

BOARD MEETING DATE: February 4, 2022

AGENDA NO. 8

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the December 2021 outreach activities of the Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Office, which includes Major Events, Community Events/Public Meetings, Environmental Justice Update, Speakers Bureau/Visitor Services, Communications Center, Public Information Center, Business Assistance, Media Relations, and Outreach to Community Groups and Federal, State and Local Governments.

COMMITTEE: No Committee Review

RECOMMENDED ACTION:  
Receive and file.

Wayne Nastri  
Executive Officer

DA:LTO:AL:bel:lam

---

## **BACKGROUND**

This report summarizes the activities of the Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Office for December. The report includes: Major Events; Community Events/Public Meetings; Environmental Justice Update; AB 617; Speakers Bureau/Visitor Services; Communications Center; Public Information Center; Business Assistance; Media Relations; and Outreach to Community Groups and Governments.

## **MAJOR EVENTS (HOSTED AND SPONSORED)**

Each year, staff hold and sponsor several major events throughout South Coast AQMD's four-county jurisdiction to promote, educate, and provide important information to the public regarding reducing air pollution, protecting public health, and improving air quality and the economy.

### 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Clean Air Awards

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Clean Air Awards was hosted virtually on December 3. There were approximately 230 attendees via Zoom, Facebook, and YouTube. Several Board Members participated or attended. Other attendees included elected officials, and members of the public.

### **COMMUNITY EVENTS/PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Each year, staff engage with thousands of residents and stakeholders, providing information about the agency, incentive programs, and ways individuals can help reduce air pollution. Attendees typically receive the following information:

- Tips on reducing their exposure to smog and its health effects;
- Clean air technologies and their deployment;
- Invitations to or notices of conferences, seminars, workshops, and other public events;
- South Coast AQMD incentive programs;
- Ways to participate in South Coast AQMD's rules and policy development; and
- Assistance in resolving air pollution-related problems.

Staff attended and/or provided information and updates at the following December events and meetings:

#### Orange County Council of Governments

Staff presented virtually at a Board Meeting on December 6. The presentation was on the fifth Multiple Air Toxics Exposure Study and an update on the fourth quarter Advisor.

#### Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority

Staff attended a Board Meeting on December 8. Staff provided an update on the 2022 AQMP and the compliance deadlines.

#### San Bernardino County Transportation Authority

Staff attended a City Manager Technical Advisory Committee meeting on December 2. Staff provided an update on an upcoming Warehouse Actions and Investments to Reduce Emissions Program (WAIRE) webinar for the Western Pallet Association.

#### San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments

On December 15, staff participated in a virtual Energy, Environment, and Natural Resources Committee meeting. Staff shared information on the Check Before You Burn Program.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATE**

The following are key environmental justice (EJ) related activities in which staff participated during December. These events and meetings involve communities affected disproportionately from adverse air quality impacts.

### Environmental Justice Community Partnership Advisory Council Meeting

Approximately 30 participated in a virtual Advisory Council meeting on December 1. There was discussion on the 2022 Goals and Objectives and a presentation by an Advisory Council Member on their work supporting community-led advocacy in EJ communities. Staff provided an update on efforts and collected input from members on issues and future agenda items.

### Institute for Local Government

Staff participated in a webinar titled, “Mastering Hybrid Public Engagement” on December 9. The webinar focused on how public engagement can help agencies build trust and develop equitable and sustainable public participation in a hybrid or digital environment.

### University of Southern California’s Center for Sustainability Solutions

On December 10, staff participated in a Climate & Health Series, “Threats of Climate Change to Children's Health and Equity: Benefits of Action.” Topics discussed were air pollution and climate change and how they can affect children’s health and brain development.

### Los Angeles Environmental Justice Network

Staff participated virtually in the Los Angeles Environmental Justice Network’s 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium on December 15. Panelists discussed the importance of protecting the environment, their experiences, and the need to have more dialogue with communities, including challenges and successes.

## **AB 617 UPDATE**

The following are key AB 617 related activities in which staff participated during December. These events, workshops, and meetings involve AB 617 communities to support the Community Steering Committees (CSCs), Community Air Monitoring Plans (CAMPs), and Community Emissions Reduction Plans (CERPs).

### Trucks Incentives Workshop

On December 1, approximately 55 individuals participated in the first of three workshops to gather input from community stakeholders on the development of the AB 617 Truck Incentives Plan. The meeting was attended by community members, small business owners, and independent truck owners/operators.

#### South Los Angeles Community Steering Committee

Approximately 35 individuals participated in a meeting on December 2. The agenda included a summary on oil and gas wells and discussion on auto body shops and metal facilities including dialogue on defining air quality priorities, BACT/BARCT/alternatives and potential solutions.

#### Eastern Coachella Valley Community Steering Committee

Approximately 70 individuals participated in a meeting on December 7. The agenda included updates on home air filtration systems/purifiers, CERPs, CAMPs implementation highlights, and working team reports on budget, monitoring, and outreach.

#### All Community Steering Committees Meeting

Approximately 65 individuals participated in a meeting on December 9 to discuss potential legislative and other improvements for the AB 617 program. Discussion focused on statutory timelines, need for elected officials and government agencies to engage in the development and implementation of Community Emission Reduction Plans and Community Air Monitoring Plans, and sustainable and increased funding for communities to directly support Community Steering Committees. Suggestions included holding hearings in communities where committee and community members would present their air quality priorities to elected officials and agencies.

#### Truck Incentives Workshop – Focus Group Discussion

On December 16, staff hosted and facilitated a focus group discussion with Community Steering Committee members to guide the development of the AB 617 Truck Incentives Plan. Committee members shared suggestions and provided comments on a questionnaire that will be used to gather feedback from Committee members and the trucking industry.

### **SPEAKERS BUREAU/VISITOR SERVICES**

South Coast AQMD regularly receives requests for staff to speak on air quality-related issues from a wide variety of organizations, such as trade associations, chambers of commerce, community-based groups, schools, hospitals, and health-based organizations. South Coast AQMD also hosts visitors from around the world who meet with staff on a wide range of air quality issues.

#### Western Pallet Association Grants Webinar

On December 15, staff presented virtually on the Warehouse Indirect Source Rule, clean technologies, and incentives. Information was shared on how the rule could apply to the pallet industry, including truck trip counting methods, the Warehouse Operator Compliance Obligation, and truck technologies that would earn points under the rule. Staff also provided information on different technologies and incentive programs.

## COMMUNICATION CENTER STATISTICS

The Communication Center handles calls on South Coast AQMD's main line, 1-800-CUT-SMOG®, the Spanish line, and after-hours calls to those lines. Total calls received in the month of December:

Calls to South Coast AQMD's Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG®	2,156
Calls to South Coast AQMD's Spanish-language Line	38
Total Calls	2,194

## PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER STATISTICS

The Public Information Center (PIC) handles phone calls for general information. The PIC did not take walk-in requests in December because of the COVID pandemic. Email advisories provided information on upcoming meetings and events, program announcements and alerts on time-sensitive issues. Information for the month of December is summarized below:

Calls Received by PIC	4
Calls to Automated System	267
Total Calls	271

Email Advisories Sent	9,782
-----------------------	-------

## SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

South Coast AQMD notifies local businesses of proposed regulations so they can participate in the agency's rule development process. South Coast AQMD works with other agencies and governments to identify efficient, cost-effective ways to reduce air pollution and shares that information broadly. Staff provides personalized assistance to small businesses both over the telephone and via virtual on-site consultation, as summarized below for December.

- Provided permit application assistance to 166 companies; and
- Processed 75 Air Quality Permit Checklists.

Types of businesses assisted:

Architecture Firms  
Auto Body Shops  
Construction Firms  
Dry Cleaners

Engineering Firms  
Gas Stations  
Manufacturing Facilities  
Offices

Restaurants  
Retail Operations  
Warehouses

## MEDIA RELATIONS

The Media Office handles all South Coast AQMD outreach and communications with television, radio, newspapers and all other publications, and media operations. The December reports are listed below:

Major Media Interactions	235
Press Releases	31

### Major Media Topics:

- **OC Air Quality:** A Chapman University student reporter inquired about air quality in Orange County. A written response was provided.
- **Ports:** LA Times, Crosstown LA, and Wall Street Journal inquired regarding various issues related to port pollution and offshore vessels. Written responses were provided. The Wall Street Journal requested information on container ship pollution in San Pedro Bay and written responses were provided. Staff participated in an interview with ABC7 regarding port pollution and at-berth regulations.
- **Phillips 66 Refinery:** Bloomberg News inquired about recent flaring at the refinery. Written responses were provided.
- **AB 617:** CalMatters inquired regarding several topics related to AB 617 communities and Community Steering Committees. A written response is being prepared.
- **Mobile Source Incentives:** CalMatters requested fact-check information on mobile source incentives funded by the Community Air Protection Program. Written responses were provided.
- **District Public Meeting:** Forthemediala.org requested information on a public meeting held March 13, 2018. Meeting information and materials were provided.
- **Gun Ranges:** The San Francisco Chronicle inquired about gun ranges and lead contamination project. Written responses were provided.
- **Mutual Flavors Notice of Violation (NOV):** Pitches were sent to local media outlets regarding NOVs issued to Mutual Flavors in City Terrace. Staff participated in an interview with KPCC on the NOVs issued.
- **Rule 2305:** SoCal News Group inquired about implementation plans for the Warehouse ISR in 2022. Additional information was requested.
- **Gas-powered Lawn Equipment Ban:** Finnish Broadcasting Company, YLE, requested an interview on the gas-powered lawn equipment ban. Additional information was requested.
- **Volvo Demonstration Event:** Pitches were sent to local media outlets for the Volvo Demonstration event on December 13.
- **AQ Special Toolkit:** Pitches were sent to local media outlets regarding the new air monitoring toolkit. Fontana Herald News had some follow up questions and a written response was provided.

- **Windblown Dust Advisory:** Pitches were sent to local media outlets informing them of two windblown dust advisories, resulting in coverage from local television, radio and print outlets.
- **Rule 1109.1:** The Daily Breeze inquired whether the rule had been approved by the Board. A written response was provided.

#### **Carson Odors**

- Staff participated in interviews with Telemundo, KPCC, KNX, and KTLA regarding NOV's and possible cause of the odors. The Daily Breeze, LA Times, and KFI sent questions regarding the press release. Responses were provided. NY Times, NBC, and Univision inquired regarding the next steps. Written responses were provided.

#### **Check Before You Burn:**

- There were 12 No-Burn Days in December. Pitches were sent to local media outlets for each day, which resulted in extensive coverage from local television, radio and print outlets throughout the month.

#### **News Releases:**

- **No-Burn Days – Mandatory Wood-Burning Ban In Effect For Residents Of The South Coast Air Basin (English and Spanish):** 12 No-Burn Days were issued on December 1-7, and 18-22.
- **South Coast AQMD Unveils New Toolkit to Help Public Use Air Quality Sensors, Understand Data (English and Spanish) – December 1, 2021:** Informed residents of new air monitoring toolkit available on the website.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Violations to Four Companies and the County of Los Angeles for Elevated Hydrogen Sulfide Levels that Impacted Communities Near the Dominguez Channel (English and Spanish) – December 3, 2021:** Informed residents of NOV's issued in response to the Dominguez Channel odors.
- **South Coast AQMD Announces 2021's Clean Air Heroes at Clean Air Awards – December 3, 2021 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of the 2021 Clean Air Award winners.
- **MEDIA ADVISORY: Volvo Demonstrates New Electric Compact Wheel Loader in Ontario – December 9, 2021:** Informed residents and press about Board Member Cacciotti's Volvo Demonstration event on December 13.
- **Violations Issued to Flavorings Company for Odors Impacting Residents in City Terrace, Failure to Have Necessary Permit – December 9, 2021 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents about violations issued to Mutual Flavors in City Terrace.

- **South Coast AQMD Issues Windblown Dust Advisory (English and Spanish) – December 14 and 27, 2021:** Informed residents of two windblown dust advisories.

**Social Media Notable posts:**

- **No Burn Day Extension (12/5):** 15,636 Twitter Impressions
- **Asthma Infographic (12/10):** 1,974 Twitter Impressions
- **No Burn Extension (12/21):** 7,124 Twitter Impressions
- **AQ Forecast (12/25):** 8,814 Twitter Impressions
- **Dust Advisory (12/27):** 7,295 Twitter Impressions

**OUTREACH TO COMMUNITY GROUPS AND FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

Outreach was conducted personally and virtually in December to communicate with elected officials or staff from the following cities:

Alhambra	Hemet	Riverside
Anaheim	Huntington Beach	Rosemead
Arcadia	Industry	San Dimas
Avalon	Irvine	San Fernando
Azusa	Irwindale	San Gabriel
Big Bear	La Cañada Flintridge	San Marino
Bradbury	La Habra	Santa Ana
Brea	La Puente	Santa Clarita
Buena Park	La Verne	Santa Monica
Burbank	Lake Forest	Seal Beach
Carson	Long Beach	Sierra Madre
Claremont	Los Angeles	South El Monte
Covina	Mission Viejo	South Pasadena
Diamond Bar	Monrovia	Stanton
Duarte	Monterey Park	Temple City
El Monte	Moreno Valley	Tustin
Fontana	Newport Beach	Walnut
Fullerton	Ontario	West Covina
Garden Grove	Pasadena	Yorba Linda
Glendale	Placentia	
Glendora	Pomona	



Communication occurred in December with elected officials and/or staff from the following state and federal offices:

- U.S. Senator Alex Padilla
- U.S. Representative Nanette Barragán
- U.S. Representative Grace Napolitano
- U.S. Representative Katie Porter
- Senator Bob Archuleta
- Senator Lena A. Gonzalez
- Senator Susan Rubio
- Assembly Member Lisa Calderon
- Assembly Member Mike Gipson

Staff represented South Coast AQMD in December and/or provided updates or a presentation to the following governmental agencies and business organizations:

Building Industry Association of Southern California, Orange County Chapter  
Coachella Valley Association of Governments  
Burbank Chamber of Commerce  
California Natural Resources Agency  
Caltrans  
Costa Mesa Chamber of Commerce  
El Monte/South El Monte Chamber of Commerce  
Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority  
Glendale Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Monterey Park Chamber of Commerce  
Inland Valley Development Agency  
Industry Business Council, Los Angeles  
Irwindale Chamber of Commerce  
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce  
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors  
Metro  
Omnitrans  
Orange County Business Council  
Orange County Council of Governments  
Orange County Transportation Authority  
San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors  
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority  
San Fernando Chamber of Commerce  
San Fernando Valley Council of Governments  
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments  
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership  
San Gabriel Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Santa Clarita Chamber of Commerce

Southern California Association of Governments  
Western Palmet Association  
Western Riverside Council of Governments  
Westside Cities Council of Governments

In December, staff represented South Coast AQMD and/or provided updates or a presentation to the following community and educational groups and organizations:

Active San Gabriel Valley  
Asian Pacific Islanders Forward Movement  
Bassett Unified School District  
California State University, San Bernardino  
Clean Air Coalition of North Whittier and Avocado Heights  
Clean Healthy Air, Clean Healthy Altadena  
Coalition for Clean Air  
Hacienda La Puente School District  
Institute for Local Government  
Move LA  
Pasadena Neighborhood Connections  
Taking Responsibility and Control, La Puente  
Visual Artists Guild, San Gabriel Valley