

BOARD MEETING DATE: November 5, 2021

AGENDA NO. 17

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the September 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 September. 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 the economy.

No major events were hosted or sponsored in September.

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 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 September events and meetings:

San Fernando Valley Council of Governments (SFVCOG)

On September 2, staff participated in a virtual SFVCOG Transportation Committee meeting to provide updates on the VW Mitigation Trust funds available for transit and shuttle buses, National Drive Electric Week, and other clean air programs.

Southern California Leadership Network (SCLN)

South Coast AQMD was the featured virtual speaker at the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce SCLN meeting on September 17. Staff shared South Coast AQMD's background, ongoing efforts to improve air quality, and an overview on Rule 2305 - Warehouse Indirect Source Rule – Warehouse Actions and Investments to Reduce Emissions (WAIRE) Program.

Rialto Pollution Prevention Fair

Staff attended the Rialto Pollution Prevention Fair, which featured community groups, environmental organizations, water, safety, health, and other civic agencies. A hydrogen fuel cell vehicle was displayed, and materials were distributed on South Coast AQMD and air quality-related programs.

Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce (HAIC)

On September 23, staff attended a virtual HAIC Government Affairs Committee meeting to provide information on South Coast AQMD programs and Clean Air Awards nominations.

City of Lakewood Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Expo

On September 25, South Coast AQMD staffed an in person informational booth at the City of Lakewood's Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Expo. Approximately 200 people visited the booth to learn about South Coast AQMD, how to file an air quality complaint and other programs.

Watts Clean Air & Energy Committee's National Drive Electric Week

Staff participated in the 6th Annual Watts Clean Air & Energy Committee's National Drive Electric Week event on September 26. Information was shared with community members on the AB 617 program, air quality, how to file an air quality complaint, phone apps, and the health effects of air pollution.

THRIVE 90805 Community Conference

On September 28, staff participated in panel discussion at the Thrive 90805 Resiliency and Environmental Stewardship Community Conference, moderated by Board Member Vice Mayor Rex Richardson. Other panelists included representatives from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, the Long Beach Conservation Corps and the Project Lead for the Long Beach Climate Action & Adaptation Plan. Discussions focused on what the agencies are doing to protect the environment and improve public health. Staff provided information on the WAIRE program and the on-going efforts with the Ports.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATE

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

Environmental Justice Community Partnership (EJCP) Advisory Council

Vice-Chair Delgado chaired a virtual quarterly meeting of the EJCP Advisory Council on September 1, with Board Member Veronica Padilla-Campos in attendance. Staff reviewed the 2022 Goals and Objectives and provided an update on the Clean Air Program for Elementary Students (CAPES), Inter-Agency Task Force, and the EJ Conference. An EJCP member presented on the Morongo Indian Reservations' Environmental Protection Department, Tribal Air Program, and air quality issues. Members shared information on environmental issues in their communities.

Pacoima Community Initiative

On September 10, staff participated in a virtual Pacoima Community Initiative monthly meeting and provided an update on CAPES. Members discussed upcoming events and shared information on projects and issues.

7th Annual Environmental Justice Enforcement Symposium

Staff participated in the 7th Annual Environmental Justice Enforcement Symposium's virtual session on Pesticide Awareness and Safety on September 15. The panel discussed who to call for questions about pesticide regulations and enforcement.

Coachella Valley EJ Enforcement Task Force

Staff participated in a virtual Coachella Valley EJ Enforcement Task Force meeting on September 22. Staff announced the upcoming AB 617 Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV) meeting and the registration link for the 7th Annual EJ Conference.

AB 617 UPDATE

The following are key AB 617 related activities in which staff participated during September. 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).

South Los Angeles (South LA) CSC

On September 2, approximately 55 people participated in a virtual South LA CSC meeting. A CSC co-lead summarized the August meeting for the Committee. Staff presented information on upcoming truck incentive workshops for AB 617 communities and an overview of the CERP and CAMP development process. CSC members asked about incentives outreach and funding. CSC members asked about information on BACT and BARCT technology, resources available for CAMP implementation, monitoring data collected with low-cost sensors, and how monitoring can inform air quality complaints received by staff. Public comments highlighted the impact of various pollutants and low-cost sensors in other communities, the importance of raising local issues in this process, and requested a grant writing session for the public.

CARB Public Meeting

On September 9, staff attended a virtual CARB public meeting during which their Board unanimously approved the CERP for the ECV community.

South LA Subcommittee on Mobile Sources

On September 14, approximately 30 people participated in the South LA Mobile Sources Subcommittee virtual meeting. CARB presented on its authority and enforcement of regulations for mobile sources. Staff and CARB addressed questions about enforcing rules that apply to truck idling, locomotives, and off-road equipment (e.g., construction equipment). Staff presented examples of mobile source actions in AB 617 CERPs, explained monitoring strategies for mobile sources, and provided an overview of the development timeline for the CERP and CAMP.

Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) CSC

Approximately 40 people participated in the SELA CSC virtual meeting on September 16. A committee member presented on the benefits of renewable natural gas for heavy-duty trucks. Staff provided an overview of CERP and CAMP progress on the air quality priority for truck traffic, the AB 617 Annual Report, and the implementation budget. CARB presented updates on truck enforcement efforts and asked for feedback on locations for truck “no idling” signs. Committee members asked about outreach for truck incentives, air monitoring education programs for schools and expressed their continued interest in zero-emission truck projects.

Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV) Community Monitoring Working Team

On September 30, staff participated in a virtual meeting with two co-leads of the ECV Monitoring Working Team and provided an update on current and upcoming air monitoring activities.

Boyle Heights Neighborhood Council

On September 21, staff attended a virtual meeting organized by the Boyle Heights Neighborhood Council and provided information on air monitoring conducted as part of the East Los Angeles, Boyle Heights, West Commerce CAMP. Staff also provided information on outreach, compliance, and enforcement efforts.

ECV CSC

Approximately 40 people participated in the ECV CSC meeting on September 23. Staff provided opening remarks to acknowledge the ECV CERP approval from CARB and provided an overview of comments received on the Annual Progress Report. A committee member provided an update on the Annual Progress Report timeline. Staff provided an overview of the AB 617 implementation budget, Rules 403 and 403.1 (fugitive dust), and suggestions for developing road paving project plans. Committee members provided input on criteria for home air filtration and purification system project plans. Staff presented an update on monitoring technologies and future deployment location plans. Committee members asked about future meeting frequency, CERP action updates, the implementation budget, enforcement procedures for Rules 403 and 403.1, and available data and criteria to prioritize air filtration project locations.

South LA Subcommittee on Oil & Gas

The South LA CSC held a virtual Oil & Gas Subcommittee meeting on September 30. An Esperanza Community Housing representative presented on his experience and role in closing AllenCo, and recommended actions for the South LA CERP. A longtime resident of South LA and representative of Redeemer Community Partnership shared his experience living near oil drilling sites. A City of Los Angeles Office of Petroleum and Natural Gas representative presented on the history of oil drilling facilities in 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. The following requests were received in September.

Pomona College

Staff presented to Pomona College students an overview of South Coast AQMD, air quality issues, and clean air vehicles. A hydrogen fuel cell vehicle was displayed. Staff also participated in a question-and-answer session.

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 September:

Calls to South Coast AQMD's Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG®	2,531
Calls to South Coast AQMD's Spanish-language Line	80
Total Calls	2,611

PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER STATISTICS

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

Calls Received by PIC	13
Calls to Automated System	558
Total Calls	571

Email Advisories Sent	39,488
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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 September.

- Provided permit application assistance to 178 companies; and
- Processed 72 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 September reports are listed below:

Major Media Interactions	125
Press Releases	4
News Carousel	6

Major Media Topics:

- **Special Air Quality Advisory:** Pitches were sent on September 23 and 26 to local news outlets for two special air quality advisories due to the Central California fires, resulting in coverage from television, radio and print outlets. Staff participated in interviews with CBS, Los Angeles Times, ABC7 and KCRW. Written responses were provided to Crescenta Valley Weekly and USC Annenberg Media. KESQ requested an interview regarding smoke conditions specifically impacting the Coachella Valley.
- **Volvo Construction Event:** Two rounds of pitches were sent to local and national news outlets with the media advisory, for the Volvo construction equipment event on September 21.
- **Public Consultation Meeting:** Inside EPA requested information regarding the September 7 public consultation meeting discussing the redesignation request and maintenance plan for 24-hour PM2.5 standards and what it means for attainment. A written response was provided.
- **Wildfire Preparedness:** Inside Edition requested an in-person interview to demonstrate household items to use during wildfires. Unable to accommodate the request.
- **AB 617:** CalMatters interviewed staff on AB 617 BARCT requirements and

implementation deadlines. Reporter submitted follow-up inquiries and written responses and resources were provided.

- **WHAM/CAPEs:** Spectrum News 1 interviewed staff regarding the Clean Air Program for Elementary Students (CAPEs) and Why Healthy Air Matters (WHAM) program.
- **Salton Sea:** NPR requested information regarding wind direction and intensity near the Salton Sea. A written response was provided.
- **Oil Wells:** Al Jazeera requested information on orphaned oil wells throughout the region. A written response was provided.
- **All American Asphalt:** Orange County Register inquired about South Coast AQMD efforts near All American Asphalt. A written response was provided.
- **Landfills:** RMI requested information regarding best practices pertaining to landfills. Responses are under review.
- **Diesel Pollution:** Environmental Health News interviewed staff on diesel pollution inequality.
- **Warehouses:** A USC student reporter requested an interview on the environmental impacts of the Amazon distribution center in South Gate. Working on a response.
- **Refinery Flaring:** Grist submitted questions regarding refinery flares following the earthquake in Carson on September 18. A written response was provided.
- **Air Quality:** A USC student reporter requested an interview to discuss the history of air pollution and health effects in South Los Angeles. A written response was provided. California State University, Bakersfield requested an interview to discuss air quality in general. Referred the reporter to San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.
- **Aliso Canyon:** Los Angeles Times submitted questions about complaints, air monitoring efforts and updates on our settlement agreement at Aliso Canyon. Working on responses.
- **World Health Organization Air Quality Guidelines:** California State University, Fullerton requested an interview on the WHO's new air quality guidelines. The reporter was referred to CARB and U.S. EPA.
- **Hyperion:** Southern California News Group requested information regarding Compliance & Enforcement efforts since the Hyperion leak. A written response was provided.
- **Engineering Career Podcast:** Cal Poly Pomona requested a one-hour podcast regarding what South Coast AQMD does and pathways to becoming an engineer. Request is under review.
- **AQI Mapping:** KQED requested an interview on how to read air quality maps but located a Bay Area AQMD reporter to interview instead.

News Releases

- **South Coast AQMD Issues Advisory Due to Smoke from California Wildfires – September 23 and 26, 2021 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents about the smoke plume from California fires and the local air quality impact.

Social Media Notable posts:

- **AQ Forecast (9/5):** 11,418 Twitter Impressions
- **AQ Forecast (9/10):** 6,648 Twitter Impressions
- **Carson Earthquake Refinery Flaring Update (9/17):** 10,675 Twitter Impressions
- **AQ Forecast (9/20):** 9,594 Twitter Impressions
- **Special AQ Advisory from Central CA Smoke (9/23):** 47,419 Twitter Impressions

Special Note: Twitter followers surpassed 10,000 followers.

News Carousel:

- **How 100 electric trucks could help clean up the ports' logistics emissions, September 1, 2021):** Provided a link to the LA Daily News article on the JETSI project.
- **Hyperlocal Air Monitoring in Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties, September 8, 2021:** Provided a link to an ACLIMA article featuring staff on air monitoring near AB 617 communities.
- **The Restless Ones: Fostering Common Understanding to Prioritize Public Health, September 10, 2021:** Provided a link to Chief Information Officer's podcast interview.
- **Learn about efforts to mitigate odors at rendering plants in Vernon – September 16, 2021:** Provided a link to the rendering plant information page.
- **Celebrate National Drive Electric Week – September 22, 2021:** Provided a link to the webpage for National Drive Electric Week.
- **Former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to be Keynote Speaker at our 7th Annual EJ Conference – September 29, 2021:** Announced Governor Schwarzenegger as EJ Conference Keynote speaker and provided a link to the event summary.

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

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

Alhambra	Garden Grove	Paramount
Anaheim	Glendale	Pasadena
Arcadia	Glendora	Pomona
Azusa	Industry	Rialto
Baldwin Park	Indio	Riverside
Big Bear Lake	Inglewood	Rosemead
Bradbury	Irvine	San Dimas
Brea	Irwindale	San Fernando
Burbank	Jurupa Valley	San Gabriel
Carson	La Cañada Flintridge	San Marino
Chino	La Habra	Santa Clarita
Claremont	La Puente	Seal Beach
Colton	La Verne	Sierra Madre
Covina	Lakewood	South El Monte
Diamond Bar	Long Beach	South Pasadena
Duarte	Los Angeles	Temple City
El Monte	Menifee	Tustin
El Segundo	Mission Viejo	Walnut
Fontana	Monrovia	West Covina
Fullerton	Monterey Park	Yorba Linda

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

- U.S. Senator Feinstein
- U.S. Senator Alex Padilla
- U.S. Representative Tony Cárdenas
- U.S. Representative Judy Chu
- U.S. Representative Young Kim
- U.S. Representative Grace Napolitano
- U.S. Representative Raul Ruiz
- U.S. Representative Adam Schiff
- U.S. Representative Brad Sherman
- U.S. Representative Norma Torres
- Senator Robert Hertzberg
- Senator Melissa Melendez
- Senator Josh Newman
- Senator Anthony Portantino
- Senator Susan Rubio
- Senator Scott Wilk
- Assembly Member Lisa Calderon
- Assembly Member Ed Chau
- Assembly Member Philip Chen
- Assembly Member Laura Friedman
- Assembly Member Chris Holden
- Assembly Member Suzette Martinez Valladares
- Assembly Member Adrin Nazarian
- Assembly Member Luz Rivas
- Assembly Member Blanca Rubio

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

Alhambra Chamber of Commerce
Bay Area Air Quality Management District
Bear Valley Electric Services
Big Bear Chamber of Commerce
Boyle Heights Neighborhood Council
Building Industry Association, Orange County
Burbank Airport
Burbank Chamber of Commerce
California Air Pollution Control Officers Association
California Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Project
California Geologic Energy Management Division
California Natural Gas Vehicle Coalition
Coachella Valley Association of Governments
County of Orange
Department of Toxic Substance Control
Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority
Foothill Transit
Gateway Council of Governments
Glendale Chamber of Commerce
Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce

Industry Business Council, Los Angeles
Irwindale Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
Los Angeles County Department of Public Works
Los Angeles County Fire Department
Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission
Los Virgenes-Malibu Council of Governments
Ontario International Airport
Orange County Business Council
Orange County Transportation Authority
Port of Long Beach
Riverside Transit Agency
San Bernardino Board of Supervisors
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
San Bernardino International Airport
San Fernando Chamber of Commerce
San Fernando Valley Council of Governments
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership
San Gabriel Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce
San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce
Santa Clarita Chamber of Commerce
Southern California Association of Governments
State Controller's Office
Sunline Transit Agency
U.S. Department of Transportation
Valley Industry and Commerce Association
Westside Cities Council of Governments

In September, 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 Forward Movement
Center for Asian Americans United for Self-Empowerment
Clean Air Coalition of North Whittier and Avocado Heights
Clean Healthy Air, Clean Healthy Altadena
Esperanza Community Housing
Ground Truthing California, South El Monte
Habitat for Humanity
Hacienda Heights Improvement Association
Mujeres de la Tierra
Pacoima Community Initiative
Pasadena City College
Pasadena Forward
Physicians for Social Responsibility
San Gabriel Mountain Forever
Sierra Club, Pasadena
Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education
Taking Responsibility and Control Neighborhood Watch, La Puente
Watts Clean Air & Energy Committee