



South Coast Air Quality Management District

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NEWS

For Immediate Release
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SCAQMD Board Takes Action to Further Reduce Flaring Emissions from Refineries

The South Coast Air Quality Management District approved measures today to improve public health and safety near South Bay oil refineries by strengthening an existing rule to reduce flaring emissions and by investing mitigation funds into affected communities.

“These actions are part of a multipronged regulatory and collaborative approach that increase health protections for residents today and set the stage for further emission reductions from refineries in the near future,” said Wayne Nastri, SCAQMD’s executive officer.

The Board today approved an amendment to SCAQMD’s Rule 1118 to:

- Prohibit certain types of flaring and require more efficient flaring operation when it does occur;
- Require facilities to prepare a detailed engineering analysis to evaluate the feasibility of implementing much tighter flaring standards in the future; and
- Remove the annual cap on mitigation fees paid for excess flaring and enhancing current public notification and reporting requirements.

In addition the Board today approved contracts with the City of Torrance and Sonoma Technology, Inc. for the \$2.77 million ExxonMobil Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) fund. The funds will enhance the monitoring and alert system at the Torrance (formerly ExxonMobil) refinery to provide warnings and updates to Torrance residents during refinery flaring and other emergencies. Finally the Board today initiated a process to study new optical remote sensing technologies to provide more accurate information on flaring emissions.

Flaring is a safety measure used to relieve pressure in refinery process units. Flaring from significant events like power outages or process unit breakdowns can release a variety of pollutants, some of which are toxic.

Later this year, SCAQMD staff plans to bring two more rules to its Governing Board relating to refinery operations: Proposed Rule 1180 requiring monitoring systems at refineries that provide real-time public information about pollutant levels surrounding them; and Proposed Rule 1410, regarding the use of hydrogen fluoride alkylation units at two refineries.

In other action today, the Board:

- Approved up to \$1.25 million to install air filtration systems at schools in environmental justice communities near the Port of Long Beach. Funds will be provided by a SEP agreement between the state Attorney General's Office and SSA Terminals in partnership with SCAQMD;
- Approved funding for the fifth Multiple Air Toxics Exposure Study (MATES V). Starting in January 2018, SCAQMD will commence MATES V to monitor air toxics for a one-year period, conduct air toxics modeling and quantify the health risks. SCAQMD has conducted four MATES studies in the South Coast basin since 1987; and
- Approved Rule 1466 that will minimize toxic emissions from earth-moving activities at sites where soil is contaminated with toxic materials including arsenic, asbestos, cadmium, hexavalent chromium, lead, mercury, nickel or polychlorinated biphenyl(s).

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

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