



Clean Air Congress **VOICE**

FALL 2005

Air Quality Settlement Funding Available Locally

The AQMD recently entered into an agreement with BP/ARCO regarding violations of air quality rules and regulations. The AQMD Governing Board has allocated \$6 million of the settlement monies to fund projects and/or programs related to air pollution mitigation, research, public outreach and education, health treatment centers or other projects to help improve air quality and our residents' quality of life.

We want your input on how those funds should be spent. AQMD will be holding a meeting in each of the four counties we serve to seek input and ideas from the public and the business community.

Public Hearing on ARB/Railroad Statewide Agreement

In June 2005, the California Air Resources Board (ARB) Executive Officer signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Union Pacific and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad companies -- the two railroads that conduct over 80 percent of the rail-transport business in California. According to ARB, dozens of local communities will benefit from this agreement because the railroads have committed through the MOU to reduce emissions from rail operations throughout the state.

However, through a public meeting held by the AQMD in July and two subsequent public hearings held by ARB in August, hundreds have spoken out against the agreement. Across the state, local and state elected officials, community group members, and representatives from environmental, health and business organizations, have expressed their concern that the MOU was negotiated without the benefit of public input. They have also requested that ARB strengthen the agreement to achieve greater reductions, and eliminate a termination clause contained in the MOU that prevents local, regional or state agencies from taking further action to reduce emissions from locomotives. As it is written currently, the MOU, according to ARB, will achieve a 20 percent reduction in locomotive diesel particulate matter emissions near rail yards. AQMD's Governing Board, state and local elected officials, environmental community group members, and others feel greater emission reductions can be achieved through legislation and regulations.

At the October 27, 2005 ARB meeting the Board received a report from its staff on the June 2005 ARB/Railroad Statewide Agreement. The Board also received and considered numerous written submittals and the testimony of 74 witnesses - residents, community groups, city officials, and legislators expressing their views regarding railroad emissions and the health effects on their communities, as well as giving their input on the MOU agreement. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Board postponed a formal decision to either ratify or rescind the Agreement, and determined that it would revisit this item at its January 26, 2006 meeting.

In the interim the Board directed its staff to work with the participating railroads to clarify several provisions of the Agreement. Items to be clarified include the circumstances under which the participating railroads might be released from their obligations to implement the Agreement, how the Agreement affects the existing programs and enforcement practices of local agencies, and what limitations, if any, the Agreement might create for other agencies that seek to reduce air pollution associated with rail operations. The Agreement remains in effect during this period. The ARB staff will report back to the Board in January on clarifications of the Agreement that have been identified and progress in implementing the Agreement. At that meeting the Board will again consider what action is necessary relative to the Agreement. The Board announced that it would allow additional testimony at the January meeting, limited to comments on any proposed clarifications of the Agreement.

For more information, visit: <http://www.arb.ca.gov/railyard/railyard.htm>.

**The following meetings
are scheduled:**

**November 28, 2005
6:30 p.m.**

**City of Banning
City Council Chambers
99 E. Ramsey St.
Banning, CA 92220**

**November 30, 2005
6:30 p.m.**

**Carson Community Center
International AB Room
801 E. Carson St.
Carson, CA 90745**

Join us and share your ideas, concepts or proposals. If you are unable to attend this meeting, you may submit your input directly by mail to South Coast Air Quality Management District, 21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765 or e-mail projectfunding@aqmd.gov. You can also request a form for submitting your ideas at either of these addresses.

For more information, contact Lourdes Cordova Martinez at 909-396-3214 or lmartinez@aqmd.gov.



State Board Supports AQMD's Clean Fleet Rules

The California Air Resources Board (CARB), after a lengthy public hearing, adopted a regulation ensuring that new transit buses purchased in the Los Angeles Basin will have the lowest possible emissions. CARB also adopted a resolution supporting the AQMD's effort to reduce emissions through its clean fleet rules, and supporting its legal authority to do so under state law.

Following extensive testimony from engine manufacturers, fleet operators, environmental group representatives and others, CARB's Board adopted amendments to its existing clean transit bus rule requiring all 18 transit agencies in the South Coast region to purchase only alternative fuel transit buses starting next year. Prior to this action, six of the 18 agencies had chosen CARB's "diesel bus purchase path." The Board's action commits those six transit districts to be on an "alternative fuel path" when purchasing new transit buses.

The six districts affected are Gardena Municipal Bus Lines, Long

Beach Transit, Montebello Bus Lines, Norwalk Transit System, Santa Clarita Transit and Torrance Transit. Collectively, they operate about 460 buses representing about 10 percent of the region's transit fleet. The other 12 transit districts in the region previously had chosen CARB's alternative fuel path.

All of the region's transit agencies with fleets of 15 or more buses, including the six affected by CARB's action, are currently in compliance with AQMD's Rule 1192 – Clean On-Road Transit Buses, which requires that transit agencies purchase alternate fuel buses when adding to their fleets.

Today, 68 percent of the region's more than 4,000 transit buses operate on clean-burning alternative fuel. Santa Clarita Transit, one of the six affected transit agencies, already has bought 14 compressed natural gas buses. The other five transit agencies plan to purchase gasoline-hybrid buses, which also are much cleaner than today's diesel-powered buses.

The CARB Board took no action on proposed school bus and waste hauling fleet rules, but reaffirmed their support for AQMD's fleet rule authority. CARB's urban transit fleet rule adoption is the latest step by local and state air quality officials to maintain clean fleet rules in the face of a five-year legal battle waged against them by oil companies and engine manufacturers.

For more information, contact Dean Saito at 909-396-2647.



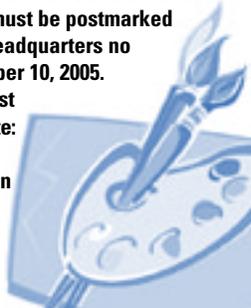
Color My World With Healthy Air - Calendar Contest 2006

Air pollution affects everyone's health, especially kids. AQMD invites students ranging from grades K-12 to create artwork depicting ideas of a world that is healthy with clean air for our 2006 Calendar Contest. Twelve winning pieces of artwork will be selected, one for each month of the year. Winners will get a \$50 gift check. One GRAND PRIZE WINNER will be selected for the cover. He or she will win a \$100 gift check, and a SURPRISE GIFT.

We're looking for bright-colored artwork with a brief clean air message describing what the picture is about. The words can be in English or Spanish. Students creating their artwork should imagine that they are telling a friend, a parent, or other adult their vision of how life could be better if we all were breathing clean air. Students can also create artwork that illustrates why air pollution is bad, and why we need to keep our air clean.

Last year's Calendar Contest drew entries from Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Your submission must be postmarked or delivered to the AQMD headquarters no later than Thursday, November 10, 2005.

For entry form and contest rules, go to the AQMD website: www.aqmd.gov. For more information, contact Patrician Price at 909-396-2690, e-mail her at pprice@aqmd.gov, or call 1-800-CUT-SMOG.



Clean Air Champion Jonah Ramirez Wins Clean Air Award

Nine-year-old Jonah Ramirez, who was featured in the first issue of the VOICE newsletter in March 2004, is the winner of the 2005 Clean Air Award for Promotion of Good Environmental Stewardship – Youth. He is the youngest recipient in the 17-year history of the Clean Air Awards. Jonah and the ten other 2005 Clean Air Award recipients were honored on October 20th at the Los Angeles Convention Center. The luncheon event was emceed by CBS2 time-saver traffic reporter Vera Jimenez.

Jonah, an asthma sufferer, has used his voice for the American Lung Association's Inland Empire chapter as the youth spokesperson for air quality throughout the San Bernardino community.

Awards were given in the categories of Advancement of Air Pollution Technology, Innovative Transportation Projects, Model Community Achievement, Public Education on Air Quality Issues, Promotion of Good Environmental Stewardship, Leadership in Government, and the Robert M. Zweig, M.D. Memorial Award.



This news publication is produced by the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (AQMD) Public Affairs Office. AQMD is the air pollution control agency for Orange County and major portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside counties. *AQMD does not endorse or warrant any products, services or companies mentioned in this publication.*

To subscribe, send your name and address to AQMDVoice, 21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765-4182. You can also e-mail cleanaircongress@aqmd.gov. For comments to the editor, e-mail pprice@aqmd.gov or call Patrician Price at (909) 396-2690. For news updates and other information, visit AQMD's website at www.aqmd.gov.