

BOARD MEETING DATE: February 7, 2025

AGENDA NO. 8

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the December 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 Natri
Executive Officer

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Background

This report summarizes the activities of the Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Office for December. 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.

There were no major events hosted or sponsored in December.

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 December events and meetings:

Jurupa Valley

On December 3, staff participated in a Reach Out Jurupa Valley community meeting to share information on the Check Before You Burn (CBYB) program.

Inland Regional Energy Network

On December 5, staff attended the Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN) Regional Energy and Climate Hub workshop, hosting a booth to provide information on South Coast AQMD including air quality and incentive programs.

South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce

On December 11, staff participated in the South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce Legislative Affairs Committee meeting to share information about the U.S. EPA's \$500 million Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) awarded to South Coast AQMD.

Fountain Valley Chamber of Commerce

On December 12, staff participated in the Fountain Valley Chamber of Commerce meeting to share the latest Advisor newsletter and a press release highlighting South Coast AQMD's new digital tools designed to improve the permitting process.

City of Industry

On December 12, staff attended the City of Industry City Council meeting to provide information on the Carl Moyer Memorial Air Quality Standards Attainment Program, highlighting the availability of approximately \$5 million in funding for eligible zero-emission off-road projects.

Orange County Business Council

On December 13, staff participated in the Orange County Business Council Government Affairs Committee virtual meeting to provide information on how to subscribe to updates on proposed and amended rules.

City of Rancho Palos Verdes

On December 13, staff participated in the Rancho Palos Verdes Youth Advisory Committee virtual meeting to provide information on CBYB and the Mobile App.

Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce

On December 13, staff attended the virtual Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce Government Affairs Council Meeting to provide information on the Carl Moyer Memorial Air Quality Standards Attainment Program and other issues.

City of Vernon

On December 17, staff participated in the Vernon City Council meeting to present the 2024 Carl Moyer Memorial Air Quality Standards Attainment Program, highlighting the availability of at least \$5 million in funding for eligible zero-emission off-road projects and the extended application deadline.

San Bernardino County

On December 17, staff participated in the San Bernardino County Transit Tuesdays webinar to provide an overview of South Coast AQMD, how to file an air quality complaint, and current incentive programs.

Proposed Amended Rules 1111 and 1121

Beginning in mid-December, staff conducted outreach on PAR 1111 - Reduction of NO_x Emissions from Natural-Gas-Fired Furnaces and PAR 1121 - Reduction of NO_x Emissions from Residential Type, Natural-Gas-Fired Water Heaters. Staff followed up with Orange County Council of Governments regarding their Board Resolution and Comment letter and requested to provide presentations at Councils of Governments throughout the jurisdiction. Fact sheets were distributed to cities, chambers of commerce, and other organizations.

Environmental Justice Update

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

Pacoima Community Initiative

On December 6, staff participated in the Pacoima Community Initiative's monthly meeting to share information on the Clean Air Program for Elementary Students, Why Healthy Air Matters program, and how to report an air quality complaint.

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 presentations in the month of December.

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 December are summarized below:

Calls to South Coast AQMD's Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG®	1,884
Calls to South Coast AQMD's Spanish Line	20
Clean Air Connections	8
Total Calls	1,912

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 December is summarized below:

Calls Received by PIC	40
Calls to Automated System	132
Total Calls	172
Visitor Transactions	108
Email Advisories Sent	1980

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 consultation, as summarized below for December.

- Provided permit application assistance to 180 companies, and
- Processed 105 Air Quality Permit Checklists.

Types of businesses assisted:

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

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 December report is listed below:

Major Media Interactions	323
Press Releases	28
News Carousel	6

Major Media Topics:

- **No-Burn Day:** Staff participated in an interview with LAist to discuss a CBYB advisory.
- **Air Pollution and Warehouses in the Inland Empire:** Staff participated in an interview with Southern California News Group to discuss efforts to curb air pollution from diesel-powered trucks serving warehouses in the Inland Empire and the incoming federal administration.
- **Wildfire Smoke:** Staff participated in an interview with ABC to discuss air quality effects of wildfire smoke. New Nation Chicago inquired about air quality impacts from the Franklin Fire. Response was provided.
- **Pollution in Agricultural Soil:** Desert Sun inquired about a response to UC Davis’s report of higher levels of NOx from agricultural soil in the Salton Sea Air Basin, impacts to Coachella Valley agriculture and nearby communities, and additional soil emissions regulation. Response was provided.

- **Methyl Bromide:** Long Beach Post requested information on the “discovery of elevated levels of methyl bromide in West Long Beach.” Response was provided.
- **Colorado Lagoon Channel (CLC):** Long Beach Post requested a comment on the CLC project in Long Beach and had follow up questions. Responses were provided.
- **Monitoring Efforts:** LA Public Press inquired on potential Trump administration impacts on monitoring efforts and Clean Air Act requirements. Response was provided.
- **Air Pollution:** Cal State Northridge student journalist requested an interview on air pollution health effects and mitigation strategies. Response was provided.
- **Hyperion:** LA Times had additional follow-up questions mainly on NOVs regarding their Hyperion inquiry from September. Response was provided.
- **Home Water Heater and Furnaces:** Spectrum News inquired about the delay on the home furnaces (Proposed Amended Rule (PAR) 1111) and water heater (PAR 1121) rules. Inside EPA requested a response to criticism by community groups about delays on these rules. Response was provided.
- **Large Water Heater Rule Lawsuit:** Politico requested comments on the lawsuit on the water heater rule (Rule 1146.2). Informed the reporter we are not able to comment on ongoing litigation.
- **Electric School Bus Fund:** LA Times inquired about EPA’s announcement of \$24.8 million in funding for school buses. Response was provided.
- **CPRG Fund:** Capital and Main inquired about the CPRG funding contracts. Response was provided.
- **Refinery Emissions Data:** Capital and Main asked for a large quantity of emissions data from refineries. Response was provided.
- **Cal State LA Press Release:** Pitched to media outlets resulting in media coverage.
- **New Permit Tools Press Release:** Pitched to media outlets resulting in media coverage.
- **Zero-Emission Infrastructure Funding Press Release:** Pitched to media outlets resulting in media coverage.
- **No-Burn Day Advisories:** Pitched to media outlets resulting in media coverage.
- **Particle Advisory:** Pitched to media outlets resulting in media coverage.
- **Smoke Advisories:** Pitched to media outlets resulting in media coverage.
- **Windblown Dust Advisories:** Pitched to media outlets resulting in media coverage.

News Releases:

- **South Coast AQMD Launches New Digital Tools to Improve Permit Processing – December 3, 2024 (English and Spanish)** – Informed the public of a new permit processing tool.
- **No-Burn Alert: Mandatory Wood-Burning Ban & Extension in Effect for Residents of the South Coast Air Basin – December 3-5, 2024 (English and Spanish)** – Informed the public of No-Burn Day alerts.
- **South Coast AQMD Awards \$109 Million to Advance Zero-Emission Infrastructure in Underserved Communities – December 6, 2024 (English and Spanish)** – Informed the public of funding approved to accelerate the development of zero-emission charging and hydrogen infrastructure.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Windblown Dust Advisory Due to High Winds in the San Geronio Pass and Parts of Riverside and Orange Counties – December 9, 2024 (English and Spanish)** – Informed the public of PM10 Windblown Dust Advisories issued due to high winds.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues and Extends Smoke Advisory for Northwest Los Angeles County Due to the Franklin Fire – December 10-11, 2024 (English and Spanish)** – Informed the public of a smoke advisory and extension due to a wildfire.
- **South Coast AQMD Grants Cal State LA \$150,000 for Advanced Battery Competition – December 17, 2024 (English and Spanish)** – Informed the public of funding for the Battery Workforce Challenge.
- **No-Burn Alert and Extension: Mandatory Wood-Burning Ban in Effect for Residents of the South Coast Air Basin – December 20-22, 26-31, 2024 (English and Spanish)** – Informed the public of mandatory wood-burning bans and extensions due to predicted high air pollution.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Particle Advisory for New Year Eve Holiday – December 30, 2024 (English and Spanish)** – Informed residents of expected poor air quality due to fireworks.

Social Media Posts:

- [CBYB Advisory Extension \(12/4\)](#): 1,111 Twitter Impressions
RT by @CodeRed001Blue, @CityofAlhambra, @LAFDtalk
- [Windblown Dust Advisory \(12/9\)](#): 4,830 Twitter Impressions
--RT by @NWSSanDiego, @AirResources, @CodeRed001Blue
- [Franklin Fire Smoke Advisory \(12/12\)](#): 1,938 Twitter Impressions
--RT by @AirResources, @CaliforniaEPA, @ReadyLA
- [No Burn Day Advisory \(12/29\)](#): 4,563 Twitter Impressions
RT by @NWSSanDiego, @CodeRed001Blue

News Carousel:

- **Participate in the Permit Streamlining Task Force meeting on Dec. 10 to discuss permitting processing and program enhancement (12/5)** – Linked to Permit Streamlining Task Force webpage.
- **There's still time to apply for zero-emission off-road equipment funding - application deadline extended to Jan. 31 (12/6)** – Linked to the Carl Moyer Program webpage.
- **Young adults, apply now to be considered for an appointment to the Young Leaders Advisory Council (YLAC) (12/18)** – Linked to application webpage.
- **South Coast AQMD is seeking candidates for Hearing Board Members and alternates. Applications are due by Jan. 10th (12/13)** – Linked to recruitment webpage.
- **Tips for Being Green Through the Holidays – Help save energy and reduce air pollution (12/20)** – Linked to infographic.
- **Warehouse Owners and Operators: Annual WAIRE Reports for 2024 are due by 1/31/25, 11:59 p.m. (12/26)** – Linked to report webpage.

Outreach to Community Groups and Federal, State and Local Governments

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

- U.S. Senator Alex Padilla
- U.S. Representative Pete Aguilar
- U.S. Representative Nanette Barragán
- U.S. Representative Lou Correa
- U.S. Representative Jimmy Gomez
- Senator Catherine Blakespear
- Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh
- Senator Lena Gonzalez
- Senator Laura Richardson
- Assemblymember Mia Bonta
- Assemblymember Diane Dixon
- Assemblymember Josh Lowenthal
- Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva
- Assemblymember Tri Ta

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

Agoura Hills	Fountain Valley	Paramount
Alhambra	Glendale	Pasadena
Arcadia	Glendora	Pico Rivera
Artesia	Hawaiian Gardens	Pomona
Azusa	Hemet	Riverside
Baldwin Park	Hidden Hills	Rolling Hills
Banning	Highland	Rolling Hills Estates
Bell	Huntington Park	Rosemead
Bell Gardens	Irwindale	San Bernardino
Bellflower	Jurupa Valley	San Dimas
Beverly Hills	La Cañada Flintridge	San Fernando
Bradbury	La Habra Heights	San Gabriel
Buena Park	La Mirada	San Jacinto
Burbank	La Puente	San Marino
Calabasas	La Verne	Santa Ana
Calimesa	Laguna Hills	Santa Clarita
Cerritos	Lakewood	Santa Fe Springs
Chino	Loma Linda	Santa Monica
Chino Hills	Long Beach	Sierra Madre
City of Industry	Los Angeles	Signal Hill
Claremont	Lynwood	South El Monte
Colton	Malibu	South Gate
Commerce	Maywood	South Pasadena
Compton	Menifee	Temecula
Corona	Monrovia	Temple City
Covina	Montclair	Upland
Cudahy	Montebello	Vernon
Culver City	Monterey Park	Walnut
Diamond Bar	Moreno Valley	West Covina
Downey	Norco	West Hollywood
Duarte	Norwalk	Westlake Village
Eastvale	Ontario	Whittier
El Monte	Palos Verdes Estates	

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

Beach Cities Health District
Coachella Valley Association of Governments
Fountain Valley Chamber of Commerce
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce
Hermosa Beach Chamber of Commerce
Lomita Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance
Mountain Transit
Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce
Omnitrans
Orange County Business Council
Orange County Council of Governments
Palos Verdes Peninsula Chamber of Commerce
Redondo Beach Chamber of Commerce
Riverside Transit Agency
San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
San Gabriel Valley Association of Governments
South Bay Cities Council of Governments
Southern California Association of Governments
South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce
SunLine Transit Agency
Western Riverside Council of Governments

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

CivicWell
Compton Unified School District Leadership Long Beach
Love Beyond Limits
Mt. San Jacinto College
Pasadena City College
Pomona Valley Habitat for Humanity