




SOUTH COAST AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT  
**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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## **Thermal 66 Fire May 30, 2019**

On May 30, 2019 at approximately 8:50 a.m., South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) was notified of a fire occurring within the Torres Martinez Reservation Landfill site. South Coast AQMD inspectors arrived at the 87000 block of Avenue 66 in Thermal, Calif. at approximately 11:30 a.m. where they observed several plumes of gray and black smoke emanating from stockpiles of mulch in the center of the former landfill site. The fire was originally reported at 9:06 p.m. on May 29, 2019.

Upon arriving at the scene, inspectors detected distinct smoke odors throughout the area with light variable winds under clear sunny skies. Inspectors conducted a visible emission evaluation (VEE) where smoke was observed at Ringelmann 1 or 20% opacity. The wind was measured at 3 mph from out of the south – south east with the smoke plume trailing in a northerly direction towards Coachella, Calif.

At approximately 2:40 p.m. inspectors reported the fire plume had increased in size with other piles burning. A VEE was performed at approximately 3:30 p.m. where smoke was observed between Ringelmann 3.75 – 4.5. The wind was measured at 10 – 12 mph from out of the south – south east with the smoke plume trailing in a north westerly direction toward La Palmitas Elementary School.

The surrounding area is mostly flat vacant land with Los Palmitas Elementary School, Toro Canyon Middle School and Desert Mirage High School located approximately 1/2 mile to the west boundary of the site. Approximately 3,650 students, between the three schools, sheltered in place until the end of the school day at 2:00 p.m.

At approximately 2:00 p.m. on May 31, 2019, the fire was mapped at 51 acres and 75% containment. The fire was extinguished on June 24, 2019.

The cause of the fire is still being determined. South Coast AQMD will evaluate whether any regulatory violations occurred.