

BOARD MEETING DATE: October 7, 2022

AGENDA NO. 14

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the August 2022 outreach activities of Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Office, which includes Major Events, Community Events/Public Meetings, Environmental Justice Update, AB 617, 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 Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Office for August. The report includes Major Events, Community Events/Public Meetings, Environmental Justice Update, AB 617, 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.

No major events were hosted or sponsored in August.

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 August events and meetings:

AllenCo Energy

On August 3, staff participated in a virtual stakeholder meeting hosted by Los Angeles County Department of Public Health related to AllenCo Energy, located in Los Angeles. Staff provided an update on monthly compliance activities, including surveillance and air monitoring.

South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce

On August 10, staff participated in the South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce Legislative Affairs Committee meeting and provided updates regarding the Volkswagen Mitigation Trust, Zero-Emission Class 8 Freight and Port Drayage Trucks Program, South Coast AQMD Green Painter's Guide, 2022 AQMP, Environmental Justice Conference and Clean Air Awards nominations.

San Bernardino Chamber of Commerce

On August 17, staff participated in the San Bernardino Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee meeting to provide updates on the Volkswagen Mitigation Trust, Zero-Emission Class 8 Freight and Port Drayage Trucks Program, and California's Hybrid Voucher Incentive Project (HVIP) for public transit buses, class 8 tractors performing drayage operations and school buses.

San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments

On August 17, staff participated in a virtual Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Committee meeting and provided updates on the 2022 AQMP, Clean Air Awards nominations and 8th Annual Environmental Justice Conference.

Inland Empire Health Plan

On August 18, staff participated in a virtual Community Partner Network meeting and provided updates on South Coast AQMD's Lawn and Garden Equipment Program HVIP funds for public transit and school buses and the Volkswagen Mitigation Trust.

San Fernando Valley Council of Governments

On August 18, staff participated in a virtual Board meeting and provided updates on the 2022 Draft AQMP, Volkswagen Mitigation Trust, Zero-Emission Class 8 Freight and Port Drayage Trucks Program, 8th Annual Environmental Justice Conference and Clean Air Awards nominations.

Ascon Coordination Committee

On August 18, staff participated in a committee meeting where the California Department of Toxic Substances Control provided updates on the draft Enclosure Feasibility Evaluation Report and an onsite Pilot Testing phase for the restart of work.

San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership

On August 24, staff attended a Legislative Action Committee meeting to provide updates on the 2022 Draft AQMP and Clean Air Awards nominations.

Orange County Council of Governments

On August 25, staff participated in a Board meeting and provided updates on the Volkswagen Mitigation Trust, Zero-Emission Class 8 Freight and Port Drayage Trucks Program and Clean Air Awards nominations.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATE

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

Pacoima Community Initiative

On August 5, staff participated in a virtual monthly meeting. Information was provided on how to sign-up for the Clean Air Program for Elementary Students (CAPES) and the Why Healthy Air Matters (WHAM) high school education programs.

Institute for Local Government

On August 9, staff participated in a Public Engagement Strategy for Underserved Communities Challenges and Solutions webinar. The webinar explored how to design a sustainable and equitable virtual engagement strategy that accounts for language access, digital literacy, intentional outreach, and collaboration with the community.

AB 617 UPDATE

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

Southeast Los Angeles CSC

On August 4, approximately 90 people participated in a virtual meeting. Staff provided an update on implementation of CERP and CAMP implementation, Sterigenics, AB 617 Annual Report and the 2022 Draft AQMP. Caltrans also presented on their California Freight Mobility Plan.

East Los Angeles, Boyle Heights, West Commerce (ELABHWC) CSC and East Coachella Valley (ECV) CSC

On August 9, staff hosted a virtual workshop on developing the Residential Air Filtration program for the ELABHWC and ECV AB 617 communities. The workshop covered participant eligibility, funding availability, implementation timelines and sought input from the communities.

San Bernardino/Muscoy CSC

On August 11, approximately 67 people participated in a virtual CSC meeting. Staff provided an update on implementation of CERP and CAMP actions, Indirect Source Rule for Intermodal facilities, AB 617 Annual Report, and the 2022 Draft AQMP.

East Los Angeles, Boyle Heights, West Commerce CSC

On August 18, approximately 76 people participated in the virtual CSC meeting. Staff provided an update on Sterigenics in Vernon, AB 617 annual report, 2022 Draft AQMP and implementation of CERP actions. Caltrans presented on their California Freight Mobility Plan.

Wilmington, Carson, West Long Beach CSC

On August 25, approximately 131 people attended a virtual CSC meeting. Staff provided an update on implementation of CERP and CAMP actions, and Parter Sterilization Services, oil and gas monitoring, AB 617 Annual Report, and the 2022 Draft AQMP.

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.

There were no Speakers Bureau/Visitor Service requests in August.

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 August are summarized below:

Calls to South Coast AQMD's Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG®	2,492
Calls to South Coast AQMD's Spanish Line	77
Clean Air Connection	4
Total Calls	2,573

PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER STATISTICS

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

Calls Received by PIC	7
Calls to Automated System	161
Total Calls	168
Email Advisories Sent	26,940

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 August.

- Provided permit application assistance to 167 companies, and
- Processed 65 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 August report is listed below:

Major Media Interactions	103
Press Releases	8
News Carousel	6

Major Media Topics:

- **Hyperion:** Pitches were sent to media on the second Order for Abatement for Hyperion. CBS requested additional information. Information was provided.
- **Windblown Dust Advisory:** Pitches were sent to local media outlets regarding the windblown dust advisory on 8/9, resulting in coverage.
- **Smoke Advisory:** Pitches were sent regarding the smoke advisory, resulting in coverage.
- **2022 AQMP:** KCET inquired about the availability of the 2022 Draft AQMP. A written response was provided.
- **Leaks from Oil and Gas Facilities:**
 - Capital and Main and FOX 11 News inquired about emissions leaks from oil and gas facilities, as reported by the FracTracker group. Written responses were provided.
 - Capital and Main submitted follow-up questions regarding the Dormax1 facility. A written response was provided.
 - A request was sent to Capital and Main requesting correction of an inaccuracy in a previously published article regarding Cree Oil. The requested correction was made to the article.
 - Chemical Watch requested an update on the investigation of reported air quality complaints regarding leaks from oil and gas wells. A written response was provided.
- **WHAM/CAPES Programs:** Staff participated in an interview with KPFK Radio on the WHAM and CAPES educational programs.

- **Oleander Chemical Incident:** KCET and Inland Empire News Today requested updates on the Oleander chemical incident in Perris. A written responses was provided.
- **Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAs):** Chemical Watch inquired about the intersection between PFAs, VOCs, hydrofluporicarbons and hydrofluoroolefins used in products. Additional follow-up questions were submitted. A written response was provided.
- **All American Asphalt:** Voice of OC requested updates about All American Asphalt’s Health Risk Assessment and inquired as to when it will be released. A written response was provided.
- **Monitoring:** Southern California News Group inquired about what it means for a substance to be at “background levels”. A written response was provided.
- **Fenceline Monitoring:** Baton Rouge Advocate asked to discuss fenceline monitoring with an expert. An interview was scheduled.
- **Rule 1168:** Chemical Watch inquired about the draft changes to South Coast AQMD’s Rule 1168. A written response was provided.
- **Indirect Sources:** Staff participated in an interview with Denver Business Journal on the warehouse indirect source rule implementation and results.
- **Wilmington Air Quality:** Unzueta Photo requested information on air quality issues in Wilmington. Staff is working on a response.
- **EVs:** Associated Press requested a list of participants in the Replace Your Ride program. A written response was provided.
- **California Climate Change Proposals:** Black Voice News requested an interview on carbon neutrality and Governor Gavin Newsom's climate change proposals. The reporter was referred to CARB.
- **State Transportation Goals:** Los Angeles Times inquired about California’s progress on transportation-related goals and NOx reduction over the last thirty years. Staff is working on a response.

Special Topics:

- **Ethylene Oxide (EtO):** Daily Breeze inquired regarding EtO facilities under review and South Coast AQMD’s monitoring efforts. A written response was provided. The reporter submitted follow-up questions. A written response was provided. Los Angeles Times inquired regarding the extent of AQMD’s monitoring efforts and the notices of violations issued earlier this year. An interview was conducted with staff.

- **Sterigenics Vernon:**
 - KCRW Radio, KPCC, LA Daily News and CBS asked about next steps in light of the Hearing Board’s decision to not issue the proposed order regarding Sterigenics. A written response was provided.
 - KCBS asked for updates available on Sterigenics. A link to the Sterigenics webpage was provided.
 - Los Angeles Times requested an update on Sterigenics and requested information about a plastics company through a public records request.
- **Parter Sterilization Services:**
 - CBS News requested information and a potential interview on the ongoing investigation of EtO in Carson. A written response was provided.
 - CBS News and Los Angeles Times asked for any updates available on Parter, specifically EtO investigations. Links were provided to the information on South Coast AQMD website.
- **Hazardous Ozone Levels due to Heat Wave:** Pitches were sent regarding the ozone advisory, resulting in coverage. FOX 11, KNX Radio, KPCC Radio, NBC, NBC Palm Springs, Telemundo, and KTLA requested interviews to discuss increased ozone levels. Staff participated in an interview with KPCC Radio and other outlets. Interviews aired multiple times throughout the week on local channels and nationwide affiliates, and spotlighted the South Coast AQMD mobile app.

Press Releases:

News Releases:

- **South Coast AQMD Requests Second Order to Reduce Odors from Hyperion – August 3, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of a second request for an Order of Abatement for Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues a Windblown Dust Advisory for Portions of Riverside County – August 9, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of dust conditions in portions of Riverside.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Ozone Advisory Due to Heat Wave – August 29, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of hazardous ozone levels due to heat.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Smoke Advisory Due to Route Fire Near Castaic – August 31, 2022 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of smoke conditions due to fire.

Social Media Posts:

- **AQ Forecast (8/3):** 1,286 Twitter Impressions
- **AQ Forecast (8/10):** 4,914 Twitter Impressions
- **AQ Forecast (8/13):** 8,205 Twitter Impressions
- **AQ Forecast (8/21):** 8,205 Twitter Impressions
- **AQ Forecast (8/28):** 8,205 Twitter Impressions
- **Ozone Advisory (8/30):** 15,734 Twitter Impressions

News Carousel:

- **\$9 million In VW funding will help replace Class 8 Freight & Port Drayage Trucks – August 4, 2022:** Provided link to application site.
- **Get Funding for Community Green Space projects in San Bernardino, Muscoy and Eastern Coachella Valley – August 11, 2022:** Provided link to funding RFP.
- **Keep up with the Latest News from South Coast AQMD - View the current edition of the Advisor newsletter – August 17, 2022:** Provided link to the newest version of the Advisor newsletter.
- **Award-Winning Volvo LIGHTS project, in Partnership with South Coast AQMD, Wraps in Southern California – August 24, 2022:** Provided link to Volvo announcement.
- **The 8th Annual Environmental Justice conference will take place virtually on Sept. 14 Register now! - August 26, 2022:** Provided registration link to Environmental Justice conference.
- **Martha Guzman, U.S. EPA Region 9 Administrator to be Keynote Speaker at our 8th Annual EJ Conference – August 31, 2022:** Provided a link to the Environmental Justice Conference page.

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OUTREACH TO COMMUNITY GROUPS AND FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

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

Arcadia	Irvine	Redondo Beach
Azusa	Irwindale	Riverside
Baldwin Park	La Cañada Flintridge	Rolling Hills
Beaumont	La Habra	Rolling Hills Estates
Bradbury	La Puente	Rosemead
Brea	La Verne	San Dimas
Burbank	Laguna Niguel	San Fernando
Carson	Lake Forest	San Gabriel
Claremont	Lawndale	San Marino
Colton	Lomita	Santa Clarita
Covina	Los Angeles	Seal Beach
Duarte	Manhattan Beach	Sierra Madre
El Monte	Menifee	South El Monte
El Segundo	Mission Viejo	South Pasadena
Garden Grove	Monrovia	Stanton
Gardena	Monterey Park	Temple City
Glendale	Murrieta	Torrance
Glendora	Newport Beach	Tustin
Hawthorne	Palos Verdes Estates	Walnut
Hermosa Beach	Pasadena	West Covina
Huntington Beach	Placentia	Yucaipa
Industry	Pomona	
Inglewood	Rancho Palos Verdes	

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

- US Senator Dianne Feinstein
- US Senator Alex Padilla
- US Representative Ted Lieu
- US Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard
- US Representative Judy Chu
- Senator Ben Allen
- Senator Robert Hertzberg
- Senator Dave Min
- Senator Josh Newman
- Senator Anthony Portantino
- Senator Richard Roth
- Senator Susan Rubio
- Assembly Member Mike Fong
- Assembly Member Cristina Garcia
- Assembly Member Chris Holden
- Assembly Member Tina McKinnor
- Assembly Member Anthony Rendon
- Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
- Assembly Member Freddie Rodriguez
- Assembly Member Blanca Rubio
- Assembly Member Miguel Santiago

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

Alhambra Chamber of Commerce
Arcadia Chamber of Commerce
BizFed
Building Industry Association of Southern California, Orange County Chapter
Cal Chamber
California Fuel Cell Partnership
California High Speed Rail Authority
CALSTART
Caltrans
El Monte - South El Monte Chamber of Commerce
Foothill Transit
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Glendora Chamber of Commerce
Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce
Hispanic Coalition of Small Businesses
Hollywood Burbank Airport
Las Virgenes-Malibu Council of Governments

League of California Cities, Los Angeles County Division
Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts
Los Angeles International Airport
Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority
Metrolink
Metropolitan Water District
Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District
Orange County Business Council
Orange County Council of Governments
San Bernardino Chamber of Commerce
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
San Fernando Valley Council of Governments
San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership
South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce
Southern California Association of Governments
Southern California Edison
Southern California Gas Company
Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District
Western Riverside Council of Governments
Westside Cities Council of Governments

In August, 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
Cal State University, Fullerton
Cal State University, San Bernardino
City of Hope
Clean Healthy Air Clean Healthy Altadena
Clean Power Alliance
Coalition for Clean Air
Huntington Beach City School District

Huntington Beach Union High School District
Inland Empire Health Plan
Mt. San Antonio College
National Park Service
San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
San Gabriel Mountains Community Collaborative
San Gabriel Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District
Taking Responsibility and Control, 91746 Neighborhood Watch
The Energy Coalition
The Wildlands Conservancy
Trust for Public Land
University of La Verne