

BOARD MEETING DATE: May 6, 2022

AGENDA NO. 15

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the March 2022 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

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Background

This report summarizes the activities of the Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Office for March. 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 engage in holding and sponsoring 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 minimizing economic impacts.

Cesar Chavez Day of Remembrance

On March 26, approximately 200 attendees joined in-person and nearly 100 participants viewed via Facebook the 8th Annual Cesar Chavez Day of Remembrance event held at The Center at the Cathedral Plaza. ABC7 Community Journalist Eric Resendiz served as the event's emcee and Teresa Romero, President of the United Farm Workers, was featured as the keynote speaker. The Richard Alatorre Environmental Justice for All award was presented to two recipients, U.S. Representative Tony Cárdenas and to the late Filipino-American Labor Organizer Larry Itliong whose daughter, Patty Serda, accepted on his behalf.

Community Events / Public Meetings

Each year, staff engage with thousands of residents and stakeholders, providing valuable information about the agency, incentive programs, and ways individuals can help reduce air pollution through events and meetings sponsored solely by South Coast AQMD or in partnership with others. 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 March events and meetings:

Lake Arrowhead Communities Chamber of Commerce

On March 1, staff participated in a virtual Lake Arrowhead Communities Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee meeting. Staff provided information on the Lower-Emission School Bus Program and funding available to replace on-board CNG tanks.

San Bernardino County Transportation Authority)

On March 2, staff participated in a virtual City Manager Technical Advisory Committee meeting and shared information on the Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project (HVIP) funding opportunities.

San Fernando Valley Council of Governments)

On March 17, staff attended a virtual Governing Board meeting and provided updates on HVIP funding, the Cesar Chavez event and the Check Before You Burn Program.

Ascon Coordination Committee

On March 17, staff attended the virtual Ascon Coordination Committee, along with City of Huntington Beach and Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). The Project Navigator team presented updates on the project schedule and DTSC staff provided updates on community interviews and the public participation plan.

California Natural Gas Vehicle Partnership Leadership

On March 29, staff attended the virtual leadership and member meeting and provided information on the Warehouse Actions and Investments to Reduce Emissions (WAIRE) Program.

Environmental Justice Update

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

Environmental Justice Community Partnership (EJCP) Advisory Council

On March 2, the EJCP Advisory Council met virtually. Agenda items included review and approval of the 2022 Goals and Objectives and selection of a theme for the 8th Annual EJ Conference, “Our Lives, Our Environment: Collaborating for Clean Air.” Advisory Council member Theresa Martinez presented on Community Connections LLC’s work supporting community grassroots efforts. Staff also provided an update on the AB 617 Community Air Protection Program and EJCP efforts.

Pacoima Community Initiative

On March 4, staff participated virtually in the monthly stakeholder meeting. Members discussed upcoming events, issues, and opportunities for collaboration to assist the community. Staff provided updates on the Clean Air Program for Elementary Students (CAPES) and shared information on South Coast AQMD’s 8th Annual EJ Conference.

AB 617 Update

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

Eastern Coachella Valley Pesticides Prioritization Meeting

On March 3, CARB hosted a virtual meeting to discuss issues related to pesticides in Eastern Coachella Valley. Other participating regulatory agencies included the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment and the Department of Pesticide Regulation.

South Los Angeles CSC Meeting and Workshop

On March 3, approximately 60 attendees participated in a virtual AB 617 CSC workshop and meeting. The discussion topics included implementation of the CERP and CAMP, and feedback was received.

South Los Angeles CSC Working Team Meetings

On March 10, 16 and 23, the AB 617 CSC held virtual Working Team meetings on monitoring and the budget. The discussion topics included air quality sensors, fixed air monitoring equipment, and emissions from metal processing facilities and oil and gas wells.

Eastern Coachella Valley CSC Budget Working Team Meeting

On March 15, the AB 617 CSC held a virtual Budget Working Team meeting to discuss the status of the Paving Project Plan.

Gateway Cities Council of Governments (COG) Meeting

On March 23, staff met virtually with the Gateway Cities COG to discuss plans for possible urban greening projects that are part of the Southeast Los Angeles CERP.

Salton Sea Authority Board Meeting

On March 24, staff participated virtually in the Board of Directors meeting. The discussions focused on issues surrounding the Salton Sea including air quality monitoring, enforcement and funding, and there were presentations on the upcoming Salton Sea Summit and projects of the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians were also discussed.

Truck Incentives Workshop

On March 30, a virtual workshop was held to review draft components of the Truck Incentives program for CARB's approval. The workshop was attended by community members, industry representatives, and independent truck owner/operators.

Salton Sea Community Meeting

On March 30, staff attended a virtual Salton Sea Management Program meeting to learn about the state's efforts in relation to the Salton Sea. The meeting was hosted by the State Water Board, California Department of Fish and Wildlife and California Natural Resources Agency.

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.

11th Annual International Portable Emissions Measurement Systems Conference

On March 18, staff attended a virtual International Portable Emissions Measurement Systems Conference hosted by the University of Riverside and Riverside Community College. Staff provided a presentation on Community Level Environmental Policy Developments and shared the CSC led policy development and implementation process of AB 617.

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 March is summarized below:

Calls to South Coast AQMD's Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG®	3,181
Calls to South Coast AQMD's Spanish-Language Line	63
Total Calls	3,244

Public Information Center Statistics

The Public Information Center (PIC) handles phone calls for general information. The PIC did not take walk-in requests in March 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 March is summarized below:

Calls Received by PIC	15
Calls to Automated System	241
Total Calls	256

Email Advisories Sent	23,876
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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 March.

- Provided permit application assistance to 224 companies
- Processed 64 Air Quality Permit Checklists

Types of businesses assisted:

Architecture Firms	Engineering Firms	Restaurants
Auto Body Shops	Gas Stations	Retail Operations
Construction Firms	Manufacturing Facilities	Warehouses
Dry Cleaners	Offices	

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 March reports are listed below:

Major Media Interactions	122
Press Releases	18
News Carousel	1

Major Media Topics:

- **Toxics:** Matter of Fact with Soledad O'Brien submitted an inquiry on toxic and carcinogenic substances emitted from oil and gas operations near Los Angeles neighborhoods, as well as the FluxSense and Remote Sensing project report from 2017. A written response was provided.
- **Jim Fire:** KPCC and LA Times inquired about air quality impacts from the Jim Fire. Written responses were provided.
- **Kinder Morgan Watson Pump Station:** Oil Price Information Services inquired about the closure of the Kinder Morgan Watson Pump station. A written response was provided.
- **Hyperion:** SoCal News Group submitted several inquiries regarding the ongoing issues with Hyperion and the Hearing Board case. Written responses were provided.
- **Indirect Source Rule:** The City inquired about New York's potential adoption of an indirect source rule, similar to Rule 2305. A written response was provided.
- **Ethylene Oxide (EtO) Emissions:** Capital & Main submitted several inquiries regarding EtO emitting facilities, upcoming state and federal regulations, and ongoing air monitoring efforts. Written responses were provided.

- **Freight and Ports:** Staff participated in an interview with KCET regarding ongoing work to improve air quality for freight and port communities.
- **NOx Emissions:** The Los Angeles Times requested information on how NOx emissions from hydrogen compare with natural gas and hydrogen/gas blends, and current NOx rules. A written response was provided.
- **Proposed Warehouse in Desert Hot Springs:** The Desert Sun requested information on a new proposed warehouse in Desert Hot Springs. Written responses were provided.
- **Oil and Gas Wells:** Inside Climate News inquired about how the public can access the oil and gas well notification portal. A link was provided.
- **Huntsman Chemical Incident:** The Los Angeles Times inquired about a Huntsman Facility incident, in Atwater. A written statement was provided.
- **Jim Henson's Creature Shop:** The Hollywood Reporter inquired about an inspection at Jim Henson's Creature Shop. A written response was provided.
- **IQAir Report:** Staff participated in an interview with ABC7 on the IQAir report that Los Angeles has the most polluted air in the United States.
- **Shipping Emissions:** The Washington Post inquired whether NOx emissions from ocean vessels will account for the majority of NOx pollution in the South Coast Air Basin by 2023. A written response was provided.
- **Long Beach Grand Prix:** The Southern California News Group requested data on the emissions caused by the annual Grand Prix. A response is being prepared.
- **AB 617:** A student at University of California, Davis inquired about the Wilmington/Carson/West Long Beach CERP implementation and funding. Additional details were requested.
- **EPA Proposed Truck Emissions Standards:** Pitches were sent to local media outlets regarding the EPA's new proposed emissions standards, and staff participated in an interview requested by KNX .
- **Axalta Settlement:** Pitches were sent to local media outlets regarding the Axalta Coatings settlement.
- **Baker Commodities NOV:** Pitches were sent to local media outlets regarding the NOV issued to Baker Commodities.
- **Windblown Dust Advisory:** Pitches were sent to local media outlets regarding four windblown dust advisories in March.

News Releases:

- **Check Before You Burn Season Closes with 35 No-Burn Days this Winter – March 3, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of the end of the 2021-22 Check Before You Burn season.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Windblown Dust Advisory – March 4, 9, 13, and 19, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of windblown dust conditions in Coachella Valley.

- **South Coast AQMD Statement on EPA’s Proposed Heavy-Duty Truck Rule – March 7, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of South Coast AQMD’s statement on EPA’s proposed heavy duty truck rule.
- **South Coast AQMD reaches \$1.37 million settlement with coating company for selling products that exceed emissions levels – March 10, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of the settlement agreement with Axalta Coating Systems.
- **Violation Issued to Animal Rendering Plant in Vernon, Calif., for Failing to Comply with Rule Requirements to Reduce Odors – March 24, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents about an NOV issued to Baker Commodities.
- **South Coast AQMD to Host 8th Annual Cesar Chavez Day of Remembrance Event – March 25, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents about the Cesar Chavez event on March 26.

Social Media Notable posts:

- **Air Quality Complaints Graphic (3/1):** 1,293 Twitter Impressions
- **Dust Advisory (3/9):** 7,013 Twitter Impressions
- **Dust Advisory (3/19):** 5,049 Twitter Impressions
- **Chavez Event: Delgado Post (3/26):** 3,281 LinkedIn Impressions
- **Chavez Event Facebook Live Stream (3/26):**
 - 53 total live views (during event)
 - 76 total views that Saturday
 - 96 total views over the weekend

Special Topics:

- **Check Before You Burn:** Pitches were sent to local media outlets regarding the end of the Check Before You Burn Season.

News Carousel:

- **Additional Rebates available for batteries purchased through the Commercial Lawn & Garden Incentive Program:** Added a link to the Battery Buy-Back Incentives page

Outreach to Community Groups and Federal, State and Local Governments

Outreach was conducted personally and virtually in March utilizing web-based and other technologies to communicate with elected officials or staff from the following cities:

Alhambra	Garden Grove	Ontario
Anaheim	Glendale	Paramount
Avalon	Glendora	Pasadena
Azusa	Huntington Beach	Placentia
Baldwin Park	Industry	Pomona
Big Bear Lake	Irvine	Rancho Cucamonga
Brea	Irwindale	Rosemead
Buena Park	La Cañada Flintridge	San Dimas
Burbank	La Habra	San Fernando
Claremont	La Puente	San Gabriel
Coachella	La Verne	Santa Ana
Colton	Laguna Niguel	Santa Clarita
Covina	Lake Forest	Seal Beach
Diamond Bar	Long Beach	South Pasadena
Duarte	Los Angeles	Stanton
El Monte	Mission Viejo	Temple City
El Segundo	Monrovia	West Covina
Fullerton	Monterey Park	Yorba Linda

Communication was conducted in March with elected officials and/or staff from the following state and federal offices:

- U.S. Senator Alex Padilla
- U.S. Representative Ken Calvert
- U.S. Representative Tony Cárdenas
- U.S. Representative Judy Chu
- U.S. Representative Lou Correa
- U.S. Representative Josh Harder
- U.S. Representative Young Kim
- U.S. Representative Jerry McNerney
- Senator Bob Archuleta
- Senator Steven Bradford
- Senator Josh Newman
- Senator Anthony Portantino
- Senator Susan Rubio
- Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
- Assembly Member Richard Bloom
- Assembly Member Cristina Garcia
- Assembly Member Eduardo Garcia
- Assembly Member Mike Gipson
- Assembly Member Chris Holden
- Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
- Assembly Member Blanca E. Rubio
- Assembly Member Miguel Santiago
- Assembly Member Buffy Wicks

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

Asian Business Association, Los Angeles
Big Bear Chamber of Commerce
Burbank Chamber of Commerce
California High Speed Rail Authority
Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Los Angeles
Clean Power Alliance
Crestline Chamber of Commerce
Energy Coalition
Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority
Foothill Transit
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Glendale Chamber of Commerce
Inland Valley Development Agency
Irwindale Chamber of Commerce
Lake Arrowhead Communities Chamber of Commerce
Las Virgenes-Malibu Council of Governments
League of California Cities, Los Angeles and Orange County Divisions
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Mountain Transit
Omnitrans
Orange County Business Council
Orange County Council of Governments
Orange County Transportation Authority
Port of Long Beach
Regional Chamber of Commerce, San Gabriel Valley
San Bernardino Area Chamber of Commerce
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
San Fernando City Chamber of Commerce
San Fernando Valley Council of Governments
San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative
San Gabriel Valley City Managers Association
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership
San Gabriel Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District
Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce
South Orange County Economic Coalition
South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce
Southern California Association of Governments
Southern California Edison

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

California State University, Fullerton
Clean Air Coalition of North Whittier and Avocado Heights
Habitat for Humanity of Orange County
Healthy Chino
Inland Empire Fire Safe Alliance
Riverside City College
Santa Ana College
University of California, Riverside