Land, Los Angeles
University of Redlands
Wildlands Conservancy
Visual Artists Guild, San Gabriel Valley
Whitter College