

BOARD MEETING DATE: October 6, 2023

AGENDA NO. 10

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the August 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

DA:LT:PC:CL:DS:cb:bel

BACKGROUND

This report summarizes the activities of the Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Office for August. 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.

There were no major events hosted or sponsored in August.

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 August events and meetings:

South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce

On August 1, staff attended the South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce's Board of Directors meeting to provide updates on South Coast AQMD's \$76 million award from California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) for zero-emission goods movement projects and the upcoming 9th Annual Environmental Justice (EJ) Conference.

Gateway Cities Council of Governments

On August 2, staff participated in the Gateway Cities Council of Government's Board of Directors meeting. Updates were provided on South Coast AQMD's \$76 million award from CalSTA for zero-emission goods movement projects and CARB's award of 183 air purifiers for clean air centers during wildfires.

Annual Back-to-School Backpack Giveaway and Resource Fair

On August 2, staff participated in Moreno Valley's Annual Back-to-School Backpack Giveaway and Resource Fair. Staff passed out South Coast AQMD rulers to students, information on how to file air quality complaints and wildfire safety tips.

San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments

On August 2, staff attended the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments' City Managers Steering Committee meeting. Information was provided on the Commercial Electric Lawn & Garden Equipment (eL&G) Incentive & Exchange Program, Voucher Incentive Program (VIP), Replace Your Ride (RYR) and the upcoming 9th Annual EJ Conference.

Orange County Business Council

On August 4, staff participated in the Orange County Business Council 's Government Affairs Committee to provide updates on the upcoming 9th Annual EJ Conference, wildfire safety tips and how to use the South Coast AQMD app to monitor air quality.

Community Resource Fair & Block Party

On August 5, staff participated in the 41st Assembly District Community Resources Fair & Block Party. Staff provided information on how to file air quality complaints, wildfire safety tips, VIP funding, residential EV charging incentives, residential and commercial eL&G programs and the upcoming 9th Annual EJ Conference.

Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce

On August 8, staff participated in the Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce 's Government Affairs Committee meeting to provide updates including how to receive air quality information via the Apps, wildfire safety tips and the upcoming 9th Annual EJ Conference.

San Bernardino County Transportation Authority

On August 9, staff participated in the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority's Legislative Committee meeting and shared information regarding how to file an air quality complaint, and South Coast AQMD 's Small Business Assistance program and Air Quality Permit Checklist.

Big Bear Chamber of Commerce

On August 10, staff presented updates at the Big Bear Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors meeting on residential and commercial eL&G programs and demonstrated a battery-electric vehicle.

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

On August 24, staff participated in the South Bay Cities Council of Government 's Board of Directors meeting and extended an invitation to the 9th Annual EJ Conference, provided flyers on the RYR and commercial and residential eL&G programs.

Orange County Council of Governments

On August 24, staff attended an Orange County Council of Governments meeting . Staff shared information regarding CARB 's award of 183 HealthPro Plus Air Purifiers for use at clean air centers during wildfires. In addition, staff provided copies of the latest Advisor newsletter and flyers on the commercial and residential eL&G programs.

San Gabriel Valley Regional Wildfire Stakeholder Working Group

On August 30, staff participated in the San Gabriel Valley Regional Community Wildfire Protection Plan Stakeholder Working Group meeting to share information on

CARB’s award of 183 air purifiers for clean air centers in the region and encouraged attendance at the 9th Annual EJ Conference.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATE

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

Pacoima Community Initiative

On August 11, staff participated in the Pacoima Community Initiative’s monthly meeting and shared information on the EJ Advisory Group meeting, Clean Air Program for Elementary Students and Why Healthy Air Matters programs, the upcoming EJ Conference and how to report air quality issues.

U.S. EPA Webinar

On August 15, staff participated in U.S. EPA’s webinar, “Tools for Helping State and Municipal Decision-Makers Meet Air Quality, Climate, and Energy Objectives: GLIMPSE and COMET. ”

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 August.

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 August are summarized below:

Calls to South Coast AQMD’s Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG®	2,481
Calls to South Coast AQMD’s Spanish Line	46
Total Calls	2,536

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 August is summarized below:

Calls Received by PIC	32
Calls to Automated System	147
Total Calls	179
Visitor Transactions	128
Email Advisories Sent	31,900

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 August.

- Provided permit application assistance to 158 companies, and
- Processed 58 Air Quality Permit Checklists.

Types of businesses assisted:

Architecture Firms	Gas Stations	Schools
Auto Body Shops	Manufacturing Facilities	Warehouses
Construction Firms	Offices	
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	103
Press Releases	4
News Carousel	4

Major Media Topics:

- **Air Quality in Coachella Valley:** Staff participated in an interview with The Desert Sun on air quality in Coachella Valley over the years.
- **EV Charging Incentive Program:** Staff participated in an interview with NTD News on the residential EV charging incentive program.
- **Rule 415 & Facility Odor Complaints:** Staff participated in an interview with Southern California Public Radio on concerns about odors from rendering facilities.
- **Wildfire and Lab Tour:** Spectrum TV toured the laboratory and conducted staff interviews for a story about the wildfire season.
- **Coachella Valley Air Quality :** Staff participated in an interview with KESQ on the air quality as a result of recent floods, mud and debris in the air.
- **Incentive Programs:** Staff participated in an interview with San Clemente Times on incentive programs offered to residents and organizations, how the area has transitioned to zero-emission equipment recently, the Clean Off-Road Equipment Voucher Incentive Project and the Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Programs.
- **Commercial Food Ovens (Rule 1153.1):** Inside EPA and the Korea Daily inquired about Rule 1153.1, which regulates commercial food ovens. The Canary had follow-up questions to an original inquiry on this topic. Responses were provided. Staff participated in interviews with KCRW and Washington Post on the agency's new Rule 1153.1.
- **History of Air Quality:** History Press requested a meeting and asked for permission to use South Coast AQMD historical images in their book. A meeting was held.
- **EtO Permanent Total Enclosure :** An interview is scheduled with Grist on Permanent Total Enclosures as a method to contain ethylene oxide emissions.
- **Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Application:** Bloomberg requested further clarification on the agency's CFI Grant Program application. A list of those who provided letters of support was provided.
- **Philbro-Tech:** CalMatters requested 10 years of data concerning complaints in area surrounding Philbro-Tech. Reporter was asked to submit a public records request and provide additional clarification.
- **Rule 1158:** Undark Magazine requested information on covering rail cars at facilities that handle coke, coal, or sulfur. A written response was provided. Outlet provided follow up questions. Responses were provided.
- **Chiquita Canyon Landfill:** The Signal requested information regarding complaints filed against Chiquita Canyon Landfill in Castaic for the last two years and sent follow up questions on permits and health impacts to the community. Response was provided.

- **Air Quality Complaint Data:** Southern California Public Radio requested air quality complaint data from 2017. Reporter was asked to submit a public records request.
- **Port Indirect Source Rule (ISR):** Agri-Pulse requested an interview to discuss the Port ISR. Informed reporter the ISR is still in draft form.
- **Rule 2202:** On the Go inquired about updates to Rule 2202. Response was provided.
- **Earthjustice Lawsuit:** E&E News, the Daily Journal, and Politico requested a comment on the latest Earthjustice lawsuit. Responses were provided.
- **Random Lengths:** Random Lengths News requested a comment regarding the Earthjustice lawsuit. Response was provided.
- **Rule 317:** Random Lengths and The Los Angeles Times requested information regarding approval of Rule 317. Responses were provided.
- **SoCal Gas Settlement:** LA Daily News inquired about the settlements reached with SoCalGas in 2017. A response was provided.
- **EV and Air Quality :** A freelancer requested data on the correlation between the percentage of electric vehicles and impacts on air quality. Working on a response.
- **Proposed Ports ISR:** International Trade Today requested a comment regarding trade association's opposition to the proposed ISR. Working on a response. Editor with Journal of Commerce asked questions about the ISR for ports and marine terminal operators. Working on a response.
- **Chiquita Canyon Landfill Release (8/15):** Pitch to local media outlets resulted in media coverage. KTLA and LAist requested more information. Responses were provided.
- **EJ Conference Release (8/30):** Pitch to local media outlets resulted in interest from outlets. Reached out to Spectrum, 94.7 The Wave, and KPAS for potential interviews.

News Releases:

- **South Coast AQMD Requests Order Against Chiquita Canyon Landfill – August 15, 2023 (English and Spanish):** Informed public of petition for an Order for Abatement against the Chiquita Canyon Landfill.
- **South Coast AQMD to Host the 9th Annual Environmental Justice Conference – August 30, 2023 (English and Spanish):** Informed the public of upcoming EJ Conference and how to register for the event.

Social Media Posts:

- [AQ Forecast \(8/6\)](#): 6,284 Twitter Impressions
--RT by @NWSSanDiego, @LAFDtalk, @StewartTVNews, @ChicagoMikeSD
- [AQ Forecast \(8/15\)](#): 8,659 Twitter Impressions
--RT by @NWSLosAngeles, @CountyofLA
- [AQ Forecast \(8/17\)](#): 1,091 Twitter Impressions
--RT by @WeAre4CleanAir, @LAFDtalk, @805Weather
- [AQ Forecast \(8/28\)](#): 3,462 Twitter Impressions
--RT by @RickDickertWX, @AIRNow

News Carousel:

- **“Do One Thing for Clean Air - Download South Coast AQMD ’s Mobile App today” (8/3)** — Linked to the Mobile App webpage.
- **“1-800-CUT-SMOG will not be available on 8/14 due to maintenance. File air quality complaints online or via our mobile app.” (8/9)** — Linked to South Coast AQMD ’s mobile app webpage.
- **“Keep up with the Latest News from South Coast AQMD ” (8/17)** — Linked to the August/September edition of the Advisor newsletter.
- **“Register Now for the 9th Annual EJ Conference ” (8/23)** — Linked to the registration page.

OUTREACH TO COMMUNITY GROUPS AND FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Communication was conducted in August 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 Judy Chu
- U.S. Representative Lou Correa
- U.S. Representative Mike Garcia
- U.S. Representative Grace Napolitano
- U.S. Representative Jay Obernolte
- Senator Lena Gonzalez
- Senator Josh Newman
- Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh
- Senator Anthony Portantino
- Senator Susan Rubio
- Senator Tom Umberg
- Assemblymember Lisa Calderon
- Assemblymember Mike Fong
- Assemblymember Laura Friedman
- Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia
- Assemblymember Chris Holden
- Assemblymember Anthony Rendon
- Assemblymember Blanca Rubio
- Assemblymember Miguel Santiago
- Assemblymember Pilar Schiavo
- Assemblymember Tri Ta
- Assemblymember Avelino Valencia

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

Agoura Hills	Fullerton	Montebello
Alhambra	Gardena	Monterey Park
Anaheim	Glendale	Moreno Valley
Arcadia	Glendora	Murrieta
Artesia	Grand Terrace	Newport Beach
Azusa	Hawaiian Gardens	Norco
Baldwin Park	Hawthorne	Norwalk
Banning	Hemet	Ontario
Beaumont	Hidden Hills	Orange
Bell Gardens	Highland	Paramount
Bellflower	Huntington Park	Pasadena
Beverly Hills	Inglewood	Perris
Big Bear Lake	Irvine	Pico Rivera
Bradbury	Irwindale	Placentia
Brea	Jurupa Valley	Pomona
Buena Park	La Cañada Flintridge	Rancho Cucamonga
Burbank	La Habra	Rancho Palos Verdes
Calabasas	La Habra Heights	Redlands
Calimesa	La Mirada	Redondo Beach
Canyon Lake	La Palma	Rialto
Carson	La Puente	Riverside
Cerritos	La Verne	Rolling Hills
Chino	Lake Elsinore	Rolling Hills Estates
Chino Hills	Lake Forest	Rosemead
Claremont	Lakewood	San Bernardino
Colton	Lawndale	San Dimas
Commerce	Loma Linda	San Fernando
Compton	Lomita	San Gabriel
Corona	Long Beach	San Jacinto
Covina	Los Angeles	San Marino
Cudahy	Lynwood	Santa Ana
Culver City	Malibu	Santa Clarita
Diamond Bar	Manhattan Beach	Santa Fe Springs
Downey	Malibu	Santa Monica
Duarte	Maywood	Seal Beach
Eastvale	Menifee	Sierra Madre
El Monte	Mission Viejo	Signal Hill
El Segundo	Monrovia	South El Monte
Fontana	Montclair	South Gate

South Pasadena
Temecula
Temple City
Torrance
Upland

Vernon
Walnut
West Covina
West Hollywood
Westlake Village

Whittier
Wildomar
Yorba Linda
Yucaipa

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

Alhambra Chamber of Commerce
Arcadia Chamber of Commerce
California Fire Safe Council
Carson Chamber of Commerce
Citrus Valley Association of Realtors
City of Hope
El Monte / South El Monte Chamber of Commerce
Foothill Transit
Gardena Valley Chamber of Commerce
Glendora Chamber of Commerce
Hermosa Beach Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Bureau
Hispanic Coalition of Small Businesses
Inglewood Airport Area Chamber of Commerce
Inland Action
Inland Regional Energy Network
Kaiser Permanente
Lake Arrowhead Communities Chamber of Commerce
Lomita Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation
Manhattan Beach Chamber of Commerce
March Joint Powers Authority
METRO
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
Murrieta/Wildomar Chamber of Commerce
Omnitrans
Ontario International Airport Authority
Orange Chamber of Commerce
Orange County Council of Governments
Palos Verdes Peninsula Chamber of Commerce
Redondo Beach Chamber of Commerce
Riverside Transit Agency
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
San Bernardino International Airport Authority
San Fernando Valley Council of Governments
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership
San Pedro Chamber of Commerce
Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce

South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce
South Bay Cities Council of Governments
SunLine Transit Agency
Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce
Upland Chamber of Commerce
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Western Riverside Council of Governments
Western States Petroleum Association

In August, 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 Islander Forward Movement
Asian Youth Center, San Gabriel
Avocado Heights Vaqueros
Cal Poly Pomona
California State University, Dominguez Hills
California State University, Fullerton
California State University, San Bernadino
Center for Asian Americans United for Self-Empowerment
Citrus College
Clean Air Coalition of North Whittier & Avocado Heights
Clean Healthy Air Clean Healthy Altadena
Del Amo Action Committee
Friends of the Desert Mountains
Friends of the Pacific Electric Trail
Grades of Green
Ground Truthing California, South El Monte
Habitat for Humanity International
Hacienda Heights Improvement Association, Inc.
Healthy Fontana
Healthy Rancho Cucamonga
Inland Empire Biking Alliance
Inland Empire Fire Safe Alliance
Mt. San Antonio College
National Forest Foundation
North Whittier Neighborhood Watch Avocado Heights Association
Oak Knoll Montessori School, Altadena
Our Global Humanity

Pasadena City College
Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority
Riverside County Health Coalition
San Bernadino Valley College
San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles Rivers & Mountains Conservancy
San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps
Sierra Club Angeles Chapter, Pasadena
South Bay Parkland Conservancy
Southern California Mountains Foundation
The Wildlands Conservancy
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, Riverside
University of La Verne