

BOARD MEETING DATE: November 4, 2022

AGENDA NO. 11

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the September 2022 outreach activities of Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Office, which includes Major Events, Community Events/Public Meetings, Environmental Justice Update, AB 617 Update, Speakers Bureau/Visitor Services, Communications Center, Public Information Center, Small 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 Update, Speakers Bureau/Visitor Services, Communications Center, Public Information Center, Small 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 while minimizing economic impacts.

8th Annual Environmental Justice Conference:

On September 14, the 8th Annual Environmental Justice Conference entitled, “Our Environment, Our Lives: Collaborating for Clean Air,” was held virtually with approximately 900 people participating. Speakers included Attorney General Rob Bonta and U.S. EPA Region 9 Administrator Martha Guzman. The conference included simultaneous breakout sessions entitled “Community Air Monitoring and Building the Road to a Zero-Emissions Future.” The plenary session, entitled “AB 617 Community Air Protection Program: Lessons Learned and Strategies for Positive Change” consisted of Community Steering Committee (CSC) members from several communities.

COMMUNITY EVENTS/PUBLIC MEETINGS

Staff engage with residents and stakeholders of diverse communities to provide information about the agency, incentive programs, and ways individuals can help reduce air pollution through events and meetings sponsored 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;
- How to file a complaint;
- Clean air technologies and their deployment;
- Invitations to or notices of conferences, seminars, workshops, and other public events;
- South Coast AQMD incentive programs;
- Funding/grants opportunities by South Coast AQMD and partner agencies;
- 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 Gabriel Valley Council of Governments

On September 4, staff attended the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments City Manager Steering Committee meeting to provide updates on the Replace Your Ride Program, regional public hearings for the Draft 2022 AQMP and Clean Air Awards nominations.

Gateway Cities Council of Governments

On September 7, staff attended the Gateway Cities Council of Governments Board of Directors meeting to present on the Draft 2022 AQMP and receive feedback from stakeholders.

Big Bear Chamber of Commerce

On September 8, staff participated in a virtual Big Bear Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs/Regional Transportation Advisory Committee meeting. Information was provided on wildfire smoke advisories and funding opportunities under California's Hybrid Voucher Incentive Project program.

Orange County Business Council

On September 9, staff attended the Orange County Business Council Government Affairs Committee meeting to present on the Draft 2022 AQMP and receive feedback from stakeholders.

Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce

On September 13, staff participated in the Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee meeting to provide updates on the Draft 2022 AQMP regional public hearings.

South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce

On September 14, staff attended the South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce Legislative Affairs Committee meeting and provided updates on the Replace Your Ride Program and Draft 2022 AQMP regional public hearings. Staff also announced the opening of Clean Air Awards nominations.

Inland Empire Fire Safe Alliance

On September 14, staff provided updates at an Inland Empire Fire Safe Alliance meeting on air quality, smoke advisories and other programs.

San Fernando Valley Council of Governments

On September 15, staff attended the San Fernando Valley Council of Governments Governing Board meeting to provide updates on Draft 2022 AQMP regional public hearings and Clean Air Award nominations.

San Bernardino County Transportation Authority

On September 15, staff attended the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority Metro Valley Study Session meeting to present on the Draft 2022 AQMP and receive feedback from stakeholders.

Coachella Valley Association of Governments

On September 15, staff attended a Coachella Valley Association of Governments meeting to present on the Draft 2022 AQMP and receive feedback from stakeholders.

Rialto Pollution Prevention Fair

On September 17, staff displayed a hydrogen fuel cell vehicle and shared information on South Coast AQMD's incentive programs focusing on the Residential Lawn Mower Exchange and Residential EV Charging.

San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership

On September 28, staff attended the San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership Legislative Action Committee meeting to present on the Draft 2022 AQMP and receive feedback from stakeholders. Staff also provided updates on the Replace Your Ride Program and announced the opening of South Coast AQMD Clean Air Awards nominations.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATE

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

Pacoima Community Initiative

On September 2, staff participated in the Pacoima Community Initiative's monthly virtual meeting. An invitation to the EJ Conference was extended to meeting attendees.

Environmental Justice Community Partnership Advisory Council

On September 7, staff attended the quarterly Environmental Justice Community Partnership Advisory Council meeting was held including presentations on the Replace Your Ride Program and 2023 Goals and Objectives.

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 and support the CSCs, Community Air Monitoring Plans (CAMPs), and Community Emissions Reduction Plans (CERPs).

Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV) Outreach Working Team Meeting

On September 6, approximately 20 people participated in the ECV Outreach Working Team meeting. CSC members discussed upcoming outreach presentations to cities and staff provided updates on the AB 617 Annual Report and Draft 2022 AQMP.

Mecca-North Shore Community Council

On September 7, staff and CSC members presented an overview of the AB 617 program to the Mecca-North Shore Community Council and discussed partnership opportunities through the AB 617 program.

South Los Angeles (SLA) CSC Meeting

On September 8, approximately 75 people participated in the SLA CSC meeting. Staff presented on the AB 617 Annual Report, Draft 2022 AQMP, CERPs and implementation of CAMPs. Caltrans shared information on their California Freight Mobility Plan.

City of Coachella

On September 14, staff and a CSC member presented an overview of AB 617 to the City of Coachella. There also was discussion on opportunities to partner on the AB 617 program for the City of Coachella and its residents.

State EJ Cooperative Agreement Program Grant

On September 22, staff held a Kick-Off Meeting for the State EJ Cooperative Agreement Program grant. Project partners include Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians, Desert Healthcare District and Foundation and Health Assessment and Research for Communities. Discussion focused on the air grant which will help establish an air quality academy to improve environmental literacy and air quality data in the Eastern Coachella Valley community.

City of Indio

On September 26, staff and CSC members presented an overview of the AB 617 program to the City of Indio Sustainability Commission, including CERP and CAMP implementation, paving projects and air filtration systems.

Thermal, Oasis & Vista Santa Rosa Community Councils

On September 26, a briefing was held for the Thermal-Oasis & Vista Santa Rosa Community Councils on the AB 617 program. The Community Councils recommended working collaboratively on outreach and CERP actions, especially paving projects and the Coachella Valley Alternative Transportation Route (CV Link).

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

On September 29, staff met with Legacy LA, to brief their new staff member who will serve on the ELABHWC AB 617 CSC.

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.

Pomona College

On September 20, staff presented to Pomona College students about South Coast AQMD, air quality, and clean technologies. Staff displayed a hydrogen fuel cell battery electric vehicle.

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 are summarized below:

Calls to South Coast AQMD's Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG®	2,579
Calls to South Coast AQMD's Spanish Line	47
Clean Air Connection	0
Total Calls	2,626

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	15
Calls to Automated System	136
Total Calls	151
Email Advisories Sent	113,772

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 provided 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 181 companies, and
- Processed 56 Air Quality Permit Checklists.

Types of businesses assisted:

Architecture Firms	Engineering Firms	Restaurants
Auto Body Shops	Gas Stations	Retail Facilities
Auto Repair Centers	Gasoline Dispensing	Telecommunication
Construction Firms	Facilities	Centers
Dry Cleaners	Manufacturing Facilities	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 September report is listed below:

Major Media Interactions	121
Press Releases	20
News Carousel	3

Major Media Topics:

- **Hazardous Ozone Levels Due to Heat Wave:** Pitches were sent regarding the ozone advisory extension. Staff participated in an interview with NBC on increased ozone levels.
- **PM10:** Staff participated in an interview with KESQ News on PM10 and the importance of minimizing it for good health.
- **Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant:** The Daily Breeze inquired about testimony information from the Hearing Board hearing for Hyperion. A written responses was provided.
- **U.S. EPA SIP:** Inside EPA inquired if South Coast AQMD still plans to sue U.S. EPA for not approving State Implementation Plans. Written responses were provided.
- **U.S. EPA EtO Enforcement:** Inside EPA inquired on U.S. EPA's role in enforcement against EtO facilities. Staff is working on a response.

- **Ozone Pollution:** China Environment News submitted questions on the causes of ozone pollution, and its sources in our region. A written response was provided.
- **All American Asphalt:** The OC Register reached out with some questions regarding the Health Risk Assessment for the facility. Written responses were provided.
- **Airborne Lead Emissions:** Southern California News Group inquired about airborne lead emissions from airports. A written response was provided.
- **Torrance Refinery:** Bloomberg News inquired regarding the Hearing Board's decision on the Torrance Refinery case. Written responses were provided.
- **Private Jets and Air Quality:** The Los Angeles Times inquired about the rising number of private jets and the air quality around the Van Nuys Airport. Staff is working on a response.
- **Lawn Equipment Incentives:** Staff reached out to the Los Angeles Times to pitch the lawn and garden and other incentive programs. Reporter is potentially working on a SoCal rebate story at the end of the year and will circle back with us in December.
- **AB 617:** Staff reached out to a reporter seeking additional details on an interview request regarding an AB 617 outreach presentation given to the Coachella City Council. Staff is waiting on a response.

Special Topics:

- **Ethylene Oxide (EtO) Investigations:** Staff participated in an interview with Southern California News Group on how EtO emissions from Parter compare to those from Sterigenics. Capital and Main News submitted follow-up questions on EtO Emissions. Staff is working on a response.

News Releases:

- **South Coast AQMD Extends Smoke Advisories due to Wildfires – September 1, 8, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of continuing smoke impacts of the fires.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Smoke Advisory Due to Wildfires – September 5, 6, 7, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of smoke impacts due to the fires.
- **South Coast AQMD Extends Ozone Advisory Due to Heat Wave – September 7, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of hazardous ozone levels due to the heat.
- **South Coast AQMD Requires Sterigenics in Vernon to Immediately Reduce Ethylene Oxide Emissions – September 9, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of South Coast AQMD's action regarding Sterigenics facilities.

- **South Coast AQMD to Host the 8th Annual Environmental Justice Conference Featuring California Attorney General Rob Bonta and U.S. EPA Region 9 Administrator Martha Guzman – September 9, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents about the EJ Conference held on September 14.
- **South Coast AQMD Designates Sterigenics in Ontario as a Potentially High-Risk Facility – September 29, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents about the designation of Sterigenics Ontario as a high-risk facility.
- **Rendering Facility in Vernon Ordered to Shut Down for Failing to Comply with Permit Requirements and Reduce Odors – September 30, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents about Hearing Board decision regarding Baker Commodities.

Social Media Posts:

- **Ozone Advisory (8/30):** 15,734 Twitter Impressions
- **AQ Forecast (8/28):** 8,205 Twitter Impressions
- **Fairview + Radford Fires Smoke Advisory (9/7):** 22,235 Twitter Impressions
- **AQ Forecast (9/18):** 1,655 Twitter Impressions
- **AQ Forecast (9/24):** 5,059 Twitter Impressions

News Carousel:

- **California Attorney General Rob Bonta to be featured Speaker at our 8th Annual EJ Conference - Register now! – September 13, 2022:** Provided a link to EJ Conference registration.
- **Join us Sept. 28 for an update on All American Asphalt's Health Risk Assessment, annual emission reports, and initial title V permit – September 22, 2022:** Provided a link to the All American Asphalt page.
- **Celebrate National Drive Electric Week from Sept. 23 - Oct. 2 - attend an event near you – September 23, 2022:** Provided a link to the National Drive Electric Week webpage.

OUTREACH TO COMMUNITY GROUPS AND FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

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

Alhambra	Glendale	Pico Rivera
Arcadia	Glendora	Pomona
Artesia	Hawaiian Gardens	Rialto
Azusa	Huntington Park	Rosemead
Baldwin Park	Industry	San Dimas
Bell	Irvine	San Fernando
Bell Gardens	Irwindale	San Gabriel
Bellflower	La Cañada Flintridge	San Marino
Big Bear Lake	La Habra	Santa Ana
Bradbury	La Habra Heights	Santa Clarita
Brea	La Mirada	Santa Fe Springs
Buena Park	La Puente	Seal Beach
Burbank	La Verne	Sierra Madre
Carson	Laguna Niguel	Signal Hill
Cerritos	Lake Forest	South El Monte
Claremont	Lakewood	South Gate
Colton	Long Beach	South Pasadena
Commerce	Los Angeles	Stanton
Compton	Lynwood	Temple City
Covina	Maywood	Tustin
Cudahy	Mission Viejo	Vernon
Diamond Bar	Monrovia	Walnut
Downey	Montebello	West Covina
Duarte	Monterey Park	Whittier
El Monte	Norwalk	Yorba Linda
El Segundo	Paramount	
Garden Grove	Pasadena	

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

- US Senator Dianne Feinstein
- US Senator Alex Padilla
- US Representative Nanette Barragán
- US Representative Tony Cárdenas
- US Representative Judy Chu
- US Representative Lou Correa
- US Representative Mike Garcia
- US Representative Young Kim
- US Representative Katie Porter
- US Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard
- US Representative Adam Schiff
- US Representative Michelle Park Steel
- US Representative Norma Torres
- Senator Lena Gonzalez
- Senator Connie Leyva
- Senator Josh Newman
- Senator Anthony Portantino
- Senator Susan Rubio
- Senator Scott Wilk
- Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
- Assembly Member Isaac Bryan
- Assembly Member Mike Fong
- Assembly Member Laura Friedman
- Assembly Member Cristina Garcia
- Assembly Member Chris Holden
- Assembly Member Freddie Rodriguez
- Assembly Member Blanca Rubio
- Assembly Member Miguel Santiago
- Assembly Member Suzette Martinez Valladares

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
Arcadia Chamber of Commerce
Big Bear Chamber of Commerce
Burbank Chamber of Commerce
California Chamber of Commerce
Caltrans
Coachella Valley Association of Governments
El Monte/South El Monte Chamber of Commerce
Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority
Foothill Transit
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Glendale Chamber of Commerce
Glendora Chamber of Commerce
Hispanic Coalition of Small Businesses
League of California Cities, Los Angeles County and Orange County Divisions
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts
Metrolink
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
Omnitrans
Orange County Business Council
Orange County Transportation Authority
San Bernardino Area Chamber of Commerce
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
San Bernardino International Airport Authority
San Fernando Valley Council of Governments
San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership
San Gabriel Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District
Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce
Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce
SCAG
South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce
U.S. National Park Service

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

Asian and Pacific Islander Forward Movement
Cal Poly Pomona
California Inland Empire Council of the Boy Scouts of America
City of Hope
Clean Air Coalition of North Whittier & Avocado Heights
Clean Healthy Air, Clean Healthy Altadena
Coalition for Clean Air
California State University, Fullerton
Inland Action
Inland Empire Fire Safe Alliance
League of Women Voters, Pasadena Area
Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation
Montebello High School
Mt. San Antonio College
Pasadena City College
Pomona College
Rancho Santiago Community College District
San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative
Santa Ana College
The Energy Coalition
Trust for Public Land
University of La Verne