

BOARD MEETING DATE: June 4, 2021

AGENDA NO. 16

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the April 2021 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, 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 April. The report includes: Major Events; Community Events/Public Meetings; Environmental Justice Update; AB 617; Speakers Bureau/Visitor Services; Communications Center; Public Information Center; Business Assistance; Media Relations; and Outreach to Community Groups and Governments.

## **MAJOR EVENTS (HOSTED AND SPONSORED)**

Each year, South Coast AQMD 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, improving air quality and the economy.

No major events were hosted or sponsored in April.

## **COMMUNITY EVENTS/PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Each year, South Coast AQMD staff engage with thousands of residents and stakeholders, providing valuable information about the agency, incentive programs, and ways individuals can help reduce air pollution through events and meetings sponsored solely 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;
- Clean air technologies and their deployment;
- Invitations or notices of conferences, seminars, workshops, and other public events;
- South Coast AQMD incentive programs;
- Ways to participate in South Coast AQMD's rules and policy development; and;
- Assistance in resolving air pollution-related problems.

South Coast AQMD staff attended and/or provided information and updates at the following April events and meetings:

### Why Healthy Air Matters (WHAM)

On April 13, 20, and 30, staff virtually presented WHAM air quality curriculum at Bassett High School in La Puente, Home Gardens Academy in Corona, and Servite High School in Anaheim, respectively. Class sizes varied, with up to 35 students.

### South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce

Staff virtually updated the South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce Legislative Committee on April 14. Updates included the CLEANair Furnace Rebate program and extension of the Emergency Order to temporarily suspend limits on cremations in Los Angeles County and Riverside County, or that have an agreement with the Los Angeles County Coroner.

### San Gabriel Valley City Manager's Association

Staff participated in the virtual San Gabriel Valley City Manager's Association meeting on April 21. Staff provided information on the Clean Air Program for Elementary Students (CAPES), the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust, and CLEANair Furnace Rebate Program.

### Orange County Council of Government (OCCOG) Board Meeting

Staff attended the OCCOG virtual monthly meeting on April 22. Staff reported on the SOON and Carl Moyer programs and other South Coast AQMD updates.

### Riverside Transit Agency, Transportation Now (T-NOW)

On April 28, staff attended the Riverside Transit Agency, T-NOW virtual meeting and presented on the new Carl Moyer Infrastructure opportunity, Proposition 1B Goods Movement Emission Reduction Projects, and the 2021 Advanced Clean Transportation (ACT) Expo.

### California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) Rural Section

On April 28, staff virtually presented insights and recommendations for “Effective Public Outreach and Community Engagement” at the CAPCOA Rural Section meeting. The presentation included a question and answer session with approximately 30 attendees.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UPDATE**

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

### Environmental Law Institute Webinar

On April 6, staff attended a webinar entitled, “Employing Critical Race Theory and Intersectionality in the Pursuit of Environmental Justice” hosted by the Environmental Law Institute. Panelists discussed the history of environmental justice, racism and issues related to indigenous peoples.

### The Mapping Inequality Project

On April 6, staff participated in a U.S. EPA Office of Environmental Justice webinar entitled “Redlining and the Climate Crisis.” The discussion focused on a recent study on the correlation of redlined areas and the location of urban heat islands.

### Pacoima Community Initiative (PCI) Meeting

Staff participated in the PCI virtual monthly meeting on April 9. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a virtual resource fair for families with students attending Pacoima Charter, Bright Star Schools, Ingenium Schools, Youth Policy Institute Charter Schools, and others.

### Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Ports Initiative Webinar

On April 9, staff attended a webinar entitled “EPA Community-Port Collaboration Resources to Address Diesel Pollution.” Speakers discussed EPA’s Community-Port Collaboration Toolkit and the Environmental Justice Small Grants program to support communities living near port and rail facilities.

### 7th Annual Environmental Justice Enforcement Symposium

On April 21, staff attended the virtual 7th Annual Environmental Justice Enforcement Symposium, hosted by California Safe Schools in partnership with the Los Angeles

Environmental Justice Network and CARB. The symposium focused on work with environmental justice communities and partnership building.

Young Leader Advisory Council (YLAC) Meeting

Staff convened a virtual quarterly meeting for YLAC on April 21. YLAC considered and proposed amendments to their charter and received a presentation on WHAM.

Environmental Justice Advisory Group (EJAG) Meeting

Staff held the quarterly EJAG meeting on April 23. Presentations included AB 617, South Coast AQMD incentive programs, WHAM, and the Environmental Justice Community Partnership.

Coachella Valley Environmental Justice Enforcement Task Force Meeting

Staff participated in the Coachella Valley Environmental Justice Enforcement Task Force's monthly meeting held virtually on April 28. Staff announced the upcoming AB 617 Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV) Community Steering Committee (CSC) meeting and provided an update on CAPES.

Special EJAG and YLAC Meeting

On April 29 and 30, special EJAG and YLAC virtual meetings were held on Proposed Rule 2305 - Warehouse Indirect Source Rule. EJAG and YLAC members voted to submit recommendation letters to the Board on the proposed rule.

**AB 617 UPDATE**

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

South Los Angeles (South LA) Community Meeting

On April 1, approximately 70 attendees participated in the South Los Angeles virtual meeting, co-hosted with Physicians for Social Responsibility – Los Angeles, Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education, and Watts Clean Air and Energy Committee. The discussion focused on community boundary considerations, air quality concerns, and CSC membership.

Wilmington, Carson, West Long Beach (WCWLB) CSC

Approximately 80 attendees participated in the WCWLB CSC virtual meeting on April 8. Staff led a discussion on AB 617 incentives budgeting, presented survey results from the incentive project prioritization activity, and gathered CSC input.

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

Approximately 30 attendees participated in the ELABHWC CSC virtual meeting on April 8. Staff led a discussion on AB 617 incentives budgeting, presented survey results from the incentive project prioritization activity and gathered CSC input.

ECV CSC

Approximately 41 attendees participated in a ECV CSC virtual meeting on April 9, as a follow-up to a prior meeting related to pesticides. CSC members and attendees participated in breakout rooms to discuss amendments to the CERP.

ECV CSC

Approximately 40 attendees participated in the ECV CSC virtual meeting on April 14. Staff led a discussion on AB 617 incentives budgeting, presented survey results from the incentive project prioritization activity, and gathered CSC input.

San Bernardino/Muscoy (SBM) CSC

Approximately 25 attendees participated in the SBM CSC virtual meeting on April 14. Staff led a discussion on AB 617 Incentives Budgeting, presented survey results from the incentive project prioritization activity, and gathered CSC input.

Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) CSC

Approximately 65 attendees participated in the SELA CSC virtual meeting on April 15. Staff led a discussion on AB 617 incentives budgeting, presented survey results from the incentive project prioritization activity, and gathered CSC input. Staff also presented on school air filtration prioritization criteria.

ECV CSC

Approximately 40 attendees participated in the ECV CSC virtual meeting on April 16. CSC Members discussed CERP amendments and alternatives to open agricultural burning.

WHAM

On April 22, staff conducted a virtual WHAM presentation at Elizabeth Learning Center in Cudahy. Students learned about South Coast AQMD, air quality and the AB 617 program.

Gateway Cities Council of Governments (Gateway Cities COG) and TreePeople

On April 22, staff met virtually with representatives of Gateway Cities COG and TreePeople to discuss collaboration on green spaces prioritized by the SELA CSC.

ECV CSC

On April 22, approximately 46 attendees participated in the ECV CSC virtual follow-up meeting for discussions on agricultural burning and CERP amendments.

Leuzinger High School, Lawndale – Environmental Careers Academy (EXP)

On April 29, staff virtually participated in Leuzinger High School’s Environmental Career Academy in partnership with the AB 617 WCWLB community. Staff partnered with EXP to present on environmental justice and air quality careers to approximately 15 high school sophomores. Students inquired about air quality careers and public outreach efforts. Staff provided information on South Coast AQMD resources, including the mobile application and the Board summer internship program.

**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 visits or speaker’s bureau requests in the month of April.

**COMMUNICATION CENTER STATISTICS**

The Communication Center handles calls on South Coast AQMD’s main line, the 1-800-CUT-SMOG® line, the Spanish line, and after-hours calls to each of those lines. Total calls received in the month of April were:

Calls to South Coast AQMD’s Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG® Line	2,601
Calls to South Coast AQMD’s Spanish-language Line	55
Total Calls	2,656

**PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTER STATISTICS**

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

Calls Received by PIC Staff	14
Calls to Automated System	691
Total Calls	705

  

Email Advisories Sent	26,772
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**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 provides personalized assistance to small businesses both over the telephone and via virtual on-site consultation, as summarized below for April.

- Provided permit application assistance to 203 companies; and,
- Processed 69 Air Quality Permit Checklists.

Types of businesses assisted:

Architecture Firms	Engineering Firms	Plating Facilities
Auto Body Shops	Gas Stations	Restaurants
Auto Repair Centers	Manufacturing Facilities	Retail Operations
Construction Firms	Offices	Warehouses
Dry Cleaners		

**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 April reports are listed below:

Major Media Interactions	100
Press Releases	10
News Carousel	6

**Major Media Topics:**

- **Warehouse ISR:**
  - Staff participated in interviews with the Los Angeles Times and NBC News regarding warehouses and their impact on communities.
  - Thomson Reuters requested an in-person interview in mid-May. Awaiting additional information prior to scheduling.
  - Chapman University, IE Business Daily, Voice of OC and KPCC requested information on the Warehouse ISR. Voice of OC reached out with multiple requests and responses were provided.
  - KPCC requested a warehouse tour. South Coast AQMD could not accommodate the request for the tour and provided written responses to the reporter’s questions.

- **Windblown Dust Advisories:** Pitches were sent to local news outlets on the windblown dust advisories on April 4, 13 and 24 impacting portions of the South Coast Air Basin and Coachella Valley, resulting in coverage from television, radio and online outlets.
- **North Start Hockey Arena:** The Desert Sun inquired about the proposed North Start hockey arena and emission standards in the Coachella Valley. Written responses were provided.
- **Rendering Facilities:** A student reporter with California State University, Los Angeles submitted questions regarding rendering facilities. Responses were provided.
- **Relocations of U.S. Army Reserve Passenger Jets:** The Los Angeles Times – Orange County inquired if South Coast AQMD had comments on the U.S. Army Reserve decision to relocate four passenger jets from Texas to Los Alamitos. A written response was provided.
- **Salton Sea Air Monitoring:** Bloomberg requested an interview or presentation slides on potential air monitoring efforts near the Salton Sea, based on a staff presentation at the State Water Board Salton Sea workshop. A copy of the presentation was provided.
- **Special Election:** Pitches were sent to local news outlets including the press release on the Board special election.
- **Long Beach Air Quality:** A California State University, Long Beach student reporter inquired about air quality changes in Long Beach during the pandemic. A written response was provided.
- **Murphy Drill Site:** The Los Angeles Times submitted questions regarding NOV's at the Murphy drill site. Written responses were provided.
- **Lawn and Garden Equipment:** Altadena Heritage Newsletter requested information on particulate matter emissions from lawn and garden equipment. Written responses were provided. University of Southern California Communications requested clarification regarding a quote comparing emissions from lawn and garden equipment to passenger vehicles. A written response was provided.
- **Off-Road Equipment:** Board Chair-Elect Benoit participated in an interview with Volvo CE on technological advancements in electric construction equipment for a thought leader piece.
- **Landfills:** Reuters requested an interview to discuss methane air monitoring efforts at landfills. A written response was provided, and the reporter was referred to CARB for additional information.
- **ALA State of the Air Report:** Pitches were sent to local news outlets regarding the ALA State of the Air report, resulting in online coverage. Staff participated in an interview with ABC regarding the report.



- **World Logistics Center:** A Riverside City College student reporter inquired about South Coast AQMD's involvement with the World Logistics Center. Requested more specific questions.
- **Meeting Webcasts:** Staff participated in an interview with Voice of OC on simulcasting public meetings in multiple languages.
- **Exide:** KCRW/NPR requested an interview to discuss community impacts near the Exide battery recycling plant. Looking into the request.
- **Air Quality and Health:** Pitched information about the South Coast AQMD mobile app to Fitbit for a story on public health, exercise and air pollution. Awaiting a response.
- **All American Asphalt:** Voice of OC requested an interview on air monitoring efforts near All American Asphalt since the March public meeting. A written response was provided due to the short deadline.
- **CIO Interview:** iHeartMedia requested an interview with our CIO for *The Restless Ones* podcast regarding his career. An interview was scheduled for early May.

#### News Releases:

- **Under Volvo LIGHTS program, Last-Mile Delivery Fleet QCD Adds Volvo VNR Electric Truck – April 1, 2021:** Shared a Volvo press release regarding QCD receiving its first zero-emission, battery electric truck.
- **South Coast AQMD Governing Board Elections - April 2, 2021 (English and Spanish):** Announced the election of Chair-Elect Ben Benoit and Vice-Chair Elect Vanessa Delgado.
- **South Coast AQMD Issues Windblown Dust Advisory for Portions of the South Coast Air Basin and Coachella Valley – April 4, 13, 24, 2021 (English and Spanish):** Informed residents of windblown dust conditions in the South Coast Air Basin and Coachella Valley.
- **Under Volvo LIGHTS program, Saia takes Delivery of Two Zero-emission VNR Electric Trucks – April 21, 2021:** Saia LTL Freight takes delivery of two Zero-emission VNR electric trucks which are the first to be deployed in Saia's fleet.

#### Social Media Notable posts:

- **New Board Chair/Vice-Chair (4/2):** 7,324 Twitter Impressions.
- **AQ Forecast (4/13):** 2,925 Twitter Impressions.
- **Notable posts: Prop 1B (4/15):** 3,121 Twitter Impressions

**News Carousel:**

- **Emergency Order for Crematoriums Extended for Los Angeles and Riverside counties – April 2, 13 and 27 2021:** Links to the latest extension of the Emergency Order for crematoriums.
- **Check out our new video on CAPES – South Coast AQMD’s educational program for elementary school students – April 16, 2021:** Shared the new CAPES video
- **April 22 is Earth Day - Here are 10 things you can do to help clean the air – April 22, 2021:** Shared healthy air habits for Earth Day.
- **Install a CLEANair furnace and get up to \$1500 in refunds – April 30, 2021:** Links to the Clean Air Furnace Rebate page.

**OUTREACH TO COMMUNITY GROUPS AND FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

Due to COVID-19, outreach was conducted virtually in April, utilizing web based and other technologies to communicate with elected officials or staff from the following cities:

Alhambra	Huntington Beach	Rosemead
Anaheim	Industry	San Bernardino
Arcadia	Irvine	San Dimas
Azusa	Irwindale	San Fernando
Baldwin Park	La Cañada Flintridge	San Gabriel
Big Bear Lakes	La Habra	San Marino
Bradbury	La Puente	Santa Ana
Brea	Laguna Niguel	Santa Clarita
Buena Park	Lake Forest	Seal Beach
Burbank	Manhattan Beach	Sierra Madre
Claremont	Mission Viejo	South El Monte
Covina	Monrovia	South Pasadena
Diamond Bar	Monterey Park	Stanton
Duarte	Newport Beach	Temple City
El Monte	Pasadena	Tustin
Fontana	Placentia	Walnut
Fullerton	Pomona	West Covina
Garden Grove	Redondo Beach	Yorba Linda
Glendora	Riverside	

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

- U.S. Representative Tony Cárdenas
- U.S. Representative Judy Chu
- U.S. Representative Mike Levin
- U.S. Representative Alan Lowenthal
- U.S. Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard
- Senator David Min
- Senator Josh Newman
- Senator Anthony Portantino
- Senator Henry Stern
- Assembly Member Marc Berman
- Assembly Member Lisa Calderon
- Assembly Member Laura Friedman
- Assembly Member Cristina Garcia
- Assembly Member Eduardo Garcia
- Assembly Member Chris Holden
- Assembly Majority Leader Eloise Gómez Reyes
- Assembly Member Blanca Rubio

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

Anaheim Chamber of Commerce  
Baldwin Hills Community Advisory Panel  
California Fuel Cell Partnership  
California High Speed Rail  
CAPCOA  
CARB  
Coachella Valley Association of Governments  
Department of Toxic Substance Control  
Gateway Cities Council of Governments  
Huntington Beach Chamber of Commerce  
Inland Action  
Inland Empire Chamber of Commerce  
Inland Valley Development Agency  
League of California Cities, Orange County Division  
Las Virgenes-Malibu Council of Governments  
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors  
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health  
Los Angeles County Department of Public Works  
Newport Beach Chamber of Commerce  
Omnitrans  
Ontario International Airport  
Orange Chamber of Commerce  
Orange County Board of Supervisors  
Orange Chamber of Commerce  
Orange County Council of Governments

Orange County Transportation Authority  
Riverside County Board of Supervisors  
Riverside County Transportation Commission  
Riverside Transit Agency  
San Bernardino County Transportation Authority  
San Bernardino International Airport  
San Fernando Valley Council of Governments  
San Gabriel Valley City Managers Association  
San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments  
Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce  
SCAG  
South Bay Cities Council of Governments  
South Orange County Economic Coalition  
South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce  
Western Community Energy  
Western Riverside Council of Governments  
Young Professionals in Energy, Los Angeles Chapter

Staff represented South Coast AQMD in April and/or provided updates or a presentation to the following community and educational groups and organizations:

Basset High School, La Puente  
Breathe Southern California  
California State University, San Bernardino  
Clean Air Coalition  
Garey High School, Pomona  
Home Gardens Academy, Corona  
Huntington Beach Union Unified School District  
Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles  
Servite High School, Anaheim  
Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education  
Watts Clean Air and Energy Committee