

BOARD MEETING DATE: April 2, 2021

AGENDA NO. 10

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the February 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

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## **BACKGROUND**

This report summarizes the activities of the Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Office for February. 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, South Coast AQMD 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, improving air quality and the economy.

No major events were hosted or sponsored in February due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **COMMUNITY EVENTS/PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Each year, South Coast AQMD 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 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.

South Coast AQMD staff attended and/or provided information and updates at the following February events and meetings:

### San Bernardino County Transportation Authority (SBCTA)

On February 4, staff represented South Coast AQMD at the SBCTA Virtual Technical Advisory Committee for county and city managers. Staff shared information on Prop 1B, Mobile Source Air Pollution Reduction Review Committee, and the Emergency Order related to crematoriums.

### South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce

On February 10, staff participated in the South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce Legislative Committee virtual meeting. Staff provided updates on South Coast AQMD programs, including the CLEANair Furnace Rebate program.

### All American Asphalt

Staff hosted a virtual meeting on February 24 with representatives from the City of Irvine and University of California, Irvine researchers, to discuss air monitoring, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of data related to All American Asphalt.

### Orange County Council of Governments (OCCOG) Board Meeting

Staff represented South Coast AQMD at the OCCOG meeting on February 25. Information was provided on the extension of South Coast AQMD's Emergency Order related to crematoriums, Why Healthy Air Matters (WHAM) High School Education program and Clean Air Program for Elementary Students (CAPES). Staff also provided information on the upcoming Cesar Chavez Day of Remembrance.

#### Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce (HAIC)

Staff participated in the HAIC Government Affairs Committee virtual meeting on February 25. Staff shared an update on South Coast AQMD's Indirect Source Rule schedule and provided weblinks for additional information.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATE**

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

#### Looking Ahead: A Roadmap for Healthy Air & Equitable Climate Action

Staff attended a webinar on February 4, hosted by the American Lung Association and American University's Center for Environmental Policy and Environmental Filmmaking. The panel explored ways the Administration could help deliver equitable and health-focused climate and environmental solutions.

#### Advancing Social Justice, Health Equity and Community

Staff participated in a Hastings Center's "*Advancing Social Justice, Health Equity and Community*" webinar on February 9. The webinar focused on bioethics and how the COVID-19 pandemic has brought the longstanding inequities of African Americans, Latin X and indigenous communities to the forefront.

#### Environmental Justice Community Partnership (EJCP) Inter-Agency Task Force

Staff hosted the EJCP Inter-Agency Task Force quarterly meeting on February 10. The group reviewed the goals for 2021 which include an inter-agency training, update to the Who to Call Guide, and collaboration with Los Angeles Department of Public Works to place agency resources on their on-line Service Locator. Staff led a discussion on the development and hosting of an Air Quality 101 webinar for public agency staff, community groups and students, that is tentatively scheduled for June 16, 2021.

#### North Verdemont Elementary School, San Bernardino

Staff met virtually with a North Verdemont Elementary School teacher regarding CAPES. This school previously participated in CAPES and expressed a continued interest in the program. This teacher is the head of the school's Clean Air Patrol Club for the fourth, fifth and sixth grades and approximately 400 students are expected to participate in CAPES by May 2021.

#### University of California, Riverside (UCR)

Staff attended a "The Salton Sea: Health Disparity Amid an Environmental Crisis" webinar on February 24. UCR faculty presented on health disparities near the Salton Sea, including the impacts of wind-blown dust on residents.

### Environmental Justice Advisory Group (EJAG)

Staff held the quarterly EJAG virtual meeting on February 26. Staff presented on the 2020 EJAG Accomplishments, pending federal legislation, Quemetco, and the Environmental Justice Community Partnership. Members also shared updates from their communities.

### CAPES Video Production

On February 27, staff participated in the production of three CAPES videos on Air Pollution 101, the Air Quality Index, and how students can do their part to clean the air and become a clean air hero.

### **AB 617 UPDATE**

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

### San Bernardino County

Staff met virtually with San Bernardino County Department of Planning on February 5 to discuss the San Bernardino, Muscoy AB 617 CERP. Discussions focused on potential collaboration between South Coast AQMD and the County of San Bernardino to implement portions of the CERP to improve air quality for residents.

### WHAM and AB 617

Staff presented WHAM virtually to two ninth grade classes at San Bernardino High School on February 9 and 11. The presentations included an introduction to South Coast AQMD, an overview of air quality issues and a question and answer session.

### Wilmington, Carson, West Long Beach (WCWLB) CSC

Staff held the first quarterly AB 617 WCWLB CSC meeting on February 11 with approximately 100 participants. Updates were provided on implementation of the CERP and CAMP. The meeting featured an Incentives Budgeting Workshop, updates on Rule 1180 - Refinery Fenceline and Community Air Monitoring, and CARB's Commercial Harbor Craft Regulation.

### What's Up with the Air in South LA?

On February 16, approximately 130 participants attended a virtual conference co-hosted by South Coast AQMD, Physicians for Social Responsibility – Los Angeles, Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education, and CARB. Staff participated on a panel on AB 617 and presented on community engagement. CSC representatives from Year 1 and shared their experiences with the AB 617 program.

#### Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV) Inter-agency Coordination

Staff met virtually to discuss AB 617 issues with the State Departments of Water Resources and Fish and Wildlife Inland Deserts Region, and Natural Resources Agency on February 17. Topics of discussion included windblown dust, dust suppression cost estimates, and the development of air monitoring plans for the northern Salton Sea.

#### Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD)

Staff participated in a webinar hosted by the Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma and the Children's Clinic Family Health on February 17 as part of an AB 617 WCWLB community partnership. Topics included an update on asthma guidelines, an overview of environmental health and community education programs, and an introduction to air pollution control and exposure reduction in schools. There were 85 LBUSD medical assistants and school nurses in attendance.

#### Coachella Valley EJ Enforcement Task Force Meeting

On February 24, staff participated in a virtual Coachella Valley EJ Enforcement Task Force meeting. Staff announced the upcoming AB 617 ECV CSC meeting.

#### East LA/Boyle Heights/West Commerce (ELABHWC) CSC

Approximately 50 attendees participated in the fourth quarterly AB 617 ELABHWC CSC meeting on February 25. Staff provided updates on the implementation of the CERP and CAMP. An Incentive Budgeting Workshop engaged CSC members in discussion on funding community priorities as identified in the CERP. Topics included funding program to reduce emissions from chrome plating facilities and a compliance update. The air monitoring update included a presentation on conducting air monitoring using mobile sensors to map the community.

#### **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.

#### Whittier College

On February 3, staff gave a presentation to students at Whittier College students and led a discussion on the progress made with air quality and environmental justice efforts. These students are enrolled in a course titled, "Toxic Tours: Environmental Justice in SoCal," which focuses on the inequitable distribution of toxics and pollution in an urban environment.

### EXP's Women in STEM Virtual Career Day

As part of an AB 617 WCWLB community partnership, staff participated in this virtual Career Day on February 24. Some of our staff presented on their academic and professional experience as a woman in STEM and answered questions from students. Staff also provided information about various South Coast AQMD resources, as well as internship and career opportunities.

### **COMMUNICATION CENTER STATISTICS**

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

Calls to South Coast AQMD's Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG® Line	2,127
Calls to South Coast AQMD's Spanish-language Line	41
Clean Air Connections	1
Total Calls	2,169

### **PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER STATISTICS**

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

Calls Received by PIC Staff	6
Calls to Automated System	463
Total Calls	469

Email Advisories Sent	89,342
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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 February.

- Provided permit application assistance to 179 companies;
- Processed 62 Air Quality Permit Checklists; and
- Provided assistance in filing 1 variance request.

Types of businesses assisted:

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

## **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 February reports are listed below:

Major Media Interactions	154
Press Releases	22
News Carousel	2

- Major Media Topics: Chevron Refinery Odor Event: Manhattan Beach Patch submitted questions regarding an odor event. Written responses were provided.
- Extension/Expansion of Emergency Order for Crematoriums: The Press-Enterprise and BuzzFeed News inquired about expansions/extensions in the Emergency Order, and LA Times submitted two inquiries for updates to the list of crematoriums applying for relief under the Emergency Order. A freelance reporter requested the list of crematoriums and information on air quality impacts. WSVN in Miami submitted questions regarding the Emergency Order. Written responses were provided.
- World Oil Permit: Capital and Main inquired whether World Oil had re-submitted a permit application. A response was provided.
- Agricultural Burning: CalMatters emailed questions on South Coast

AQMD's agricultural burning rule. Responses were provided.

- Exide: The Guardian requested information on NOV's issued to Exide. The reporter was provided the information via the F.I.N.D. tool.
- Philips 66 Refinery: The Guardian and the Daily Breeze requested a response to a claim by Earthjustice regarding enforcement at Phillips 66 refinery. A statement was provided.
- Petroleum Storage: Inside Climate News inquired about NOV's related to an inquiry on bulk petroleum storage practices. Referred the reporter to F.I.N.D.
- All American Asphalt: Voice of OC requested a list of speakers for the March 3 meeting on AAA, and information on permitting and complaints related to AAA. Written responses and the meeting agenda were provided.
- Prop 1B: A reporter inquired about funding for Prop 1B. Written responses were provided.
- Ports and Air Quality: Random Length News sent questions regarding efforts at the ports as well as ongoing actions to reach federal attainment standards. Responses were provided.
- Chevron NOV: Pitches were sent to news outlets announcing the issuance of an NOV due to odors caused by a hydrogen sulfide release, resulting in print and radio coverage.
- No-Burn Day Alerts: Pitches were sent to local media for No-Burn days on February 7-10 resulting in radio, print and television coverage.
- Rex Richardson Joins Board: Pitches were sent to local media outlets announcing Vice Mayor Richardson joining the South Coast AQMD Board resulting in print coverage.
- Windblown Dust Advisory: Pitches were sent to news outlets for dust advisories on February 12, 24 and 26, resulting in radio, print and television coverage.
- Ports Op-Ed: Pitched an Op-Ed written by Vice Mayor Richardson on Black History Month and air quality in the communities and at the ports. Op-Ed was picked up by So Cal News Group.
- Extension of Crematorium Emergency Order Press Release: Pitches were sent to news outlets announcing the extension of the Emergency Order and expansion to Riverside County resulting in local radio and newspaper coverage.
- Special Advisory: Pitches were sent to local news on the special advisory due to the industrial fire in Compton resulting in radio and online coverage.



### News Releases:

- Emergency Order for Crematoriums Expanded to Riverside County - February 3, 2021 (English and Spanish): Informed residents of the expansion/extension of the Emergency Order regarding crematoriums.
- South Coast AQMD issues violation to Chevron Refinery in El Segundo for hydrogen sulfide release, causing odors – February 4, 2021 (English and Spanish): Notified residents of the NOV issued to Chevron Refinery.
- No-Burn Day - Mandatory Wood-Burning Ban in Effect for Residents of The South Coast Air Basin - February 7-10, 2021 (English and Spanish): Informed residents of the No Burn day advisory.
- Long Beach Vice Mayor Rex Richardson Joins South Coast AQMD Governing Board - February 9, 2021 (English and Spanish): Announced Rex Richardson as the newest member of the Board.
- South Coast AQMD Issues Windblown Dust Advisory - February 12, 24 and 26, 2021 (English & Spanish): Informed residents about windblown dust conditions.
- South Coast AQMD Issues Special Air Quality Advisory due to an Industrial Fire in Compton – February 26, 2021 (English and Spanish): Informed residents about the industrial fire in Compton.

### Social Media Notable posts:

- Check Before You Burn (2/8): 11,906 Twitter Impressions
- Prop 1B Funding (2/12): 3,432 Twitter Impressions
- AQ Forecast (2/23): 8,176 Twitter Impressions

### News Carousel:

- **Wildfire Smoke and Ash Health and Safety Tips:** Provided link to the Wildfire Tips page.
- **Emergency Order for Crematoriums Extended – February 16, 2021:** Provided information on the Emergency Order extension for Los Angeles, Orange and Riverside counties through February 22.
- **Emergency Order for Crematoriums Extended – February 23, 2021:** Provided information on the Emergency Order extension.

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

Due to COVID-19, outreach was conducted virtually in February, utilizing web based and other technologies to communicate with elected officials or staff from the following cities:

Alhambra	Grand Terrace	Pomona
Anaheim	Highland	Rancho Cucamonga
Arcadia	Huntington Beach	Redlands
Avalon	Industry	Redondo Beach
Azusa	Irvine	Rialto
Baldwin Park	Irwindale	Rosemead
Big Bear Lake	La Cañada Flintridge	San Bernardino
Bradbury	La Habra	San Dimas
Brea	La Puente	San Fernando
Buena Park	La Verne	San Gabriel
Burbank	Laguna Nigel	San Marino
Calimesa	Lake Forest	Santa Ana
Canyon Lake	Los Angeles	Santa Clarita
Carson	Manhattan Beach	Sierra Madre
Chino	Maywood	Signal Hill
Chino Hills	Mission Viejo	South El Monte
Claremont	Monrovia	South Pasadena
Coachella	Montclair	Stanton
Covina	Montebello	Temple City
Culver City	Monterey Park	Tustin
Diamond Bar	Moreno Valley	Walnut
Duarte	Newport Beach	West Covina
El Monte	Ontario	Westminster
Fontana	Palm Desert	Whittier
Fullerton	Palm Springs	Yorba Linda
Garden Grove	Pasadena	Yucaipa
Glendale	Perris	
Glendora	Placentia	

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

- U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein
- U.S. Senator Alex Padilla
- U.S. Representative Nanette Barragán
- U.S. Representative Mike Levin
- U.S. Representative Ted Lieu
- U.S. Representative Katie Porter
- Senator Ben Allen
- Senator Lena Gonzalez
- Senator Dave Min
- Senator Tom Umberg
- Assembly Member Autumn Burke
- Assembly Member Laurie Davie
- Assembly Member Cristina Garcia
- Assembly Majority Leader Eloise Gomez Reyes
- Assembly Member Sydney Kamlager
- Assembly Member Al Muratsuchi
- Assembly Member Patrick O'Donnell
- Assembly Member Cottie Petrie-Norris
- Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon

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

Alhambra Chamber of Commerce  
Association of California Cities, Orange County  
Bay Area AQMD  
Baldwin Hills Community Advisory Panel  
Big Bear Chamber of Commerce  
Burbank Fire Department  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Inland Desert  
California Department of General Services  
California Department of Water Resources  
California Transportation Commission  
CAPCOA  
CARB  
Clean Cities Coalition Network  
Coachella Valley Association of Governments  
DTSC  
Gateway Cities Council of Governments  
Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce  
Healthy Communities, San Bernardino  
Imperial Irrigation District  
Industry Business Council, Los Angeles  
Inland Action  
Inland Valley Development Agency

Irvine Ranch Water District  
Irwindale Chamber of Commerce  
LA Metro  
Las Virgenes-Malibu Council of Governments  
League of California Cities  
Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce  
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors  
Manhattan Beach Chamber of Commerce  
Mountain Transit  
National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration  
Natural Gas Vehicle America  
Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce  
Omnitrans  
Ontario International Airport  
Orange County Black Chamber of Commerce  
Orange County Board of Supervisors  
Orange County Business Council  
Orange County Council of Governments  
Orange County Transportation Authority  
Pasadena Chamber of Commerce  
Port of Long Beach  
Port of Los Angeles  
Riverside County Board of Supervisors  
Riverside Transit Agency  
San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors  
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority  
San Bernardino International Airport  
San Fernando Valley Council of Governments  
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments  
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership  
San Joaquin Valley APCD  
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians  
Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce  
South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce  
South Bay Cities Council of Governments  
South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce  
Southern California Association of Governments  
Southern California Edison  
Southern California Gas  
Sunline Transit  
Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District  
Valley Industry and Commerce Association

Western Community Energy  
Western Riverside Council of Governments  
Westside Cities Council of Governments

Staff represented South Coast AQMD in February and/or provided updates or a presentation to the following community and educational groups and organizations:

California State University, Los Angeles  
Chino Hills High School  
Clean Air Coalition of North Whittier and Avocado Heights  
Clean Healthy Air, Clean Healthy Altadena  
Coalition for Clean Air  
East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice  
Esteban Torres High School, Los Angeles  
EXP Educational Nonprofit  
Ganesha High School, Pomona  
Long Beach Alliance for Children with Asthma  
Long Beach Unified School District  
North Verdmont Elementary School, San Bernardino  
Rescue Our Waterfront  
San Bernardino High School  
Santa Ana College  
Sierra Club  
University of California, Irvine  
University of California, Riverside