



South Coast Air Quality Management District

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NEWS

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SCAQMD Hosts Third Annual Environmental Justice Conference

More than 200 community activists and others participated today in the South Coast Air Quality Management District's third annual environmental justice conference, titled *A Conversation on Environmental Justice*. The event was hosted by the agency's Environmental Justice Community Partnership at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in downtown Los Angeles. Los Angeles City Council President Herb J. Wesson, Jr. delivered the keynote address.

"The environmental justice community is a community of caring partners that have joined together to protect and clean our most precious resources," said South Coast Air Quality Management District Governing Board Chairman William A. Burke, Ed.D. "It is my hope that all of the participants learned new skills and are able to help make our planet a better place to live in."

The conference aimed to strengthen SCAQMD's relationship with stakeholders in environmental justice communities by encouraging more residents to get involved and to be optimistic about the positive results that their activism can bring to their communities.

SCAQMD Governing Board members, members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the California Legislature, and representatives from the environmental justice community and academia participated in breakout sessions. Participants in each session were able to learn new methods, gain new tools, and build new partnerships.

Representatives from transportation, legal services, academia, and utilities highlighted that it is necessary to create partnerships to create pathways to clean energy technology and the electrification of transit and heavy-duty trucks to help reduce air pollution impacts facing EJ communities. Additionally, a commitment to working with community and faith-based groups in and outside of service areas, requiring local-sourced construction materials, low emission fuels, and providing technical expertise for impacted communities are key factors to implement environmental justice initiatives.

Conference breakout sessions included:

- **Clean Air Innovation:** Exploring zero- and near-zero emission technologies;

- **Cooperative Engagement:** How community groups, public agencies, and businesses can work together to champion environmental justice;
- **Right on the Money:** Techniques for effective grant writing; and
- **Air Pollution, EJ and Health.**

SCAQMD also provided participants with an overview of how legislation such as the Chemical Safety Act, Clean Air Act, and the Cap and Trade program will affect California and discuss how community groups are responding to legislative activities in Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

SCAQMD's EJ program began in 1997 with the Ethnic Advisory group which was later renamed as the Environmental Justice Advisory Group. The EJAG advises the SCAQMD Governing Board and assists the agency in protecting and improving public health in SCAQMD's most impacted communities.

To build on the work of the EJAG, the Environmental Justice Community Partnership was established in February 2015. Through this grassroots partnership, SCAQMD hosts a series of events with a special EJ focus. These forums, training sessions, and other engaging outreach activities help broaden mutual awareness of EJ topics, and keep SCAQMD connected to the residents whom the agency serves.

SCAQMD is the air pollution control agency for Orange County and major portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside counties.