BOARD MEETING DATE: August 4, 2023 AGENDA NO. 7

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the May and June 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 Nastri Executive Officer

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Background

This report summarizes the activities of the Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Office for May and June. 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 May 20, South Coast AQMD partnered with Habitat for Humanity, Orange County to help build two homes in Santa Ana. Volunteers installed siding, painted and participated in other construction activities.

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 May and June events and meetings:

Move LA's Community Conversation

On May 1, staff attended Move LA's Community Conversation, "The Force (Community + Labor) is Strong in LA" to provide information to attendees on South Coast AQMD, regional air quality issues, and how to file a complaint including on the mobile apps.

South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce

On May 10, staff attended the South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce's Legislative Affairs Committee meeting to promote the Commercial Electric Lawn & Garden (eL&G) Equipment Incentive & Exchange program.

Upland Chamber of Commerce

On May 11, staff participated in Upland Chamber of Commerce's Government Affairs Committee meeting to share updates on South Coast AQMD incentive programs including Carl Moyer and the Voucher Incentive Program (VIP).

Spring Community Health Fair

On May 13, staff participated in Dignity Health's Spring Community Health Fair in Northridge. Staff provided information on South Coast AQMD's Mobile App, how to file a complaint, residential lawn and garden incentive program, and Replace Your Ride.

Lake Arrowhead Chamber of Commerce

On May 17, staff participated in the Lake Arrowhead Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee meeting to provide information on the VIP.

Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce

On May 18, staff participated in the Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce's Government Affairs Committee to share information on the Facility Information Detail (F.I.N.D) web tool and other programs.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Heritage Month Resource Fair

On May 19, staff participated in UCLA Medical Center's Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Heritage Month Resource Fair to provide information and resources, including how to file a complaint, wildfire safety tips and South Coast AQMD's mobile app.

Wilmington Neighborhood Council

On May 19, staff attended the Wilmington Neighborhood Council and announced the upcoming Proposed Amended Rule 1180: Refinery Community and Fenceline Monitoring Working Group meeting.

San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership

On May 24, staff attended San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership's Legislative Action Committee meeting to provide update on South Coast AQMD incentive programs such as VIP and eL&G.

Orange County Council of Governments

On May 25, staff attended the Orange County Council of Governments meeting and provided information on the start of smog season and incentive programs.

LA Sanitation and Environment's North Central District Open House

On May 27, staff participated in LA Sanitation and Environment's North Central Open House. Staff shared information on South Coast AQMD, including how to file a complaint, residential and commercial incentive programs, and South Coast AQMD's mobile app.

South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce

On June 6, staff participated in the South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce meeting and announced the upcoming Local Government & Small Business Assistance Advisory Group meeting.

San Bernardino County Supervisor Curt Hagman's Open House

On June 7, staff participated in Supervisor Curt Hagman's District Open House. Staff demonstrated a clean air vehicle and electric lawn equipment to attendees. Staff also provided information on commercial and residential incentive programs and how to file a complaint.

San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments

On June 7, staff participated in the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments' Energy, Environment & Natural Resources Committee meeting to provide updates on Replace Your Ride and VIP programs.

Big Bear Chamber of Commerce

On June 8, staff attended the Government Affairs Committee meeting for the Big Bear Chamber of Commerce to provide updates on VIP and eL&G program.

Los Angeles Sanitation and Environment

On June 10, staff participated in LA Sanitation and Environment's South Los Angeles Open House. Staff shared information on how to file a complaint, South Coast AQMD's mobile app and other programs.

Foothill Extension

On June 14, staff attended a Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority Board meeting and spoke during public comment to provide updates related to transportation including increased incentives for Replace Your Ride and VIP.

South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce

On June 14, staff participated in the Legislative Affairs Committee meeting for South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce. Staff provided information on Replace Your Ride, eL&G and VIP.

Leonard Transportation Center

On June 21, staff participated in the California State University, San Bernardino Leonard Transportation Center student discussion forum. Staff displayed a clean air vehicle and shared information about South Coast AQMD, regional air quality issues and how to file a complaint.

Arcadia Environmental Fair

On June 22, staff participated in the Arcadia Environmental Fair. Staff provided information on South Coast AQMD, VIP, eL&G, Replace Your Ride and how to file a complaint.

Orange County Council of Governments

On June 22, staff participated in the Orange County Council of Governments Executive Board meeting and shared updates regarding three MSRC Micro Transit grants awarded to Orange County cities.

Environmental Justice Update

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

White House Climate and Environmental Justice Briefing

On May 3, staff participated in the White House Climate and Environmental Justice Briefing. Senior Biden-Harris Administration officials made announcements regarding EJ, clean energy, and climate programs.

Pacoima Community Initiative

On May 5, staff participated in Pacoima Community Initiative's monthly meeting. Staff shared information on the Environmental Justice Advisory Group meeting and South Coast AQMD programs.

Santa Ana EJ Stakeholder Meeting

On May 18, staff participated in the Santa Ana EJ Stakeholder meeting to learn about community environmental priorities.

Girl Scouts of Los Angeles Science, Technology, Math and Engineering (STEAM) Takeover

On June 3, staff participated in the Girl Scouts of Los Angeles STEAM Takeover to present an overview on South Coast AQMD, present curriculum from the Clean Air Program for Elementary Students and Why Healthy Air Matters program. Staff also conducted experiments to illustrate regional air quality issues.

U.S. EPA Region 9's EJ Monthly Community Check-in

On June 6, staff participated in U.S. EPA Region 9's EJ Monthly Community Check-in which focused on the Justice40 initiative and included Q&A with the participants.

Environmental Justice Community Partnership

On June 7, South Coast AQMD staff hosted the last quarterly meeting of the Environmental Justice Community Partnership (EJCP) Advisory Council. Staff presented an update on the implementation of Assembly Bill 617 Community Emission Reduction and Community Air Monitoring Plans. Additionally, an EJCP member presented on the South Los Angeles Project to understand the sources and health impacts of local air pollution.

U.S. EPA Enforcement and Compliance Webinar

On June 13, staff participated in U.S. EPA's training webinar on how to use their online enforcement and compliance tool. The online search tool provides information on approximately 800,000 regulated facilities nationwide.

U.S. EPA National Environmental Justice Community Engagement

On June 20, staff participated in U.S. EPA's National EJ Community Engagement meeting. The agenda included a presentation by the Friendship House Association of American Indians and an update on the U.S. EPA Equity Action Plan.

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 May or June.

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 May and June are summarized below:

Calls to South Coast AQMD's Main Line and	4,351
1-800-CUT-SMOG®	
Calls to South Coast AQMD's Spanish Line	58
Clean Air Connection	22
Total Calls	4,431

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 May and June are summarized below:

Calls Received by PIC	99
Calls to Automated System	383
Total Calls	482
Visitor Transactions	275
Email Advisories Sent	87,119

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 May and June.

- Provided permit application assistance to 421 companies, and
- Processed 174 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 May and June report is listed below:

Major Media Interactions	134
Press Releases	14
News Carousel	8

Major Media Topics:

- Wildfires & Effects on Air Quality: Staff participated in an interview with NBC4 on wildfires and their effects on air quality.
- Commercial Electric Lawn & Garden Equipment: Staff participated in an interview with KCRW Radio for an in-depth highlight story on the Commercial Electric Lawn and Garden Equipment Program.
- **Air Quality Monitoring System:** Pitched our air quality data to local meteorologists. Working with CBS and ABC on ways to feature our information on their daily weather reports. Working with the stations and contractors on the best way to provide information.
- **Battery Electric Semi-trucks:** Forbes inquired about grants for the purchase of battery electric semi-trucks, including Tesla Semi and Nikola. Response sent to the reporter.
- **Commerce Fire**: CBS reporter inquired about air quality impacts of the Commerce fire. Response sent to reporter.
- **Baker Commodities**: LAist reporter requested an update on Baker Commodities resuming operations. Response sent to reporter.
- **F.I.N.D. Tool:** Voice of OC requested more information on how F.I.N.D. gets data from facilities and if there are efforts underway to improve that process. Response sent to reporter.
- Torrance Refinery Flare Event: Press Enterprise inquired about the unplanned flare event at the Torrance Refinery. Response sent to reporter.
- **Impact of Air Pollution**: Newport Coast student provided questions about the impacts of air pollution. Response sent to student.
- **Hexavalent Chromium**: CalMatters inquired about hexavalent chromium at school sites and facilities in the Paramount area. Response sent to reporter.
- **Redspira Sensor**: Reuters (Mexico) inquired about the Redspira air quality sensor and its reliability. Response sent to reporter.
- **Dominguez Channel**: Wired asked for an update on the status of the Dominguez Channel investigation. Response sent to reporter.
- PM Standards and Federal Implementation Plan (FIP): U.S. EPA requested a comment on the finding that South Coast failed to submit necessary measures regarding attainment of PM standards and is beginning the clock for a potential FIP for the region. Response sent.
- Windblown Dust Advisories: Pitched advisories to local news outlets.
- **Summer Smog Season:** Pitched announcement of start of ozone season to local media outlets.
- **Air Quality During Wildfires**: Staff participated in an interview with Spectrum News 1 on how individuals can protect themselves from bad air quality during wildfires.
- **Proposed Amendments to Rule 1153.1:** Staff participated in an interview with Southern California News Group on the background of the proposed rule to reduce NOx from commercial food ovens.

- **Southern California Weather:** Staff participated in a phone interview with the Los Angeles Times about Southern California air quality following the cooler weather from May and June.
- Air Quality and Fireworks: Staff participated in an interview with KTLA about the impact fireworks have on Los Angeles County air quality, the expectations of air quality this year, and what is the reality of the air quality today based on Purple Air monitors.
- **Santa Ana Crematorium:** Voice of OC reporter requested information on South Coast AQMD enforcement actions for air quality violations and information on a crematorium in Santa Ana. Response sent to the reporter.
- **Replace Your Ride Program:** Telemundo News and Telemundo Responde requested interviews to discuss the details of the program. Pre-recorded video responses sent to the reporter in Spanish.
- **Cremation Limits:** Ivy Tech student requested information on daily cremation limits. Response was sent.
- **Air Quality Communications:** Staff participated in an interview with New York Magazine/Curbed on best communication practices when wildfires affect the air quality.
- **Sterigenics:** Surveyor inquired on the curtailment status of the Sterigenics Ontario facility. Response was sent.
- **Arroyo Live Talk show:** Producer at KPAS-TV expressed interest in an interview with a Board Member and a second guest. Working on interview topics.
- **Lobbying Firms:** Reporter at Capitol Weekly inquired why South Coast AQMD employs multiple lobbying firms. Response sent to the reporter.
- Rendering Plants: Reporter at LAist inquired about the current number of rendering plants in Vernon that are open since the closing of Farmer John (Clougherty Packing). Reporter also had questions about upcoming legal action involving Baker. Response to first questions sent. Working on follow-up responses.
- Salton Sea: A freelance journalist submitted questions on toxins in the Salton Sea, the contribution of agricultural dust PM2.5 and PM10 emissions in the district, and whether we have or will provide access to indoor air purifiers to local residents. Response was sent to journalist.
- **KLM Data**: Meteorologist at CBS2/KCAL requested access to our KLM data for use as wildfire season approaches. Response was provided.
- Wildfire Season Preparation: Pitched local news outlets to discuss wildfire preparations, outreach, and the tools South Coast AQMD uses. Spectrum News and ABC expressed interest in an interview and tour of the lab. Staff participated in an interview with ABC on South Coast AQMD wildfire season outreach and monitoring tools.
- **Windblown Dust Advisory:** Pitched advisories to local outlets resulting in media coverage.
- Ozone Advisory: Pitched advisories to local outlets resulting in media coverage.

News Releases:

- May is the Start of Summer Smog Season Protect Your Health by Knowing Your Air Quality May 1, 2023 (English and Spanish): Informed the public of the start of ozone season in Greater Los Angeles.
- South Coast AQMD Issues Windblown Dust Advisory for the San Gorgonio Pass and Coachella Valley areas May 9-10, 2023 (English and Spanish): Informed the public of a PM10 Dust Advisory and extension caused by high winds in the Coachella Valley.
- South Coast AQMD Issues Windblown Dust Advisory for the Coachella Valley and Eastern Riverside County May 31, 2023 (English and Spanish): Informed the public of a PM10 Dust Advisory caused by high winds in the Coachella Valley and Eastern Riverside County.
- South Coast AQMD Issues Windblown Dust Advisory for the Coachella Valley June 16 & 22, 2023 (English and Spanish): Informed the public of a PM10 Dust Advisory caused by high winds in the Coachella Valley.
- South Coast AQMD Issues Ozone Advisory Due to Heat Wave June 30, 2023 (English and Spanish): Informed residents of hazardous ozone levels due to heat.

Social Media Posts:

- <u>Windblown Dust Advisory Extension (5/10):</u> 5,327 Twitter Impressions
- --RT by @NWSSanDiego, @805weather, @PalmDesertGov
- AQ Forecast (5/17): 1,315 Twitter Impressions
- --RT by @LAFDtalk, @805Weather
- AQ Forecast (5/20): 1,624 Twitter Impressions
- --RT by @LAFDtalk, @805Weather
- Windblown Dust Advisory (5/31): 7,474 Twitter Impressions
- --RT by @WEAre4CleanAir, @NWSSanDiego, @PalmDesertGov, @AirResources
- AQ Forecast (6/13): 1,118 Twitter Impressions
- --RT by @LAFDtalk, @ WEAre4CleanAir
- <u>Windblown Dust Advisory (6/16):</u> 5,435 Twitter Impressions
- --RT by @PalmDesertGov, @NWSSanDiego, @CodeRed001Blue
- Windblown Dust Advisory (6/22): 4,756 Twitter Impressions
- --RT by @WeAre4CleanAir, @AIRNow, @AirResources, @NWSSanDiego
- AQ Forecast (6/26): 4,637 Twitter Impressions
- --RT by @WeAre4CleanAir, @805Weather, @ClimateResolve, @NWSSanDiego

News Carousel:

- There's still time to apply for funding to help replace heavy-duty vehicles and equipment with cleaner technology! by May 9, 11:59 p.m. (5/4). Linked to the Carl Moyer Funding page for further information.
- Join the Clean Air Team! South Coast AQMD is hiring for Instrument Specialist, Legislative Analyst and Mail Services positions. (5/10). Linked to current job opportunities.
- Participate in a Working Group on Control of Emissions from Metal Heating Operations Thurs., 5/18 (5/17). Linked to Proposed Rule 1435 page.
- **Keep up with the Latest News from South Coast AQMD (5/24).** Linked to South Coast AQMD Advisor Newsletter.
- South Coast AQMD partnership assists Schneider to open a large-scale electric truck charging depot in South El Monte through the JETSI project (6/7). Linked to Schneider's news article.
- Get a rebate of up to \$250 when swapping your older gas-powered lawn mower with a cordless battery-electric mower. (6/15). Linked to South Coast AQMD's Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program.
- Choose a Low-VOC paint for your summer home projects (6/22). Linked to Green Painter's Guide webpage.
- Initial site information reports are due by July 5 for Phase 2 Warehouse Actions and Investments to Reduce Emissions (WAIRE) facilities 150,000 to 250,000 sq. ft. Linked to WAIRE Program webpage.

Outreach to Community Groups and Federal, State and Local Governments

Communication was conducted in May and June 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 Nanette Barragan
- U.S. Representative Judy Chu
- U.S. Representative Robert Garcia
- U.S. Representative Grace Napolitano
- U.S. Representative Jay Obernolte
- U.S. Representative Raul Ruiz
- U.S. Representative Adam Schiff
- U.S. Representative Mark Takano
- Senator Bob Archuleta
- Senator Josh Becker
- Senator Lena Gonzalez
- Senator Melissa Hurtado
- Senator Caroline Menjivar
- Senator Josh Newman
- Senator Janet Nguyen
- Senator Anthony Portantino

- Senator Susan Rubio
- Speaker Anthony Rendon
- Senator Nancy Skinner
- Assemblymember Marc Berman
- Assemblymember Lisa Calderon
- Assemblymember Mike Fong
- Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia
- Assemblymember Eloise Gomez Reves
- Assemblymember Chris Holden
- Assemblymember Tom Lackey
- Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi
- Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva
- Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez
- Assemblymember Blanca Rubio
- Assemblymember Miguel Santiago
- Assemblymember Avelino Valencia

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

Alhambra Burbank Arcadia Calimesa Artesia Canyon Lake Avalon Carson Azusa Cerritos **Baldwin Park** Chino Banning Chino Hills Beaumont Claremont Bell Colton Bell Gardens Commerce Compton Bellflower Corona Big Bear Lake Bradbury Covina Brea Cudahy Buena Park Diamond Bar Downey
Duarte
Eastvale
El Monte
El Segundo
Fontana
Gardena
Glendale
Glendora
Grand Terrace
Hawaiian Gardens
Hawthorne

Hermosa Beach

Highland

Hemet

Huntington Beach Monrovia Santa Ana San Bernardino **Huntington Park** Montclair San Dimas **Industry** Montebello Inglewood Monterey Park San Fernando Irvine San Gabriel Moreno Valley Irwindale Murrieta San Jacinto Jurupa Valley Newport Beach San Marino La Cañada Flintridge Norco Santa Ana La Habra Norwalk Santa Clarita La Habra Heights Ontario Santa Fe Springs

La Mirada Orange Seal Beach La Palma Palos Verdes Estates Sierra Madre La Puente **Paramount** Signal Hill La Verne Pasadena South El Monte Lake Elsinore Perris South Gate Lake Forest Pico Rivera South Pasadena

Lakewood Placentia Stanton Lawndale Pomona Temecula Loma Linda Rancho Cucamonga Temple City Lomita Rancho Palos Verdes Torrance Redlands Long Beach **Upland** Los Angeles Redondo Beach Vernon Walnut Lynwood Rialto West Covina Manhattan Beach Riverside

Manhattan BeachRiversideWest CoviMaywoodRolling HillsWildomarMenifeeRolling Hills EstatesWhittierMission ViejoRosemeadYucaipa

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

Alhambra Chamber of Commerce

Arcadia Chamber of Commerce

Carson Chamber of Commerce

Climate Mayors

County of San Bernardino

Dignity Health

DTSC

El Monte-South El Monte Chamber of Commerce

El Segundo Chamber of Commerce

Foothill Transit

Gardena Valley Chamber of Commerce

Glendora Chamber of Commerce

Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce

Hermosa Beach Chamber of Commerce

Imperial Irrigation District

Independent Special Districts of Orange County

Inglewood Airport Area Chamber of Commerce

Inland Valley Development Agency

Lake Arrowhead Chamber of Commerce

League of California Cities, Los Angeles County Division

Lomita Chamber of Commerce

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation

Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts

Manhattan Beach Chamber of Commerce

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Mountain Transit

National Park Service

Omnitrans

Ontario International Airport

Orange County Council of Governments

Orange County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Orange County Sanitation District

Riverside Transit Agency

San Bernardino County

San Bernardino County Transportation Authority

San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy

San Gabriel Valley CARE

San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments

San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership

San Gabriel Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District

Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce

SCAG

SunLine Transit Agency

Upland Chamber of Commerce

Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District

Western Riverside Council of Governments

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

Arcadia Unified School District

Baldwin Park Unified School District

Basset Unified School District

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

California State University, Dominguez Hills

California State University, San Bernardino

Diamond Bar Woman's Club

Grades of Green

Move LA

Mt. San Antonio College

Pasadena City College

Rialto Unified School District

Rim of the World Unified School District

Rio Hondo College

San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative

South Bay Parkland Conservancy

The Energy Coalition

Trust for Public Land

University of California, Riverside

University of La Verne

University of Redlands