



# South Coast Air Quality Management District

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## NEWS

**For Immediate Release  
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*Editor's Note: Photos of the event are available by contacting SCAQMD's Media Office*

### **Building Upon the Dream: A Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service Forum**

The South Coast Air Quality Management District today hosted its fifth "Building Upon the Dream: Day of Service Forum" at the California African American Museum in Los Angeles. Over 353 were in attendance.

This forum memorialized Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s fight for justice for all, and demonstrated how his dream can be materialized through the efforts of SCAQMD and its environmental justice partners to clean the air.

"The combined efforts of stellar citizens and elected officials, SCAQMD, cities, businesses and other agencies wiped out the days of smog alerts and smog so thick that you could not see the beautiful mountain ranges around Southern California," said SCAQMD Governing Board Chair William A. Burke, Ed.D. "Dr. King's collaborative efforts shows us that what may appear to be unsurmountable challenges, can be overcome if we continue to work together for the common good our region and public health."

State Sen. Steven Bradford of the 35<sup>th</sup> district gave the keynote speech. Herb Wesson, president of the Los Angeles City Council was honored with SCAQMD's Environmental Justice for All Award.

Wesson has served as the president of the Los Angeles city council since November 2011 and has represented council district 10 since 2005. Wesson is the first African-American to hold the position of council president in the city's history and has been re-elected three times to lead the city's legislative body.

During Wesson's tenure as council president, he has presided over major policy initiatives making Los Angeles a better place to live, work and raise a family. Many of the local policy initiatives, which include raising the minimum wage, pension reform and consolidating city elections to increase voter turnout, have positively affected local residents and served as a model for similar policies in California and nationwide.

Today's event marks one of the first of many events this year to engage residents in the Southland, particularly in disadvantaged and environmental justice communities. SCAQMD will host meetings to seek input, feedback and partnership for Assembly 617, a comprehensive community-based effort that focuses on improving air quality and public health in environmental justice communities. The first three areas approved for AB 617 program implementation are Wilmington/West Long Beach/Carson, San Bernardino/Muscoy and Boyle Heights/East Los Angeles/West Commerce. For more information please visit <http://www.aqmd.gov/nav/about/initiatives/environmental-justice/ab617-134>.

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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