

BOARD MEETING DATE: June 2, 2023

AGENDA NO. 14

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the April 2023 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, Small 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 April. The report includes Major Events, Community Events/Public Meetings, Environmental Justice Update, Speakers Bureau/Visitor Services, Communications Center, Public Information Center, Small 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 while minimizing economic impacts.

Working with Communities

On Saturday, April 1, South Coast AQMD partnered with Habitat for Humanity to install drought tolerant landscaping at a family home in the Eastern Coachella Valley. Later in the month, on Saturday, April 29, through a partnership with Habitat for Humanity, Riverside, South Coast AQMD worked to complete 10 new transitional housing cottages in downtown Riverside. The Habitat project known as Mulberry Village will provide stable housing and support services for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Earth Day Events

On April 21, staff hosted virtual Earth Day events for both Clean Air Program for Elementary Students (CAPES) and Why Healthy Air Matters (WHAM). There were 96 elementary school classrooms on the CAPES webinar where students learned about South Coast AQMD, air pollution, and career pathways. In addition, 71 middle and high school classrooms attended the WHAM webinar where a South Coast AQMD inspector presented on air quality issues and discussed career pathways.

COMMUNITY EVENTS/PUBLIC MEETINGS

Staff engaged with residents and stakeholders of diverse communities to provide information about the agency, incentive programs, and ways individuals can help reduce air pollution through events and meetings sponsored by South Coast AQMD or other partnerships. Attendees typically receive information regarding the following:

- Tips on reducing their exposure to smog and its negative health effects;
- How to file a complaint;
- Clean air technologies and their deployment;
- Invitations to or notices of conferences, seminars, workshops, and other public events;
- South Coast AQMD incentive programs;
- Funding/grant opportunities by South Coast AQMD and partner agencies;
- 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 April events and meetings:

Orange County Business Council

On April 14, staff participated virtually in the Government Affairs Committee meeting to share updates regarding the Carl Moyer Program and the Commercial Electric Lawn & Garden (eL&G) Equipment Incentive & Exchange program.

Eco-Friendly Fair

On April 15, staff participated in the City of Paramount's Eco-Friendly Fair. Attendees received information about South Coast AQMD, air quality issues, how to file a complaint, careers, and residential incentive programs.

California State University Dominguez Hills Earth Day

On April 18, staff participated in the California State University Dominguez Hills Earth Day event to share information on South Coast AQMD, careers, and the Governing Board student internship program.

University of California at Riverside Earth Day Showcase

On April 19, staff participated in the University of California at Riverside's Invest in Our Planet: Annual Earth Month Sustainability Showcase. Students learned about South Coast AQMD, air quality issues, the South Coast AQMD mobile app, and career pathways.

Inland Empire Utilities Association Earth Day

On April 20, staff participated in the Inland Empire Utilities Association Earth Day event. A clean air vehicle was displayed and information was shared about South Coast AQMD residential incentive programs for electric lawnmowers and EV chargers as well as careers at South Coast AQMD.

California State University Fullerton Earth Week

On April 20, staff participated in California State University Fullerton's Earth Week event with an informational booth to promote the South Coast AQMD mobile app, how to file a complaint, wildfire safety tips, careers, and the Governing Board student internship program.

City of Calimesa's Earth Day

On April 22, staff participated in the City of Calimesa's Earth Day event to share information on the South Coast AQMD mobile app, how to file a complaint, wildfire safety tips, incentive programs, careers, and the Governing Board student internship program.

Bolsa Chica Earth Day

On April 22, staff shared information with local residents at the Bolsa Chica Earth Day event. The booth had informational brochures such as How to File a Complaint, 10 Things You Can Do to Clean the Air, and rebates for residential electric lawn mowers.

21st Annual Corn Feed Run Car Show & Cruise

On April 22, staff participated in Annual Corn Feed Run Car Show & Cruise in Chino. Staff shared agency programs such as the eL&G program, Replace Your Ride, How to File a Complaint, and the South Coast AQMD App.

Golden Streets “Heart of the Foothills”

On April 23, staff participated in the Golden Streets Heart of the Foothills open street event which took place in the cities of San Dimas, La Verne, Pomona, and Claremont. Over 3,000 participants attended, and staff shared information on residential incentive programs for electric lawn mowers, EV chargers, and Replace Your Ride.

Pasadena Lawn & Garden Equipment Workshop

On April 26, staff participated in-person at Pasadena’s Lawn & Garden Equipment Workshop to promote the eL&G program to approximately 500 commercial gardeners and landscapers.

San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership

On April 26, staff participated virtually at the San Gabriel Valley Legislative Action Committee meeting to promote the eL&G program and to remind attendees of the upcoming application deadline for the Carl Moyer Program.

Earth Day Celebration

On April 29, staff participated in the Whittier Area Environmental Coalition’s Earth Day Celebration. Staff provided background information on South Coast AQMD and shared resources on our incentive programs and the South Coast AQMD mobile app.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATE

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

Innovations in Transit: Learning from Foothill Transit

On April 7, staff participated in the first Clean Air Conversation of 2023 hosted by Coalition for Clean Air (CCA). The webinar’s topic was Innovations in Transit: Learning from Foothill Transit with CCA. Foothill Transit was among the first agencies to commit to converting their bus fleet to 100 percent zero-emission buses and an early adopter to put them in service.

Why Healthy Air Matters Program

On April 11, WHAM hosted a webinar for high school students to educate them on the work South Coast AQMD is doing and informed them about ways to get involved to help clean the air. A total of 8 classrooms attended live and an additional 12 classrooms watched the video throughout the day.

Pacoima Community Initiative

On April 14, staff participated in the Pacoima Community Initiative’s monthly meeting. Staff shared information on the upcoming Environmental Justice Advisory Group meeting, CAPES and WHAM programs, and how to report air quality issues.

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 presentations in April.

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 April are summarized below:

Calls to South Coast AQMD’s Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG®	2,471
Calls to South Coast AQMD’s Spanish Line	22
Clean Air Connection	6
Total Calls	2,499

PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER STATISTICS

The Public Information Center (PIC) handles phone calls and assists individuals who walk-in for general information. Email advisories provided information on upcoming meetings and events, program announcements and alerts on time-sensitive issues. Information for the month of April is summarized below:

Calls Received by PIC	41
Calls to Automated System	226
Total Calls	
Visitor Transactions	131
Email Advisories Sent	15,730

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 provided personalized assistance to small businesses over the telephone, at South Coast AQMD headquarters and via virtual on-site consultation, as summarized below for April.

- Provided permit application assistance to 162 companies, and
- Processed 61 Air Quality Permit Checklists.

Types of businesses assisted:

Auto Body Shops	Gas Stations	Telecommunication
Construction Firms	Manufacturing Facilities	Centers
Dry Cleaners	Restaurants	Warehouses
Engineering Firms	Retail 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 April report is listed below:

Major Media Interactions	97
Press Releases	8
News Carousel	5

Major Media Topics:

- **Montebello Tornado:** San Gabriel Valley Tribune inquired about the progress and recovery after the Montebello Tornado. Written responses were sent.
- **Ozone Problem:** EM Magazine requested an article about the nature of the ozone problem and the ongoing efforts by South Coast AQMD to develop a plan to address ozone nonattainment for an upcoming issue. Working on a draft.
- **Purple Air Data:** Purple Air inquired about what South Coast AQMD does with Purple Air data and the high-resolution hybrid map produced. Written responses were sent.
- **Title VI Lawsuit:** The Daily Journal and California Environmental Insider inquired about the Earthjustice Title VI lawsuit. Written responses were sent.
- **EPA Lawsuit:** Los Angeles Times requested a copy of South Coast AQMD’s lawsuit filed against U.S. EPA for lack of action on its State Implementation Plan. Written responses were sent.

- **ALA State of the Air Report:** KTLA, Southern California News Group and USC's Annenberg TV News requested a response to the State of the Air report. A statement was provided.
- **Effects of Fireworks on Air Quality:** Staff participated in an interview with The Atlantic on the effects of fireworks.
- **Proposed Rule 1153.1:** Avant Food requested written responses on the electrification of commercial ovens. Written response was sent.
- **Kore Infrastructure Project Funding:** S&P Global requested information about the Kore Infrastructure Project Funding. Written Response was sent.
- **Refinery Regulations and Air Quality:** Staff participated in an interview with KCRW on current refinery monitoring, upcoming bills and how they will impact local AB 617 communities.
- **Air Quality in Coachella Valley:** Staff participated in an interview with KESQ on historical air quality and trends for the Coachella Valley.
- **Mandate for Electric Gardening:** San Fernando Sun requested information concerning the new state law that went into effect regarding the mandate for electric gardening equipment to be used. Reporter was referred to CARB.
- **Air Quality Monitoring Opportunities:** Pitched local news stations about South Coast AQMD's air quality monitoring system and opportunities to showcase information. CBS and ABC expressed interest and follow-up meetings are being scheduled.
- **Earth Day:** Pitched local outlets on Earth Day coverage.
- **Sterigenics Ontario Facility Shutdown:** Pitched local news stations about the temporary shutdown of the Sterigenics Ontario Facility due to elevated ethylene oxide (EtO) levels.
- **Windblown Dust Advisory:** Pitched advisory to local outlets resulting in media coverage.

News Releases:

- **South Coast AQMD Issues a Windblown Dust Advisory for San Gorgonio Pass, Coachella Valley, and East Riverside County – April 2, 18, and 30, 2023 (English and Spanish):** Informed the public of Windblown Dust caused by high winds in San Gorgonio Pass, Coachella Valley and East Riverside County – April 2, 18, and 30, 2023 (English & Spanish) – pitched to 15 media outlets.
- **South Coast AQMD Requires Sterigenics in Ontario to Temporarily Shut Down Due to Elevated EtO Readings – April 28, 2023 (English and Spanish):** Informed the public of the temporary shutdown of the facility due to EtO levels.

Social Media Posts:

- **Windblown Dust Advisory (4/2):** 6,898 Twitter Impressions
--RT by @AirResources, @PalmDesertGov, @805Weather, @WeAre4CleanAir, @NWSSanDiego
- **Air Quality Map (4/9):** 2,351 Twitter Impressions
--RT by @805Weather, @PasadenaGov
- **Windblown Dust Advisory (4/18):** 4,863 Twitter Impressions
--RT by @AirResources, @SoCal_RedCross, @RivCoReady, @805Weather, @NWSSanDiego, @BCWildfireWkly
- **AQ Forecast (4/22):** 1,692 Twitter Impressions
--RT by @LAFDtalk, @805Weather

News Carousel:

- **Facility Operators: Annual Emissions Reporting (AER) Deadline is Mon. 5/1/23 5pm.” -- April 26, 2023:** Linked to the Annual Emissions Reporting overview webpage.
- **“South Coast AQMD partnership assists NFI to Expand Class 8 Electric Truck Fleet in Southern CA through the JETSI Project” -- April 12, 2023:** Linked to press release issued by NFI.
- **“Attend a Community Workshop on South Coast AQMD’s proposed new rule for new rail yards - Wed., 4/12 - Remote only” -- April 11, 2023:** Linked to flyer on Indirect Source Rule Community Workshops.
- **“Celebrate Earth Day on April 22! Here are 8 things you can do to help clean the air” -- April 19, 2023:** Linked to a tip sheet for things people can do to celebrate Earth Day.
- **“Reminder! Annual Emission Reports and fees are due by 5:00 p.m., May 1 for facilities subject to reporting 2022 emissions” -- April 26, 2023:** Linked to the Annual Emissions Reporting Overview webpage.

OUTREACH TO COMMUNITY GROUPS AND FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Outreach was conducted personally and virtually in April to communicate with elected officials or staff from the following cities:

Agoura Hills	Beaumont	Burbank
Alhambra	Bell	Calabasas
Arcadia	Bell Gardens	Calimesa
Artesia	Bellflower	Canyon Lake
Avalon	Beverly Hills	Carson
Azusa	Big Bear Lake	Cerritos
Baldwin Park	Bradbury	Chino
Banning	Brea	Chino Hills

Claremont	La Cañada Flintridge	Pomona
Colton	La Habra	Rancho Palos Verdes
Commerce	La Habra Heights	Redondo Beach
Compton	Lake Elsinore	Rialto
Colton	La Mirada	Riverside
Corona	La Puente	Rolling Hills
Covina	La Verne	Rolling Hills Estates
Cudahy	Lakewood	Rosemead
Culver City	Lawndale	San Dimas
Diamond Bar	Loma Linda	San Fernando
Downey	Lomita	San Gabriel
Duarte	Long Beach	San Jacinto
Eastvale	Los Angeles	San Marino
El Monte	Lynwood	Santa Fe Springs
El Segundo	Malibu	Santa Monica
Fontana	Manhattan Beach	Sierra Madre
Fullerton	Menifee	Signal Hill
Gardena	Maywood	South El Monte
Grand Terrace	Monrovia	South Gate
Glendale	Montclair	South Pasadena
Glendora	Montebello	Temecula
Hawaiian Gardens	Monterey Park	Temple City
Hawthorne	Moreno Valley	Torrance
Hemet	Murrieta	Upland
Hermosa Beach	Norco	Vernon
Hidden Hills	Norwalk	Walnut
Huntington Beach	Ontario	Wildomar
Huntington Park	Palos Verdes Estates	West Covina
Industry	Paramount	West Hollywood
Inglewood	Pasadena	Westlake Village
Irvine	Perris	Whittier
Irwindale	Pico Rivera	Yorba Linda
Jurupa Valley	Placentia	Yucaipa

Communication was conducted in April 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 Ken Calvert
- U.S. Representative Tony Cárdenas
- U.S. Representative Judy Chu
- U.S. Representative Jay Obernolte
- U.S. Representative Michelle Steel
- U.S. Representative Norma Torres
- Senator Bob Archuleta
- Senator Catherine Blakespear
- Senator Maria Elena Durazo
- Senator Steven Glazer
- Senator Lena Gonzalez
- Senator Josh Newman
- Senator Anthony Portantino
- Senator Susan Rubio
- Senator Nancy Skinner
- Senator Scott Weiner
- Assemblymember Marc Berman
- Assemblymember Mike Fong
- Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia
- Assemblymember Mike Gipson
- Assemblymember Gregg Hart
- Assemblymember Chris Holden
- Assemblymember Corey Jackson
- Assemblymember Ash Kalra
- Assemblymember Tom Lackey
- Assemblymember Stephanie Nguyen
- Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez
- Assemblymember Blanca Rubio
- Assemblymember Miguel Santiago
- Assemblymember Avelino Valencia
- Assemblymember Christopher Ward

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

Alhambra Chamber of Commerce
Arcadia Chamber of Commerce
Azusa Chamber of Commerce
Baldwin Park Chamber of Commerce
Carson Chamber of Commerce
Claremont Chamber of Commerce
Climate Mayors
Covina Chamber of Commerce
Crestline Chamber of Commerce
DTSC
Duarte Chamber of Commerce
El Monte-South El Monte Chamber of Commerce
El Segundo Chamber of Commerce
Foothill Transit
Gardena Valley Chamber of Commerce
Glendale Chamber of Commerce
Glendora Chamber of Commerce

Greater Monterey Park Chamber of Commerce
Greater West Covina Business Association
Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority
Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce
Hermosa Beach Chamber of Commerce
Industry Business Council, Los Angeles
Inglewood Airport Area Chamber of Commerce
Irwindale Chamber of Commerce
La Canada Flintridge Chamber of Commerce and Community Association
Lake Arrowhead Chamber of Commerce
La Verne Chamber of Commerce
League of California Cities, LA County Division
Lomita Chamber of Commerce
Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles Sanitation District
Manhattan Beach Chamber of Commerce
March Air Force Base JPA
Metropolitan Water District
Monrovia Chamber of Commerce
National Park Service
Ontario International Airport
Olive View - UCLA Medical Center
Omnitrans
Orange County Council of Governments
Palos Verdes Peninsula Chamber of Commerce
Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy
Pasadena Chamber of Commerce
Pomona Chamber of Commerce
Rosemead Chamber of Commerce
Redondo Beach Chamber of Commerce
Regional Chamber of Commerce-San Gabriel Valley
Running Springs Chamber of Commerce
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
San Bernardino International Airport
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
San Dimas Chamber of Commerce
San Fernando City Chamber of Commerce
San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers Mountains Conservancy
San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative
San Gabriel Chamber of Commerce
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership
San Gabriel Valley Mosquito & Vector Control

San Marino Chamber of Commerce
San Pedro Chamber of Commerce
Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce
Sierra Madre Chamber of Commerce
South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce
South Bay Cities Council of Governments
Southern California Association of Governments
South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce
Temple City Chamber of Commerce
Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce
United States Forest Service
Upland Chamber of Commerce
Western Riverside Council of Governments
West Valley Water District
Wilmington Chamber of Commerce

In April, 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
Big Bear Unified School District
Breathe Southern California
California Fuel Cell Partnership
California State University, Dominguez Hills
California State University, San Bernardino
Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice
Chino Valley Unified School District
Clean Air Coalition of North Whittier & Avocado Heights
Clean Healthy Air, Clean Healthy Altadena
Clean Power Alliance of Southern California
Coalition for Clean Air
Communities for a Better Environment
Del Amo Action Committee
Friends of the Pacific Electric Trail
Grades of Green
Habitat for Humanity, Riverside
Inland Empire Biking Alliance
Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma
Mountain Rim Fire Safe Council
National Park Service
Our Global Humanity, Los Angeles
Pasadena City College
Rialto Unified School District

Rim of the World Unified School District
San Bernardino Valley College
San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps
South Bay Parkland Conservancy
Southern California Mountains Foundation
The Energy Coalition
Torrance Refinery Action Alliance
TreePeople
Trust for Public Land
University of California, Irvine
Whittier Area Environmental Coalition