

Chapter 2: Community Outreach, Community Steering Committee and Public Process

Introduction

Community engagement, outreach, and public process were crucial to developing the Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV) Community Emission Reduction Plan (CERP). Key features of the outreach efforts include establishing a Community Steering Committee (CSC), monthly CSC meetings, CSC member and South Coast AQMD staff presentations, providing materials (in English and Spanish) via email and a webpage, live-streaming all CSC meetings (with English and Spanish interpretation), and establishing a Technical Advisory Group (TAG). Also, numerous interactions between CSC members and South Coast AQMD staff occurred in one-on-one or small group meetings, allowing for in-depth discussions on joint development and creating the CERP.

Chapter 2 Highlights

- The Community Steering Committee (CSC) and Technical Advisory Group worked with South Coast AQMD staff to develop the CERP
- Despite the COVID-19 Stay-At-Home Order, regularly scheduled CSC meetings resumed using a virtual platform to engage with the CSC and public
- The Community Liaison served as the point of contact
- A series of Charter Working Group Meetings were held to develop a CSC Charter
- Additional one-on-one, small group, and community meetings also played an important part in community engagement
- A Community Webpage was created as an information portal

Community Liaisons

A Community Liaison from the South Coast AQMD served as the point of contact to communicate with members of the CSC and members of the public to address concerns regarding logistics and development of the CERP and Community Air Monitoring Plan (CAMP) (Figure 2-1). The Community Liaison ensured communication throughout the CERP development process and worked with community members to identify the best ways to make information accessible and user-friendly. The South Coast AQMD Community Liaison for the Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV) is Arlene Farol (afarol@aqmd.gov). In addition, Pedro Piqueras (ppiqueras@aqmd.gov) serves as the South Coast AQMD point of contact for CERP-related discussions.

Figure 2-1: South Coast AQMD staff assisting CSC members and the public at a meeting in the city of Coachella



Community Steering Committee (CSC)

A steering committee was formed in late January 2020 for the ECV community, and monthly in-person meetings were organized, starting February 19, 2020 (Figure 2-2). However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting executive orders from the Governor¹, the remaining CSC meetings were transitioned to a video conferencing format. The March and April CSC meetings were cancelled and resumed in May using the Zoom platform. The main role of the CSC is to provide input and guidance as well as to propose actions for the community plans (i.e., CERP and CAMP). The CSC is comprised of stakeholders with community knowledge to help drive community action and develop the CERP and CAMP. The CSC creates a way to incorporate community expertise and direction in developing and implementing clean air programs in each community. Staff will continue to seek recommendations and feedback from the CSC during CERP implementation and adjust the outreach approaches to be more effective.

The ECV CSC has 50 primary members and 12 alternate members representing active residents, community organizations, and businesses. While 20 primary members are on the roster representing active residents, an additional 10 primary members also reside within the community (resident percentage on the CSC = 60%). Additionally, there are 10 primary members and 8 alternate members representing agencies, schools/universities, or offices of elected officials who serve this community.² The roster is available at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/nav/about/initiatives/community-efforts/environmental-justice/ab617-134/eastern-coachella-valley>

¹ Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-25-20 on March 12, 2020 and Executive Order N-29-20 on March 17, 2020.

² Per discussion with CARB staff, members representing agencies, schools, universities, hospitals, and offices of elected officials are not included in the calculation of resident percentage on the CSC.

Figure 2-2: Community Steering Committee meeting in Coachella



CSC Charter Working Group

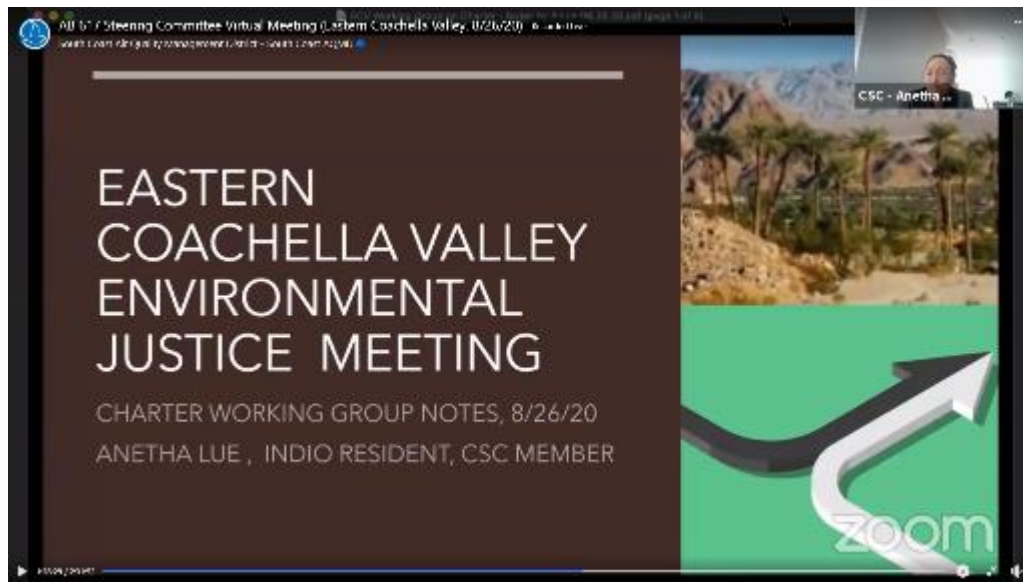
The South Coast AQMD's original draft charter was presented at the February 20th CSC meeting. In March 2020 meeting, CSC member Rebecca Zaragoza provided a revised charter based on input from some of her fellow CSC members. Because they felt it was important for the CSC as a whole to discuss the Charter, the CSC recommended forming a Charter Working Group to draft the charter to include all CSC input. At the May 20th CSC meeting, all CSC members were invited to participate in the Charter Working Group/CSC meetings, and updates were provided to the full membership during CSC meetings. The first Charter Working Group meeting was held on June 23, 2020 followed by subsequent weekly meetings (a total of 4 meetings of this Working Group).

During the Charter Working Group meetings, CSC members discussed ideas for the committee meeting process, including a request to incorporate elements of the Brown Act into the charter and to form subcommittees to discuss specific topics. Additionally, Committee members requested stipends, transit, childcare, availability of alternative community locations with internet access for future meetings, outreach via mass mailing of materials, air quality training and workshops, printed meeting materials to be delivered to organizations and residents, and that materials be provided far in advance of meetings.

A Google document was created for CSC members to provide recommendations and direct edits to the draft charter. At each Charter Working Group meeting, CSC members discussed the edits and suggestions provided in the draft charter. CSC members edited the Google document until July 29th when a draft was presented to members at the Charter Working Group meeting. CSC members provided comments and the feedback received was included in the revised charter. A vote was taken by CSC members recommending not to bring the Brown Act item to the next CSC meeting for a vote, and instead continue developing the language in the charter, removing the sentence that mentions the Brown Act. Additionally, the CSC also recommended presenting a clean version of the charter for consideration the next CSC meeting.

At the August 26th CSC meeting, CSC member Anetha Lue presented a thorough summary of the discussions during the various Charter Working Group meetings. In her summary, she stated the general agreement that the charter should ensure inclusion and fairness, achieving results and a leadership role for the community (Figure 2-3).

Figure 2-3: CSC Member Anetha Lue presented an update at the August 26th CSC meeting



The final charter was approved by the CSC on September 24th and is available at the links below.

CSC Final Charter - September 24, 2020 version:

- English: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ab-617-ab-134/steering-committees/eastern-coachella-valley/final-charter.pdf?sfvrsn=8>
Spanish: <http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/ab-617-ab-134/steering-committees/eastern-coachella-valley/final-charter-span.pdf?sfvrsn=8>

Committee Presenters

A critical aspect of the CERP is development and implementation through collaboration with committee members and the agencies, organizations, businesses, or other entities that they represent. Committee members were invited to share their work that is complementary to the actions being developed in the CERP, such as programs carried out by their organization that help address air quality issues in the community.

On July 31st, an informational workshop on Salton Sea and Pesticides was held to identify the roles of various public agencies dealing with the Salton Sea and pesticides. The workshop included presentations from CARB, Department of Pesticide Regulation, Imperial Irrigation District, Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner's Office and UC Riverside.

Committee members Dr. Ann Cheney, Adriana Chavez and Conchita Pozar provided information about ongoing studies related to the Salton Sea. Daniel Delgado represented committee member Ruben Arroyo

from the Riverside County Department of Agriculture and Measurement (Agricultural Commissioner) Standards and described the role of the Agricultural Commissioner in implementing pesticide regulations.

Community Testimonials

On February 2019, South Coast AQMD, along with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) invited residents from the ECV community to learn about the AB 617 program. Community members were invited

Figure 2-4: Community members are invited to share their personal air pollution concerns



to share personal stories, outline their concerns with air pollution and describe how it has negatively impacted their lives and community. A video documentary, “Estamos Aqui” was presented by local filmmakers. These types of conversations from the community during CSC meetings have helped provide perspective and context to frame the discussions during the CSC meetings (Figure 2-4).

Community Meetings

In February 2019, a community meeting was held at the North Shore Community Center to provide an introduction to the AB 617 program. Since CARB designated the ECV community for the AB 617 program in December 2019, South Coast AQMD staff has hosted community meetings on a regular basis in the community or through virtual meetings. This included one kick-off meeting, a series of CSC meetings, community workshops, Q&A sessions, and Charter Working Group meetings.

Community Kick-Off Meeting

The Community Kick-Off Meeting in the ECV community was held on Wednesday, January 22, 2020 at the Coachella Library Conference Center (Figure 2-5). During this meeting, staff presented information about the AB 617 program and explained the critical role of the CSC in the development and implementation of the CERP and CAMP. During the kick-off meeting, community members were invited to fill out an interest form to express their interest in becoming a CSC member, and were then notified by mail or phone if they were selected to be a member or an alternate.

Figure 2-5: Community kick-off meeting at the Coachella Library



CSC Meeting Schedule

The CSC meetings were held on an approximately monthly basis, and all meetings were intended to be held in various locations throughout the community. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting executive orders from the Governor³, only one in-person meeting was held in February, and the remaining CSC meetings were transitioned to a video conferencing format. Because of the additional work needed to manage this transition to virtual formats, two meetings (March and April) were postponed, but CSC meetings resumed in May using the Zoom videoconferencing platform (Figure 2-6). Each meeting was open to the public, and Spanish interpretation was available at the kick-off meeting and at every CSC meeting. A full list of the meetings and details are provided in Table 2-1 of Appendix 2.

In response to the CSC members' requests for additional meetings to discuss the charter and to develop the CERP and CAMP, staff added several CSC meetings over the course of the year, for a total of 15 meetings for the ECV community.

Figure 2-6: Community Steering Committee meeting via Zoom



Meeting Facilitator

CSC meetings were facilitated by Jeanette Flores and Valerie Martinez of VMA Communications (www.vmapr.com).

Social Media

Staff received a suggestion from one committee member to live-stream meetings on social media in order to engage youth who use this technology and who may not be able to attend the meetings in person. All

³ Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-25-20 on March 12, 2020 and Executive Order N-29-20 on March 17, 2020.

CSC meetings were subsequently live-streamed using Facebook Live (Figure 2-7). The links to the live-stream recording were also posted on the South Coast AQMD community webpage, so that members who could not attend or view the meeting live could view the recorded video of the meeting. All CSC meetings are publicized on Instagram (Figure 2-8), Twitter, and Facebook events, and are available in English and Spanish. Each video received more than 100 views.

Figure 2-7: Screen shot of Facebook Live recording of ECV CSC



Figure 2-8. Screen shot of Instagram post of ECV CSC



Community Webpage

A community webpage (Figure 2-9) was created for the ECV community. The webpage includes information about upcoming meetings, meeting materials (flyers, agendas, presentations, handouts, live stream links, and meeting summaries). Additionally, the ECV community page includes interactive maps, the CSC roster, and the CAMP and CERP documents. All flyers, agendas, social media posts, presentations, and handouts to the CSC were made available in English and Spanish. Webpage: <http://www.aqmd.gov/nav/about/initiatives/community-efforts/environmental-justice/ab617-134/eastern-coachella-valley>

Figure 2-9: Community webpage for the Eastern Coachella Valley community

During this difficult time, South Coast AQMD is committed to protecting air quality and public health. Please visit our COVID-19 page for the operational updates and latest information. [Go to COVID-19](#)

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AB 617 - 2019-Designated Communities

Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV)

Recent & Upcoming Activity

Next Scheduled meeting:

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m., Thursday, October 22, 2020 - Community Steering Committee Remote Meeting
 Zoom Link: <https://us02ampl.zoom.us/j/98534653376>
 Zoom Webinar ID (English): 985 3465 3376
 Teleconference Dial In: +1 669 900 6833
 Spanish Meeting ID: 937 9466 3910, Passcode: 214680 *
 Please note that a passcode is now required for the dial-in Spanish line only.

Newsletters

- May 2020 - English (PDF) | Español (PDF)

Interactive Maps

- [Story Map - ECV Community Boundary and Regulatory Air Quality Monitoring - English | Español](#)

Informational Handouts

- [Air Quality Priorities - English \(PDF\) | Español \(PDF\)](#)
- [Open Burning \(agriculture and non-agriculture\) - English \(PDF\) | Español \(PDF\)](#)
- [Fugitive Road Dust - English \(PDF\) | Español \(PDF\)](#)

Prior Meetings & Activity

October 15, 2020 - AB 617 Incentive Strategies - Virtual Public Consultation Meeting

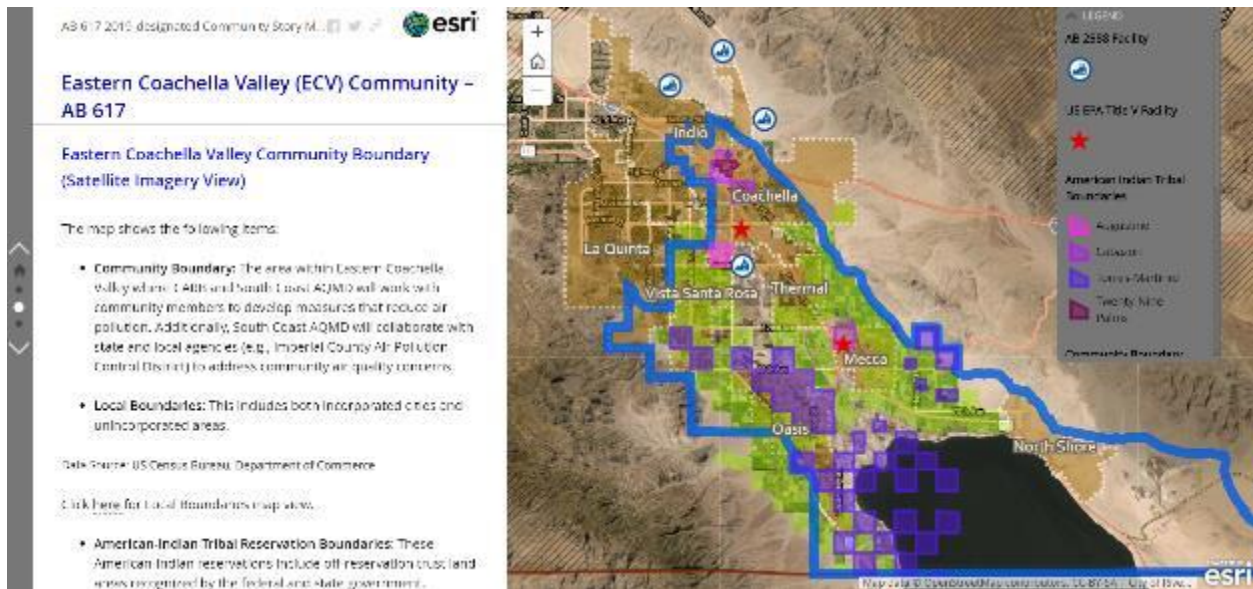
- [Meeting Agenda: English \(PDF\) | Español \(PDF\)](#)
- [Meeting Presentations: English/Español \(PDF\)](#)

October 14, 2020 - Community Steering Committee Remote Meeting

- [Meeting Agenda: English/Español \(PDF\)](#)
- [Meeting Presentations: English \(PDF\) | Español \(PDF\)](#)

The interactive maps on the webpage presented data about the community. Figure 2-10 is an example of an interactive map that was created for the ECV community. These interactive maps provide data on land use, locations of facilities, schools, hospitals, and daycare centers, and the air quality concerns identified by the CSC and members of the public. This information was provided to help inform air quality priorities for the CERP.

Figure 2-10: Interactive map showing land use in the ECV community



Community Bus Tour

A critical part of the CERP development and implementation is collaboration with committee members and the agencies, organizations, businesses, or other entities that they represent. In early 2020, a Community Bus Tour was being organized by some committee members in collaboration with South Coast AQMD staff. However, due to the Governor's executive orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the community bus tour was put on hold until it is deemed safe to hold such an event.

Technical Advisory Group

In February 2019, the AB 617 Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was established to provide a forum to discuss technical details related to the development and implementation of the CAMPs and CERPs.⁴

In 2020, the TAG met twice to discuss technical details related to the CERP and CAMP development for the two 2019-designated communities (SELA and Eastern Santa Coachella Valley). Topics discussed included monitoring equipment and laboratory capabilities, methodology and data sources for developing an air toxics emissions inventory at a community scale, methodology for forecasting emissions in future years, and methodology for modeling air toxics levels across geographical areas. All meetings were open to the public, webcast on the www.aqmd.gov webpage, and included an email option to send questions to be answered during the meeting.

Many of these technical considerations apply to all five AB 617 designated communities, thus the TAG includes up to 3 members from each CSC, and additional technical experts from academia, research institutes, and governmental agencies. The ECV CSC members who served as TAG members in 2020 are

⁴ The webpage for the TAG: <http://www.aqmd.gov/nav/about/initiatives/environmental-justice/ab617-134/technical-advisory-group>

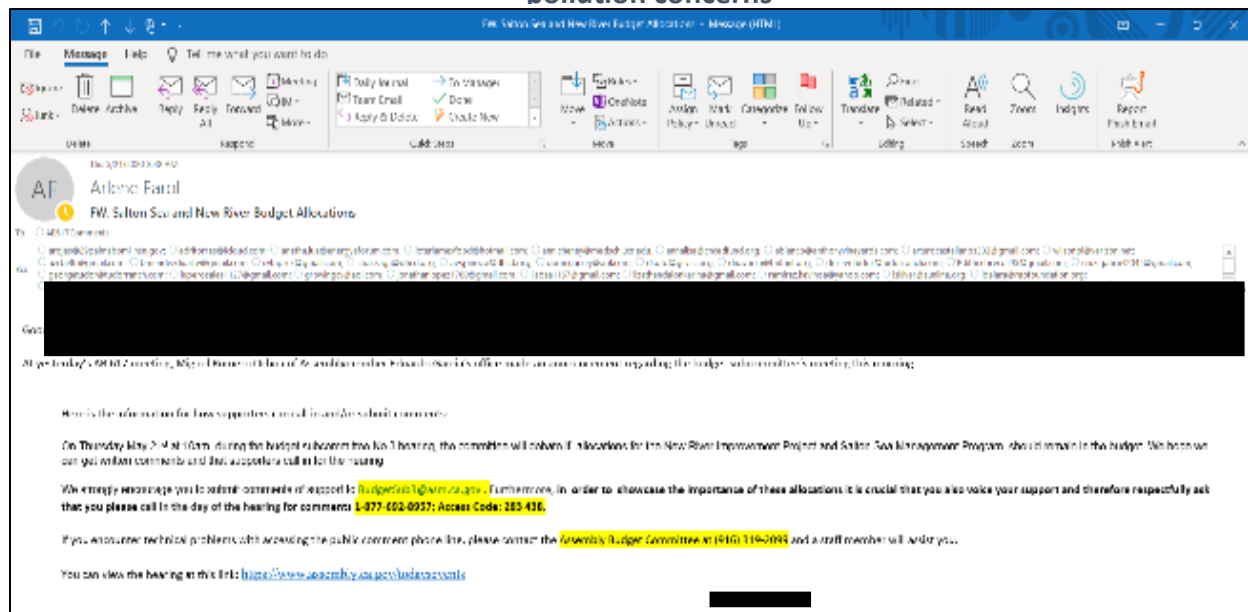
Lilian Garcia and Ryan Sinclair. Additional information about the TAG and the 2020 TAG meeting schedule are provided in the Chapter 2 Appendix.

Additional Community Engagement

In addition to establishing the CSC and convening monthly meetings, South Coast AQMD staff participated in one-on-one or small group meetings with members, and attended meetings led by various community organizations. These meetings gave committee members an opportunity to communicate directly with staff. Additionally, these meetings give staff an opportunity to answer questions and clarify information requested from CSC members. Staff was able to gain a better understanding of the unique issues faced by each community by attending and participating in meetings led by community organizations.

Broader public engagement is also important to the AB 617 program. Every CSC meeting agenda includes an opportunity for committee members to suggest agenda items to co-create future agendas for upcoming meetings. Staff reviews comments after each CSC meeting, and responds as needed. (Figure 2-11).

Figure 2-11: Community members are invited to share community information on air pollution concerns



Throughout the development of the CERP, community liaisons and other staff met with community members, environmental justice organizations, industry, and other stakeholders to provide assistance and prompt response to concerns raised about the CSC process. Community liaisons also attended meetings from local organizations, environmental justice groups, city and county government to promote participation in the development and implementation of the CERP. Staff attended meetings hosted by other entities in this community to give presentations on AB 617 CERP development and had more than 35 in-person, phone, and meetings with committee members to discuss the CSC process and seek input on CERP actions. South Coast AQMD staff will continue to work with the CSC to implement the CERP actions and provide periodic community updates on implementing the plan. Community engagement is

essential to the success of the CERP and the AB 617 program as a whole, and all parties are committed to building and improving upon existing outreach efforts.

Figure 2-12: Small group air quality priority exercises with CSC members and South Coast AQMD staff

