

BOARD MEETING DATE: November 3, 2023

AGENDA NO. 7

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the September 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 September. The report includes Major Events, Community Events/Public Meetings, Environmental Justice (EJ) 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 hosting 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.

On September 13, the 9th Annual Environmental Justice Conference entitled, "Building a Clean Air Future Together," was held in-person, with free admission, at the Riverside

Convention Center with a virtual option. Speakers included Dr. Jalonne L. White-Newsome, Senior Director for Environmental Justice at the White House Council on Environmental Quality and Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia, 36th District. The conference included simultaneous breakout sessions entitled “Empowering Overburdened Communities: Bridging the Gap for Environmental Justice” and “Unlocking Green Opportunities: Job Training and Education for Environmental Policy”. The conference concluded with a plenary session entitled “Building a Collaborative Path to Environmental Justice: Community, Technology, and Partnerships.” There were approximately 210 in-person attendees and 445 virtual participants via Whova, YouTube and Facebook.

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 in partnership with others. 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 September events and meetings:

South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce

On September 5, staff attended the South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce Board of Directors meeting and shared information regarding the 9th Annual EJ Conference, Rules 1180 and 1180.1 Working Group meetings, and CARB’s Planning and Clean Transportation Funding grants.

San Bernardino County Transportation Authority

On September 6, staff participated in the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority City Manager Technical Advisory Committee and shared information on the upcoming 9th Annual EJ Conference.

San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments

On September 6, staff participated in the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments Energy, Environment & Natural Resources Committee meeting and shared an invitation to the 9th Annual EJ Conference.

Gateway Cities Council of Governments

On September 6, staff shared information on the 9th Annual EJ Conference with the Board of Directors of Gateway Cities Council of Governments.

Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce

On September 8, staff participated in the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce Government Affairs Council to share information on the upcoming 9th Annual EJ Conference.

Long Beach Fire Department Community Emergency Response Team

On September 9, staff participated in the READY Long Beach Community Preparedness Expo. Staff shared information on how to file an air quality complaint and the 9th Annual EJ Conference.

29th Annual Rialto Pollution Prevention Fair

On September 16, staff participated in the 29th Annual Rialto Pollution Prevention Fair. Staff demonstrated an alternative fuel vehicle, shared air quality information, and explained how to file a complaint.

Murrieta/Wildomar Chamber of Commerce

On September 20, staff participated in the Murrieta/Wildomar Chamber of Commerce meeting and provided information on programs such as Small Business Assistance and Replace Your Ride and how to file air quality complaints.

Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce

On September 20, staff participated in the Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce Government Affairs Committee meeting to provide updates on the Voucher Incentive Program and the enforcement initiative for noncompliant warehouses.

28th Annual Central Avenue Jazz Festival

On September 23, staff participated in the 28th Annual Central Avenue Jazz Festival in Los Angeles. Staff informed residents on how to file air quality complaints and how to use the South Coast AQMD app, and shared information on the Check Before You Burn program.

Orange County Cities Council of Governments

On September 28, staff participated in the Orange County Cities Council of Governments Board of Directors meeting to provide updates on incentive programs and on how to file an air quality complaint.

Riverside College and Career Fair

On September 28, staff participated in the Greater Riverside Chamber of Commerce’s College and Career Fair to share information on career opportunities and the Why Healthy Air Matters education program.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATE

The following are key EJ-related activities in which staff participated during September. These events and meetings involve communities affected disproportionately from adverse air quality impacts.

White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council

On September 26, staff participated virtually in the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council public meeting to learn about the Council’s Environmental Quality initiatives.

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 September.

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 September are summarized below:

Calls to South Coast AQMD’s Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG®	2,373
Calls to South Coast AQMD’s Spanish Line	16
Total Calls	2,389

PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER STATISTICS

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

Calls Received by PIC	4
Calls to Automated System	171
Total Calls	175
Visitor Transactions	118
Email Advisories Sent	36,198

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 September.

- Provided permit application assistance to 152 companies, and
- Processed 76 Air Quality Permit Checklists.

Types of businesses assisted:

Architecture Firms	Gas Stations	Schools
Auto Body Shops	Manufacturing Facilities	Warehouses
Construction Firms	Other Businesses	
Dry Cleaners	Restaurants	
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 August report is listed below:

Major Media Interactions	170
Press Releases	18
News Carousel	3

Major Media Topics:

- **EJ Conference:** Staff participated in an interview with 94.7 The Wave about the EJ conference, for a segment that aired on their public affairs talk show “Open Line.”
- **Smoke and Air Quality:** Staff participated in an interview with KTLA Digital to discuss smoke and its impact on air quality.
- **Ports Indirect Source Rule (ISR) and Marine Terminal Operators (MTOs):** Journal of Commerce requested information on the ISR for ports and MTOs. Response was provided.
- **Air Quality in Coachella Valley:** KESQ requested information on air quality in the Coachella Valley, the post-Tropical Storm Hilary impacts on local air quality, and what determines when advisories are issued. Response was provided.
- **Chiquita Canyon Landfill Hearing :** ABC 7, LAist, and The Signal inquired if a hearing will take place. A link to the livestream webcast was provided. Telemundo and KTLA requested information about the hearing. The press release was shared.
- **Ethylene Oxide (EtO) and Permanent Total Enclosures (PTEs):** Inside EPA requested information on upcoming EtO rule. Grist conducted an interview on issues related to EtO and submitted follow-up questions. Responses were provided.
- **Torrance Refinery Flaring:** Southern California News Group asked about unplanned flaring at Torrance Refinery. Response was provided.
- **Disney Forward Environmental Impact Report (EIR):** The Los Angeles Times was looking for information on the impending Disney Forward EIR. Response was provided.
- **Chiquita Canyon Landfill:** The Signal requested confirmation of a violation issued to Chiquita Canyon Landfill following complaints at Live Oak Elementary School. Response was provided.
- **Reduced Ports Emissions:** Journal of Commerce inquired about ports and emission reductions. Response was provided.
- **Railroad MOU/ ISR:** The Los Angeles Times requested information on the potential MOU with Railroads and how this compares to the Warehouse ISR and the proposed Port ISR. Information was provided.
- **Warehouse ISR:** KCVR requested information on the warehouse enforcement initiative. LAist inquired about the rule. Fontana Herald News inquired if any warehouses in Fontana are noncompliant. UCI EcoGoLab requested a list of warehouses in Santa Ana subjected to the Warehouse ISR. San Bernardino County Sentinel inquired about noncompliant warehouses in San Bernardino County. Responses were provided.

- **Port ISR:** International Trade Today asked if South Coast AQMD delayed the Port ISR after the letter written by The Pacific Merchant Shipping Association and asked whether South Coast AQMD had any comments on the matter. Response was provided.
- **Paso Robles Tank:** Press Enterprise requested information on the Paso Robles Tank company, inquiring whether South Coast AQMD issued a NOV, if there was a shutdown, and if there were any complaints. Response was provided.
- **Rule 415 and Coast Packing:** Southern California Public Radio requested clarification on an ongoing inquiry regarding Rule 415 and Coast Packing. Response was provided.
- **Electric Tractors:** Loyola Marymount University students inquired about South Coast AQMD's possible involvement in assisting the city of Santa Monica with electric tractor equipment. Response was provided.
- **Warehouse Enforcement Initiative:** Pitched enforcement initiative on noncompliant warehouses to media outlets resulting in media coverage. Interviews were conducted with the Los Angeles Times and KNX radio. Southern California News Group had questions. Responses were provided. Press release was also covered by several other local radio, television and print outlets.
- **Windblown Dust Advisory (9/4, 9/9, 9/13, 9/21, 9/25, 9/29):** Pitched advisory to media outlets resulting in media coverage.
- **Smoke Advisory:** Pitched advisory to media outlets resulting in media coverage.
- **Windblown Dust Advisories:** Pitched all advisories to local media outlets resulting in coverage. Staff participated in an interview with KESQ about the advisory issued on 9/13 due to local air quality conditions in the Coachella Valley area.

News Releases:

- **South Coast AQMD Issues Windblown Dust Advisory for the Coachella Valley – September 4, 9, 13, 21 and 29, 2023 (English and Spanish):** Informed the public of a PM10 Dust Advisory caused by high winds in the Coachella Valley.
- **Chiquita Canyon Landfill is Ordered to Resolve Odors Impacting Community, Find Cause of Increased Sulfur Emissions – September 7, 2023 (English and Spanish):** Informed the public of an Order for Abatement requiring Chiquita Canyon Landfill to reduce odors from the landfill.
- **Senator (Ret.) Vanessa Delgado and Governor Appointee Gideon Kracov Reappointed to South Coast AQMD Governing Board – September 8, 2023 (English and Spanish):** Informed the public of Chair Vanessa Delgado and Board member Gideon Kracov's reappointments.

- **South Coast AQMD Launches Enforcement Initiative to Address Noncompliant Warehouses – September 20, 2023 (English and Spanish) :** Informed the public of new action to bring warehouses into compliance.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Smoke Advisory Due to Northern California Wildfires – September 23, 2023 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of smoke advisory due to fire.

News Carousel:

- **“This year’s Intl. Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies focuses on partnership, investments & responsibility to overcome air pollution.”** – Linked to Clean Air for Blue Skies webpage.
- **“Celebrate the United Nations’ Intl. Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer on Sept. 16”** – Linked to United Nations webpage.
- **“Celebrate National Drive Electric Week from Sept. 22 - Oct. 1”** – Linked to the Drive Electric Week website about the event.

OUTREACH TO COMMUNITY GROUPS AND FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

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

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| • U.S. Senator Alex Padilla | • Assemblymember Lisa Calderon |
| • U.S. Representative Nanette Barragán | • Assemblymember Sabrina Cervantes |
| • U.S Representative Judy Chu | • Assemblymember Bill Deaver |
| • U.S. Representative Mark Takano | • Assemblymember Mike Fong |
| • Senator Lena Gonzalez | • Assemblymember Chris Holden |
| • Senator Josh Newman | • Assemblymember Josh Lowenthal |
| • Senator Anthony Portantino | • Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi |
| • Senator Richard Roth | • Assemblymember Blanca Rubio |
| • Senator Susan Rubio | • Assemblymember Miguel Santiago |
| • Senator Kelly Serato | |

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

Alhambra	Glendora	Pasadena
Anaheim	Grand Terrace	Perris
Arcadia	Hawaiian Gardens	Pico Rivera
Artesia	Hemet	Pomona
Azusa	Highland	Rancho Cucamonga
Baldwin Park	Huntington Park	Redlands
Banning	Irvine	Rialto
Beaumont	Irwindale	Riverside
Bell	Jurupa Valley	Rosemead
Bell Gardens	La Cañada Flintridge	San Bernardino
Bellflower	La Habra Heights	San Dimas
Big Bear Lake	La Mirada	San Fernando
Bradbury	La Palma	San Gabriel
Brea	La Puente	San Jacinto
Buena Park	La Verne	San Marino
Burbank	Lake Elsinore	Santa Ana
Calimesa	Lake Forest	Santa Clarita
Canyon Lake	Lakewood	Santa Fe Springs
Cerritos	Loma Linda	Seal Beach
Chino	Long Beach	Sierra Madre
Chino Hills	Los Angeles	Signal Hill
Claremont	Lynwood	South El Monte
Colton	Maywood	South Gate
Commerce	Menifee	South Pasadena
Compton	Mission Viejo	Stanton
Corona	Monrovia	Temecula
Covina	Montclair	Temple City
Cudahy	Montebello	Upland
Dana Point	Monterey Park	Vernon
Diamond Bar	Moreno Valley	Walnut
Downey	Murrieta	West Covina
Duarte	Newport Beach	Whittier
Eastvale	Norco	Wildomar
El Monte	Norwalk	Yorba Linda
El Segundo	Ontario	Yucaipa
Fontana	Orange	
Glendale	Paramount	

Staff represented South Coast AQMD in September 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
Big Bear Lake Valley Chamber of Commerce
Burbank Chamber of Commerce
Caltrans
CARB
Claremont Chamber of Commerce
Covina Chamber of Commerce
Duarte Chamber of Commerce
City of Hope
Covina Chamber of Commerce
Duarte Chamber of Commerce
El Monte / South El Monte Chamber of Commerce
Foothill Transit
Gateway Council of Governments
Glendale Chamber of Commerce
Glendora Chamber of Commerce
Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority
Greater Monterey Park Chamber of Commerce
Greater Riverside Chamber of Commerce
Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce
Industry Business Council
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, d Empire, Los Angeles, and Orange County Divisions
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Metropolitan Water District
Monrovia Chamber of Commerce
Mountain Transit
Murrieta/Wildomar Chamber of Commerce
National Park Service
Omnitrans
Ontario International Airport Authority
Orange County Cities Council of Governments

Orange County Transportation Authority
Pasadena Chamber of Commerce
Pomona Chamber of Commerce
Port of Long Beach
Regional Chamber of Commerce San Gabriel Valley
Rosemead Chamber of Commerce
San Bernardino Area Chamber of Commerce
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
San Dimas Chamber of Commerce
San Fernando Chamber of Commerce
San Fernando Valley Council of Governments
San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
San Gabriel Chamber of Commerce
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership
San Gabriel Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District
San Marino Chamber of Commerce
Sanitation District of Los Angeles County
Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce
Sierra Madre Chamber of Commerce
South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce
South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce
Southern California Association of Governments
Temple City Chamber of Commerce
Upland Chamber of Commerce
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

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

Clean Power Alliance
Inland Empire Biking Alliance
Mt. San Antonio College
Oak Knoll Montessori School
Pasadena City College
San Bernadino Valley College
San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative
Trust for Public Land