

BOARD MEETING DATE: February 5, 2021

AGENDA NO. 10

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the December 2020 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 December. The report 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 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 December, 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 December events and meetings:

Sunrise Rotary, Lake Arrowhead

Staff presented virtually to the Sunrise Rotary Club on South Coast AQMD and air quality issues on December 2. Staff provided information on the Check Before You Burn (CBYB) program and electric vehicle incentive programs.

San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG)

Staff represented South Coast AQMD at the SGVCOG Planning Directors Technical Advisory Committee virtual meeting on December 3. Staff reported on CBYB and encouraged city representatives to share the information with their residents.

All American Asphalt in Irvine

Staff held a virtual community meeting on December 9 with approximately 80 participants. Board Members provided opening and closing remarks. Staff provided updates on complaints and enforcement, permitting, source testing and air monitoring.

South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce

Staff participated in the South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce Legislative Affairs Committee virtual meeting on December 9. Staff provided information on the Small Business Assistance hotline, CBYB and other programs.

Baldwin Hills Community Advisory Panel

Staff represented South Coast AQMD at the monthly Baldwin Hills Community Advisory Panel meeting on December 10. Los Angeles County Department of Regional

Planning staff presented on the Health Risk Assessment Report and the draft 2021 Annual Plan on Drilling, Redrilling, Well Abandonment, Well Pad Restoration Plan, and the 2020 Settlement Agreement Update.

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 (EJCP)

Staff held the quarterly EJCP Advisory Council virtual meeting on December 2 with approximately 35 attendees. The Advisory Council approved the Goals and Objectives for 2021. Additionally, staff provided updates on EJCP efforts and federal legislation. Representatives from the Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians presented on illegal dumping and the impacts on their reservation.

Staff met via teleconference with CalEPA's Environmental Justice Program Manager on December 3. The discussion focused on CalEPA's participation in the South Coast AQMD EJ Inter-Agency Task Force to better serve disproportionately impacted communities.

The Role of Community Science in Compliance and Enforcement Programs

Staff attended a virtual roundtable discussion on December 11, entitled, "Looking Ahead: The Role of Community Science in Compliance and Enforcement Programs," hosted by the Environmental Law Institute and co-sponsored by the International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement. Panelists provided perspectives on the role community science may play as technology evolves, data sources become more widely available to citizens and communities seek a larger role in determining their environmental future. There was also a discussion on equity issues in decision-making and limited government resources in the post-pandemic era.

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 (CSC), Community Air Monitoring Plans (CAMPs) and Community Emissions Reduction Plans (CERPs).

Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV) CSC

Staff held a CSC meeting for ECV on December 1 with approximately 75 attendees. Three South Coast AQMD Board Members attended the meeting. Staff presented an overview of the CERP development process, the estimated emission reductions and guidance on how to participate in the upcoming Board meeting. Committee members

expressed concern about the collaboration required to address the Salton Sea and pesticides due to South Coast AQMD's limited jurisdiction. They suggested conducting regular public stakeholder meetings, encouraging inter-agency participation in CSC meetings, and expediting timelines for CERP actions. Committee members inquired about the methodology used to quantify CERP emission reductions, the timeline to amend the CERP in 2021, pesticide monitoring and developing specific collaborations with academic researchers and other agencies.

California State University, Northridge (CSUN)

On December 1 and 2, staff participated in student project interviews for an Environmental Reporting class at CSUN. The topic of the interviews was environmental justice work by South Coast AQMD through the AB 617 program, especially within the Eastern Coachella Valley, near the Salton Sea.

East Los Angeles, Boyle Heights, West Commerce (ELABHWC) CSC

Staff held the fourth quarterly AB 617 ELABHWC CSC on December 8 with approximately 60 participants. Staff presented an overview of the CARB Board Hearing to approve the ELABHWC CERP and potential AB 617 incentive strategies. Staff provided a progress update on CERP implementation for truck routes, Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs), permit cross-checks and school air filtration projects. Staff also presented updates on compliance and enforcement, air monitoring and Exide. Committee members raised concerns about disproportionate allocation of incentive funds between AB 617 communities and emphasized the need for effective outreach that targets small businesses within the community. Committee members provided additional locations to consider for both ALPR deployment and truck route designation.

Wilmington, Carson, West Long Beach (WCWLB) CSC

Staff held the fourth quarterly AB 617 WCWLB CSC on December 9 with approximately 100 participants. Staff presented potential AB 617 incentive strategies, a CERP implementation update on monitoring and enforcement efforts, and provided a recap of the AB 2588 meeting for Phillips 66. CARB staff presented a summary of recent enforcement efforts for ports, rail yards and truck idling. Committee members suggested improvements to incentive programs (e.g., additional outreach and a focus on small businesses) and raised concerns to CARB about emissions from queuing trucks. Committee members expressed concern about the delayed schedule for Proposed Rule 1109.1 which would require additional controls at refineries, and the desire to address refinery benzene emissions through Rule 1178. They expressed interest in seeing the health benefits of the CERP actions and information about access to health care resources.

San Bernardino, Muscoy (SBM) CSC

Staff held the fourth quarterly AB 617 SBM CSC on December 10 with approximately 50 participants. Committee members emphasized their desire for more trees and

provided a recap of the SBM CERP approval at the CARB Board Meeting. San Bernardino County Transportation Authority provided an update on the Mount Vernon Bridge Project. Staff provided an update on the AB 617 incentives strategy and an overview of the CAMP implementation. Committee members asked about air quality impacts from the Mount Vernon Bridge project, expressed concerns about the disproportionate allocation of incentive funds and emphasized the need for incentives that benefit the community (e.g., independent truck owners and operators).

Meeting with CARB & City of Los Angeles Department of Sanitation

Staff met virtually on December 15 with representatives from CARB and City of Los Angeles Department of Sanitation to discuss strategies and processes for installing “No Idling” signs in AB 617 communities.

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.

Riverside Transit Agency (RTA)

On December 3, staff presented at the RTA, Transportation NOW San Geronio Pass Area virtual meeting. The presentation focused on clean air incentive programs for lawn equipment, clean air vehicles, and charging infrastructure.

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 December were:

Calls to South Coast AQMD’s Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG® Line	2,086
Calls to South Coast AQMD’s Spanish-language Line	27
Clean Air Connections	0
Total Calls	2,113

PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER STATISTICS

The Public Information Center (PIC) handles phone calls, email advisories and walk-in requests for general information. The PIC did not take walk-in requests in December because of the COVID pandemic. Email advisories provide 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 Staff	13
Calls to Automated System	650
Total Calls	663

Email Advisories Sent	40,617
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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 also 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 251 companies;
- Processed 59 Air Quality Permit Checklists; and
- Provided assistance in filing 43 variance requests.

Types of businesses assisted:

Architecture Firms	Dry Cleaners	Plating Facilities
Auto Body Shops	Engineering Firms	Restaurants
Auto Repair Centers	Furniture Refinishing	Manufacturing Facilities
Construction Firms	Gas Stations	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.

December reports are listed below:

Major Media Interactions	190
Press Releases	36
News Carousel	0

Major Media Topics:

- **Ozone Levels:** The Alpine Mountaineer requested information regarding high ozone levels at the Crestline air monitoring station. A written response was provided.
- **2020 Air Quality from Wildfires:** Spectrum News 1 requested information on 2020 air quality from wildfire smoke and the latest information on the Bond and

Airport Fires. A written response was sent to the reporter, as well as a copy of the smoke advisory.

- **ECV CERP:** The Desert Sun requested information about the recently adopted ECV CERP. A Board Member and staff participated in an interview, along with three members of the ECV Community Steering Committee for information about the CERP.
- **Governing Board:** Los Angeles Times requested a tally of votes for the vacant Board seat. KCRW asked who was elected and requested the voting tabulations. The reporter was informed that Vice Mayor Rex Richardson was elected and both reporters were referred to the Los Angeles City Selection Committee regarding the voting process.
- **All American Asphalt (AAA):** The Epoch Times requested background information on All American Asphalt prior to the December 9 public meeting. A link to South Coast AQMD's AAA page was provided and the reporter was referred to AAA for information on potential speakers. LA Weekly requested information on sampling and enforcement efforts near AAA. A written response was provided, and the reporter submitted an additional inquiry for air sampling results. The reporter was referred to the AAA page. A UC Irvine student reporter submitted questions regarding AAA and was provided with written responses.
- **Refinery Flaring:** OPIS inquired if South Coast AQMD was involved in plans to prohibit refinery flaring. A written response was provided with information on South Coast AQMD Rule 1118.
- **Mobile App:** GovTech submitted written questions regarding the updated South Coast AQMD Mobile app. A written response was provided. KPCC requested information on upgrades to the mobile app and the potential it has for the public. Staff also participated in an interview.
- **News Conference:** NBC's News Conference requested an interview regarding several recent subjects including wildfires, the district mobile app and the adoption of the SELA CERP. The show had to pivot directions and will reach out to schedule a future date.
- **Smoke Conditions:** The Los Angeles Times requested an update on the smoke conditions following the smoke advisory on December 13. Informed the reporter the advisory was lifted once smoke plumes were no longer detected.
- **Exide:** The Los Angeles Times submitted a series of questions regarding Exide and South Coast AQMD's case. Written responses were provided.
- **2021 Policy Initiatives:** The Los Angeles Times requested an interview regarding South Coast AQMD's 2021 policy initiatives in light of the recent ozone season. Staff participated in an interview for an editorial board piece.
- **COVID-19 and Air Quality:** The OC Register requested a narrative analysis of air quality in 2020, in light of COVID-19 and the wildfires. Reporter was provided a written response.
- **World Oil Terminal:** Capital & Main inquired about the two new storage

tanks on the World Oil Terminal at the Port of Long Beach. Staff informed the reporter that World Oil had cancelled the permits to construct.

- **Dust and the Salton Sea:** KESQ requested information on widespread dust blowing from the Salton Sea and projections on how severe the dust problem will be in the coming years. The reporter was referred to the Imperial Irrigation District.
- **Fireworks Particulate Advisory:** KFI requested information on the New Year's Fireworks Particulate Advisory. Information was provided to the reporter.
- **Windblown Dust:** Pitches were sent to local news outlets for windblown dust advisories on December 2 and 22, resulting in radio and television coverage.
- **Governing Board Adoption of SELA/ECV CERPS:** Pitches were sent to local news outlets announcing the AB 617 CERP adoptions for the ECV and SELA communities, resulting in local newspaper coverage.
- **No-Burn Alerts:** Pitches were sent to local news outlets regarding No-Burn Day announcements not concurrent with smoke advisories on December 5-7 and 21, resulting in radio and television media coverage.
- **Smoke Advisory/No-Burn Alert:** Pitches were sent to local news outlets for concurrent smoke advisories and No-Burn Alerts on December 3, 4 and 13, resulting in radio and television media coverage.
- **App Press Release:** Pitches were sent to local, state and national news outlets announcing the latest major update to the South Coast AQMD app, resulting in radio and online coverage.
- **Fireworks Particulate Advisory/No-Burn Alert:** Pitches were sent to local news outlets regarding the special particulate advisory and No-Burn Alert for New Year's Eve, resulting in radio and television media coverage.

News Releases:

- **No-Burn Days - Mandatory Wood-Burning Ban in Effect for Residents of the South Coast Air Basin (English and Spanish):** 10 No-Burn Days were declared during the month of December. Press releases were issued to notify residents on December 3-7, 13, 21, 24-25, 30.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Windblown Dust Advisory for Portions of Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties - December 2, 2020 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of dust conditions in Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside counties.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Smoke Advisory Due to Bond and Airport Wildfires - December 3-4, 2020 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of smoke conditions due to fires.
- **South Coast AQMD Governing Board Adopts SELA and ECV CERPs - December 4, 2020 (English and Spanish):** Announced the adoption of the AB 617 SELA and ECV CERPs.

- **South Coast AQMD Releases Enhanced Mobile App with Greater Accuracy for Checking Local Air Quality - December 10, 2020 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of the latest major update to the South Coast AQMD mobile app.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Smoke Advisory Due to Sanderson Fire - December 13, 2020 (English and Spanish):** Advised residents of smoke conditions due to fires.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Windblown Dust Advisory for Eastern Coachella Valley - December 22, 2020 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of dust conditions in Eastern Coachella Valley.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Particulate Advisory Due to New Year's Eve Fireworks - December 30, 2020 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of air quality conditions due to fireworks.

Social Media Notable posts:

- Dust Advisory (12/2): 15,926 Twitter Impressions
- Smoke Advisory (12/3): 20,435 Twitter Impressions
- Smoke Advisory Update (12/4): 35,942 Twitter Impressions
- Smoke Advisory (12/13): 36,906 Twitter Impressions
- Windblown Dust Advisory (12/22): 9,205 Twitter Impressions
- AQ Forecast (12/29): 16,421 Twitter Impressions
- Particulate Advisory (12/30): 9,130 Twitter Impressions

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

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

Alhambra	Fullerton	La Puente
Arcadia	Glendale	La Verne
Azusa	Glendora	Long Beach
Baldwin Park	Huntington Beach	Los Angeles
Bradbury	Industry	Monrovia
Brea	Inglewood	Monterey Park
Burbank	Irvine	Moreno Valley
Claremont	Irwindale	Pasadena
Covina	Jurupa Valley	Placentia
Diamond Bar	La Cañada Flintridge	Pomona
Duarte	La Habra	Riverside
El Monte	La Quinta	Rosemead

San Dimas
San Fernando
San Gabriel
San Marino
Santa Clarita

Sierra Madre
South El Monte
South Pasadena
Temple City
Walnut

West Covina
Wildomar
Yorba Linda
Yucaipa

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

- U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein
- U.S. Senator Kamala Harris
- U.S. Representative Nanette Barragán
- U.S. Representative Tony Cardenas
- U.S. Representative Judy Chu
- U.S. Representative-elect Young Kim
- U.S. Representative Grace Napolitano
- U.S. Representative-Elect Jay Obernolte
- U.S. Representative Katie Porter
- U.S. Representative Raul Ruiz
- U.S. Representative Adam Schiff
- U.S. Representative Brad Sherman
- U.S. Representative Norma Torres
- Senator Lena Gonzalez
- Senator Robert Hertzberg
- Senator Dave Min
- Senator Josh Newman
- Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh
- Senator Anthony Portantino
- Senator Nancy Skinner
- Senator Scott Wilk
- Assembly Majority Leader Eloise Gomez Reyes
- Assembly Member Lisa Calderon
- Assembly Member Ed Chau
- Assembly Member Philip Chen
- Assembly Member Laurie Davies
- Assembly Member Laura Friedman
- Assembly Member Chris Holden
- Assembly Member Suzette Martinez Valladares
- Assembly Member Janet Nguyen
- Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
- Assembly Member Luz Rivas
- Assembly Member Blanca Rubio
- Assembly Member Sharon Quick-Silva
- Assembly Member Kelly Seyarto
- Assembly Member Christy Smith

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

Advanced Engine Systems Institute
Baldwin Hills Community Advisory Panel
California Contract Cities Association
California Air Pollution Control Officers Association
CARB
Clean Cities, Coachella Valley
Coachella Valley Association of Governments
Department of Toxic Substances Control

Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Inland Action
Inland Valley Development Agency
LA Metro
League of California Cities
Lomita Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Los Angeles County Department of Health
Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning
Los Angeles County Fire Department
Los Angeles World Airports
Los Angeles World Affairs Council
Move LA / Move CA
Omnitrans
Orange County Board of Supervisors
Pasadena Chamber of Commerce
Pasadena Public Health Department
Riverside County Board of Supervisors
Riverside Transit Agency, Transportation NOW
San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
San Fernando Valley Council of Governments
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership
South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce
Southern California Association of Governments
Western Riverside Council of Governments
Westside Cities Council of Governments

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

California School Board Association
Clean Air Coalition
Clean Air Coalition of North Whittier and Avocado Heights
Esperanza Community Housing
People Not Pozos
San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association
Sunrise Rotary, Lake Arrowhead