

## **CHAPTER 7**

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# **PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION**

- **SUGGESTED GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

## PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

In Town Hall meetings held by the AQMD, residents throughout the South Coast basin have asked how the public can become more involved in reducing local air pollution impacts in their communities. Local governments are encouraged to invest in public outreach activities and programs to build strong public awareness of regional and local air quality issues and health studies. To foster greater community involvement and support in developing public policy, local jurisdictions should consider the following activities to improve awareness of air quality and environmental justice issues.

- identify an individual as a contact person for environmental justice issues.
- participate with the AQMD in Town Hall meetings to hear citizen concerns regarding air quality and environmental justice.
- schedule community meetings to update residents of proposed large development projects, the results of AQMD air monitoring programs (e.g., MATES-II), cumulative air quality impacts and evaluate various options to reduce health impacts from exposure to air pollution. To encourage greater participation, hold public meetings in centrally-located community meeting rooms, libraries, and schools. Schedule meetings at times that encourage public participation (e.g., evenings and weekends) and provide translation services, and childcare services, if needed.
- collaborate with local school districts and private schools to increase student awareness of air pollution and health effects issues.
- distribute air quality information, AQMD brochures and fact sheets on the health effects of air pollution, public service announcements, and web page links. Provide this information in languages of the major ethnic groups in the community.
- collaborate with AQMD and other public entities as appropriate on distribution of public notices for air emission related actions and events involving environmental justice, including, but not limited to, mailing lists, noticing venues, and content of notices to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of this outreach effort.
- dedicate a page of the local government website to address local land use policies as they relate to environmental justice programs and cumulative air quality impacts.

- allow, encourage, and promote community access to activities related to land use activities such as General Plan or Community Plan updates, zoning changes, special studies, CEQA reviews, variances, etc.
- create and distribute simple, easy-to-read, understandable material on public participation that describes how to contact the local jurisdiction or AQMD to obtain information and assistance regarding air quality, health effects and environmental justice programs. A model handbook is available from CARB titled “Public Participation Guidebook.”

USEPA's Environmental Education Center provides curricula and creative activities on a variety of air quality topics. Kids' sites from the USEPA include educational material on air pollution and its effects on global warming. USEPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards' Environmental Education Web site describes air quality training opportunities for teachers K-12, resource materials and available grants.

The AQMD provides a number of air quality curricula and materials to assist teachers at no charge. For example, a project titled: “Air Pollution - What's the Solution” has been developed for students, grades 6 – 12. This curriculum utilizes online, real-time data to guide student discovery of the science behind the causes and effects of ground level ozone in the context of an authentic real-world problem. The AQMD Student's Health Web Site is a resource for high school students and adults to learn about the health effects of air pollution in Southern California. Also, the website includes a “Kids' Page” that shows three colorful chameleons to teach children how to moderate their activity to safely play outside when air pollution levels are elevated.

## **SUGGESTED GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

**Goal 6                    Greater public awareness of the changes in personal behavior that can be chosen to minimize air pollution**

**Objective 6.1    Make air quality education a priority for the City's effort to protect public health and achieve state and federal clean air standards.**

### **Suggested Policies/Strategies Related to Public Awareness:\***

**AQ 6.1.1**        Provide regional and local air quality information on City's website, including links to the AQMD, CARB, USEPA and other environmental-based internet sites.

**AQ 6.1.2**        Organize city-sponsored events on topics that educate businesses and the public about compliance with air quality regulations (e.g., alternative fuels and low polluting clean household products).

**AQ 6.1.3**        Work with school districts to develop air quality curricula for students.

- AQ 6.1.4** Encourage, publicly recognize, and reward innovative approaches that improve air quality.
- AQ 6.1.5** Encourage the participation of environmental groups, the business community, civic groups, special interest groups, and the general public in the formulation and implementation of programs that effectively reduce air pollution.
- AQ 6.1.6** Encourage the purchase and use of low- or zero-emission vehicles, coordinate with AQMD and with local car dealerships and their associations to encourage and support the dealerships' participation in AQMD's "Clean Air Choice" vehicle information program.
- AQ 6.1.7** Provide public education to encourage local consumers to choose the cleanest paints, consumer products, etc.
- AQ 6.1.8** Publicize the AQMD's 1-800-CUT-SMOG number for the public to report air pollution complaints to the AQMD.

\*Potential funding for these policies has been identified in Appendix E.