

BOARD MEETING DATE: September 6, 2024

AGENDA NO. 11

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the July 2024 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, 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

DA:LTO:PC:DS:bel:sr:mc

Background

This report summarizes the activities of the Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Office for July. The report includes Major Events, Community Events/Public Meetings, Environmental Justice (EJ) 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 hosting 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.

South Coast AQMD worked with the Administration, Senator Alex Padilla, and CARB to hold a press event to announce the historic awarding of nearly \$500 million through the U.S. EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program. Senior U.S. EPA leadership, Senator Alex Padilla, CARB, Sierra Club, and officials from South Coast AQMD were present to mark the occasion. Prior to the press event, representatives from all three agencies signed letters with commitments for measures to reduce NOx emissions and ozone levels.

Community Events/Public Meetings

Staff engaged 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 information regarding the following:

- Tips on reducing their exposure to smog and its negative 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/grant 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 July events and meetings:

Riverside County Board of Supervisors

On July 9, staff attended a Riverside County Board of Supervisors meeting to provide information on how to report an air quality complaint and to encourage residents to download the South Coast AQMD Mobile App.

Inland Empire Resource Conservation District

On July 11, staff attended Inland Empire Resource Conservation District Board meeting to share information regarding the latest smoke advisory, the Commercial Electric Lawn & Garden Equipment Incentive and Exchange (eL&G), and updates to Rule 1146.2 - Emissions of Oxides of Nitrogen (NOx) from Large Water Heaters, Small Boilers and Process Heaters.

Garden Grove Chamber of Commerce

On July 16, staff participated in a Garden Grove Chamber of Commerce meeting to provide updates on Small Business Assistance (SBA), eL&G Program, South Coast AQMD Mobile App, and the latest Advisor newsletter.

City of Riverside

On July 16, staff attended the Riverside City Council meeting to announce the upcoming 10th Annual EJ Conference.

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

On July 17, staff met with the Service Provider liaison from Area 3 of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to share information regarding residential programs for EV charging, eL&G Program, Replace Your Ride, and other incentives.

Lake Forest Chamber of Commerce

On July 18, staff met with the Lake Forest Chamber of Commerce to discuss South Coast AQMD resources such as SBA, South Coast AQMD Mobile App, Advisor newsletter, and commercial eL&G Program.

Grand Slam Health Jam

On July 21, staff hosted an information booth at the Inland Empire Health Plan's Grand Slam Health Jam in Rancho Cucamonga to provide information on South Coast AQMD, how to file an air quality complaint, eL&G Program, and other resources.

Beach Cities Health District

On July 24, staff attended the Beach Cities Health District Board of Directors meeting to share information about the upcoming Public Hearing on Proposed Amended Rule 1148.1- Oil and Gas Production Wells, and the 10th Annual EJ Conference.

City of Maywood

On July 24, staff attended the Maywood City Council meeting to share updates on South Coast AQMD's incentive programs for residents, and the 10th Annual EJ Conference.

City of Industry

On July 25, staff attended the City of Industry City Council meeting to provide information on Rule 1146.2.

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

On July 25, staff attended the South Bay Cities Council of Governments Board of Directors meeting to share the Advisor newsletter.

City of South Pasadena

On July 29, staff attended a South Pasadena media event to unveil the nation's first all-electric vehicle police fleet. Staff hosted an information booth to educate residents on how to file a complaint, residential incentive programs for EV charging, and eL&G Program.

Environmental Justice Update

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

Plaza de la Raza

On July 11, staff met with the Executive Director of Plaza de la Raza to provide information on how to file air quality complaints and the save the date for the 10th Annual EJ Conference in October.

U.S. EPA's National Environmental Justice Community Engagement

On July 16, staff participated in U.S. EPA's National Environmental Justice Community Engagement meeting. The meeting included presentations on the Inflation Reduction Act, EJScreen 2.3, Civil Rights, and technical assistance for Community Change Grants.

Orange County Environmental Justice's Environmental Justice Organizing Academy

On July 17, staff participated in Orange County Environmental Justice's Environmental Justice Organizing Academy. Legislative, Public Affairs and Media summer interns presented an overview of South Coast AQMD and the history of air pollution in the basin.

U.S. EPA – EJScreen 2.3

On July 24, U.S. EPA held a virtual public training on EJScreen 2.3, a mapping and screening tool. The training included information on the updates made to EJScreen, a demonstration of the available features, and tips on how to use the tool.

Mujeres de la Tierra

On July 24, staff met with Mujeres de la Tierra an environmental non-profit group focused on redefining the traditional “green” dialogue. Staff learned about current work being done in the community and shared information on incentive programs and upcoming meetings.

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.

California Council for Environmental and Economic Balance (CCEEB) Summer Issues Seminar

On July 9 and 10, staff presented on a panel with Bay Area Air Quality Management District and San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District to discuss upcoming challenges and staff participated on a panel on cumulative impacts at CCEEB's Summer Issues Seminar.

Visiting Students from China

On July 19, a group of students visiting from China visited headquarters and toured the Lab with a local Duarte Councilmember.

University of California, Irvine (UCI) and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Interns

On July 26, a group NASA undergraduate interns and faculty from UCI visited headquarters for an overview of South Coast AQMD, mission-oriented functions and a tour of the Lab.

Communications Center Statistics

The Communications 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 July are summarized below:

Calls to South Coast AQMD's Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG®	2,445
Calls to South Coast AQMD's Spanish Line	24
Clean Air Connections	5
Total Calls	2,474

Public Information Center Statistics

The Public Information Center (PIC) handles phone calls and assists individuals who walk in for general information. Email advisories provide information on upcoming meetings and events, program announcements and alerts on time-sensitive issues. Information for the month of July is summarized below:

Calls Received by PIC	49
Calls to Automated System	207
Total Calls	256
Visitor Transactions	144
Email Advisories Sent	7,911

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 over the telephone, at South Coast AQMD headquarters and via virtual on-site consultations, as summarized below for July.

- Provided permit application assistance to 233 companies, and
- Processed 120 Air Quality Permit Checklists.

Types of businesses assisted:

Architecture Firms	Engineering Firms	Retail Facilities
Auto Body Shops	Manufacturing Facilities	Warehouses
Construction Firms	Offices	
Dry Cleaners	Restaurants	

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 July report is listed below:

Major Media Interactions	260
Press Releases	30
News Carousel	3

Major Media Topics:

- **Formaldehyde Testing:** Staff participated in an interview with ProPublica to provide details for a story on formaldehyde testing in Fontana. Reporter followed up on information they requested during the interview. Response was provided.
- **Post 4th of July:** Staff participated in an interview with ABC7, KNX, LAist and KTLA News regarding air quality after the July 4 holiday. LAist was also provided a written response for a separate inquiry.
- **Advisories:** Staff participated in an interview with LAist to discuss the ozone and particle advisories. Staff participated in an interview with KVCR regarding a smoke advisory. Staff participated in an interview with CalMatters to discuss general information about windblown dust advisories in the Coachella Valley.
- **Ethylene Oxide (EtO):** Staff participated in an interview with LAist regarding EtO. A reporter had additional follow-up questions and a response was provided.
- **Residential Air Filtration:** Staff participated in an interview with Boyle Heights Beat to discuss the Residential Air Filtration program.

- **Rail Yards Indirect Source Rule (ISR):** Staff participated in an interview with the Los Angeles Times to discuss the ISR rule. KVCR requested information on the rail yard rule. Responses were provided. Inside EPA had follow up questions on the terminology used in the staff report. Response was provided. Inside EPA asked about the upcoming Board meeting for consideration of the Rail Yards ISR and the effective date if passed. Response was provided.
- **Hydrogen Sulfide (H2S):** Staff participated in an interview with the Los Angeles Times to discuss the Salton Sea odors. Desert Sun inquired about the location of H2S monitors in the Coachella Valley, the rise and fall of H2S levels, and clarification on a response that was previously sent regarding H2S. Responses were provided.
- **Warehouse Indirect Source Rule (WAIRE):** Spectrum News requested an interview to discuss the WAIRE program. Interview was scheduled. Chemical and Engineering News requested an interview to discuss findings from a study on air pollution impacts of warehouses and had questions on the rule. Working on a response. Journalism student from the Climate Equity Reporting Project inquired about warehouses that have received NOV's under the WAIRE program. Responses were provided.
- **Murphy Drill Site:** EarthBeat requested the NOV issued to Freeport-McMoRan and requested clarification on the methane leak that was found. Response was provided.
- **Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG):** Inside Climate News asked if South Coast AQMD could share the grant application. Working on obtaining approval. KVCR requested an interview or a statement on the federal grant. Written response was provided.
- **Air Quality Alert:** Newsweek requested additional information on the San Bernardino smoke advisory. Response was provided.
- **Office of Inspector General (EPA Internal Watchdog) report:** The Hill requested a comment on a report published by the watchdog that listed our agency as not adequately inspecting some polluting facilities. Response was provided.
- **Aerial Advertising:** LAist inquired if pollution from aerial advertising is regulated/monitored. Working on a response.
- **Ports Emissions Funding:** Bloomberg News inquired about funding for projects related to reducing emissions at the ports. Response was provided.
- **Hyperion Hearing Board:** Daily Breeze requested the name of the alternate Hearing Board Member at the proceeding for Hyperion. A reporter had a follow up question on a witness name. Responses were provided.
- **Dust Advisory:** KESQ inquired about the dust problem in the Coachella Valley, since Tropical Storm Hilary, and requested information on any soil testing to determine what elements become airborne, and lab contacts. Working on a response.
- **Ozone Advisory (7/2 & 7/5):** Pitched to media outlets resulting in media coverage.

- **Odor Advisory: (7/28-29):** Pitched to media outlets resulting in coverage.
- **Particle Advisory:** Pitched to media outlets resulting in coverage.
- **Smoke Advisory (7/9, 7/10, 7/19, 7/21, 7/29 & 7/30):** Pitched to media outlets resulting in coverage.
- **Windblown Dust Advisory (7/7, 7/12, 7/27 & 7/28):** Pitched to media outlets resulting in coverage.

News Releases:

- **South Coast AQMD Issues and Extends Ozone Advisory Due to Heat Wave – July 2 & 5, 2024 (English and Spanish)** - Informed the public of a multi-day extreme ozone (smog) event due to the heat wave affecting the region, followed by an extension.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Particle Advisory due to 4th of July Fireworks – July 3, 2024 (English and Spanish)** - Informed residents of expected poor air quality due to fireworks.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Windblown Dust Advisories – July 7, 12, 27 & 28, 2024 (English and Spanish)** - Informed the public of PM10 caused by high winds.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues and Extends Wildfire Smoke Advisory – July 9, 10, 19, 21, 29 & 30, 2024 (English and Spanish)** - Informed the public of a smoke advisory caused by wildfire, followed by an extension.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues and Extends Odor Advisory for the Eastern Coachella Valley – July 28-29, 2024 (English and Spanish)** - Informed the public of odor advisory issued and extended due to elevated levels of hydrogen sulfide.

Social Media Posts:

- [Lake Fire/Vista Fire Smoke Advisory \(7/9\)](#): 8,198 Twitter Impressions
- RT by @CaliforniaEPA, @SBCounty, @AirResources, @NWSSanDiego, @CodeRed001Blue, @sbcountyscanner, @RCFD_PIO
- [AQ Forecast \(7/14\)](#): 5,234 Twitter Impressions
-RT by @ NWSSanDiego, @CodeRed001Blue
- [Fork Fire Smoke Advisory \(7/19\)](#): 7,848 Twitter Impressions
-RT by @KFIAM640, @SBCounty, @NWSSanDiego
- [Windblown Dust Advisory \(7/27\)](#): 6,338 Twitter Impressions
-RT by @NWSSanDiego, @CodeRed001Blue
- [Nixon Fire Smoke Advisory \(7/30\)](#): 6,119 Twitter Impressions
--RT by @RivCoReady, @AirNOW, @NWSSanDiego

News Carousel:

- **Participate in the Permit Streamlining Task Force meeting 7/17 to discuss permitting processing and program enhancement (7/16)** - Linked to Permit Streamlining Task Force webpage
- **Range Energy and South Coast AQMD to Partner on Electric-Powered Trailers for Class 8 Commercial Fleets to Reduce Air Pollution (7/18)** - Linked to press release webpage
- **Residents in parts of Los Angeles and the Coachella Valley can apply for a free air purifier (7/25)** - Linked to Residential Air Filtration Program webpage.

Outreach to Community Groups and Federal, State and Local Governments

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

- U.S. Senator Alex Padilla
- U.S. Senator Laphonza Butler
- U.S. Representative Pete Aguilar
- U.S. Representative Nanette Barragán
- U.S. Representative Ken Calvert
- U.S. Representative Tony Cárdenas
- U.S. Representative Judy Chu
- U.S. Representative Lou Correa
- U.S. Representative Mike Garcia
- U.S. Representative Robert Garcia
- U.S. Representative Jimmy Gomez
- U.S. Representative Sydney Kamlager-Dove
- U.S. Representative Young Kim
- U.S. Representative Ted Lieu
- U.S. Representative Grace Napolitano
- U.S. Representative Jay Obernolte
- U.S. Representative Katie Porter
- U.S. Representative Raul Ruiz
- U.S. Representative Linda Sanchez
- U.S. Representative Adam Schiff
- U.S. Representative Brad Sherman
- U.S. Representative Michelle Steel
- U.S. Representative Mark Takano
- U.S. Representative Norma Torres
- U.S. Representative Maxine Waters
- Senator Benjamin Allen
- Senator Angelique Ashby
- Senator Josh Becker
- Senator Steven Bradford
- Senator Maria Elena Durazo
- Senator Kelly Seyarto
- Senator Aisha Wahab
- Assemblymember Diane Dixon
- Assemblymember Chris Holden
- Assemblymember Tina McKinnor
- Assemblymember Cottie Petrie-Norris
- Assemblymember Anthony Rendon
- Assemblymember Eloise Gomez Reyes
- Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez
- Assemblymember Greg Wallis
- Assemblymember Rick Zbur

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

- Agoura Hills
- Alhambra
- Arcadia
- Artesia
- Azusa
- Baldwin Park
- Banning
- Beaumont
- Bell
- Bell Gardens
- Bellflower
- Beverly Hills
- Big Bear Lake
- Bradbury
- Calabasas
- Calimesa
- Canyon Lake
- Carson
- Cerritos
- City of Industry
- Claremont
- Commerce
- Compton
- Corona
- Costa Mesa
- Covina
- Cudahy
- Culver City
- Dana Point
- Diamond Bar
- Downey
- Duarte
- Eastvale
- El Monte
- El Segundo
- Fontana
- Fountain Valley
- Garden Grove
- Glendora
- Hawaiian Gardens
- Hawthorne
- Hemet
- Hermosa Beach
- Hidden Hills
- Huntington Park
- Inglewood
- Irwindale
- Jurupa Valley
- La Cañada Flintridge
- La Habra Heights
- La Mirada
- La Puente
- La Verne
- Laguna Beach
- Lake Elsinore
- Lake Forest
- Lakewood
- Lawndale
- Lomita
- Long Beach
- Los Angeles
- Lynwood
- Malibu
- Manhattan Beach
- Maywood
- Menifee
- Monrovia
- Montebello
- Monterey Park
- Moreno Valley
- Murrieta
- Norco
- Norwalk
- Palos Verdes Estates
- Paramount
- Pasadena
- Perris
- Pico Rivera
- Pomona
- Rancho Palos Verdes
- Redlands
- Redondo Beach
- Riverside
- Rolling Hills
- Rolling Hills Estates
- Rosemead
- San Dimas
- San Gabriel
- San Jacinto
- San Marino
- Santa Fe Springs
- Santa Monica
- Seal Beach
- Sierra Madre
- Signal Hill
- South El Monte
- South Gate
- South Pasadena
- Stanton
- Temecula
- Temple City
- Torrance
- Tustin
- Upland
- Vernon
- Walnut
- West Covina
- West Hollywood
- Westlake Village
- Whittier
- Wildomar
- Yucaipa

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

- Bear Valley Electric Service, Inc.
- Big Bear Chamber of Commerce
- CARB
- Carson Chamber of Commerce
- El Segundo Chamber of Commerce
- Foothill Transit
- Fountain Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Garden Grove Chamber of Commerce
- Gardena Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Ontario Business Council
- Hermosa Beach Chamber of Commerce
- Inglewood Airport Area Chamber of Commerce
- Inland Empire Utilities Agency
- League of California Cities, Los Angeles County Division
- Lomita Chamber of Commerce
- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
- Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
- Los Angeles World Airports
- Manhattan Beach Chamber of Commerce
- Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority
- Metrolink
- Ontario International Airport
- Orange County Business Council
- Palos Verdes Peninsula Chamber of Commerce
- Redondo Beach Chamber of Commerce
- Riverside County Board of Supervisors
- San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors
- San Bernardino County Department of Public Health
- San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
- San Pedro Chamber of Commerce
- South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce
- South Bay Cities Council of Governments
- Southern California Association of Governments
- Southern California Edison
- Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce
- Upland Chamber of Commerce
- Valley Industry and Commerce Association

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

- American Heart Association
- Bandini Elementary School
- Carson-Gardena-Dominguez Rotary Club
- Clean Power Alliance
- Colton Joint Unified School District
- El Sol Neighborhood Educational Center
- Habitat for Humanity of Greater Los Angeles
- Hawthorne-LAX-Lennox Rotary Club
- Hermosa Beach Rotary Club
- Inglewood Rotary Club
- Lawndale Rotary Club
- Loma Linda University
- Los Angeles Unified School District
- Manhattan Beach Rotary Club
- Montebello Unified School District
- Plaza de la Raza
- Redondo Beach Rotary Club
- Rialto Unified School District
- San Bernardino City Unified School District
- Southern California Mountains Foundation
- Torrance Del Amo Rotary Club
- Torrance Refinery Action Alliance
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of California, Riverside
- Wilmington Rotary Club