

BOARD MEETING DATE: April 5, 2024

AGENDA NO. 14

REPORT: Legislative, Public Affairs and Media Report

SYNOPSIS: This report highlights the February 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 February. 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 February.

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 February events and meetings:

Orange County Business Council

On February 2, staff attended Orange County Business Council's Government Affairs Committee meeting to promote funding opportunities on South Coast AQMD's Grants and Bids webpage.

Sustainable Claremont

On February 5, staff attended Sustainable Claremont's Dialogue Series to present an overview on South Coast AQMD incentive opportunities and Why Healthy Air Matters (WHAM) middle and high school education program.

Upland Chamber of Commerce

On February 8, staff attended the Upland Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee meeting to promote the 34th Annual Clean Air Awards and updates on incentive funding programs.

Greater Riverside Chamber of Commerce

On February 9, staff participated in the Greater Riverside Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee meeting to promote 34th Annual Clean Air Awards and share the latest Advisor newsletter.

San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments

On February 13, staff participated in San Gabriel Valley Council of Government's Energy Working Group meeting to provide updates on the extended deadline for Carl Moyer's Zero-Emission Infrastructure Program and South Coast AQMD's press release on U.S. EPA's proposed disapproval of our plan to meet the federal ozone standard.

San Bernardino County Transportation Authority

On February 14, staff attended San Bernardino County Transportation Authority's General Policy Committee meeting to promote the 34th Annual Clean Air Awards and updates on incentive funding programs.

Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce

On February 15, staff attended the Harbor Association of Industry and Commerce's Government Affairs Committee meeting to provide updates on Proposed Amended Rule 1118 and the Governing Board Summer Internship Program.

Oso Fit Fun Run & Community Health Fair

On February 24, staff hosted an informational booth at the Oso Fit Run and Community Health Fair. Staff distributed information on how to file an air quality complaint, the South Coast AQMD Mobile App, Advisor newsletter, and the residential Electric Lawn Mower Rebate program.

American Lung Association

On February 25, staff participated in the American Lung Association's Fight for Clean Air at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum by providing attendees with information on the residential Electric Lawn Mower Rebate program, Wildfire Safety Tips, Advisor newsletter, and how to file an air quality complaint.

San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership

On February 28, staff attended the San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership's Legislative Action Committee meeting to share updates on the Governing Board Summer Internship program and other air quality updates.

La Sierra University's Annual Grad School and Career Fair

On February 29, staff hosted an informational booth at the La Sierra University EXPO 2024. Staff provided information on the Governing Board Summer Internship program, how to file an air quality complaint, the South Coast AQMD Mobile App and Advisor newsletter.

Environmental Justice Update

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

California Air Resources Board

On February 9, staff participated in CARB's pre-solicitation meeting for the Access Clean California project. The project is an existing outreach effort that helps streamline access to California Climate Investments' consumer-facing, equity-focused clean transportation, and clean energy incentive programs for low-income and disadvantaged communities.

U.S. EPA Region 9 Roadshow

On February 16, staff participated in U.S. EPA's Region 9 Roadshow meeting in San Bernardino to discuss Inflation Reduction Act funding opportunities and to brainstorm on how to advance environmental justice in the region.

U.S. EPA Bringing Benefits Webinar

On February 20 and 22, staff participated in U.S. EPA's Bringing Clean Energy Benefits webinars. U.S. EPA showcased successful state and local models for energy efficiency and renewable energy programs to under-resourced communities as well as providing information on community partnerships and outreach.

Environmental Justice Advisory Group

The first quarterly Environmental Justice Advisory Group meeting was held on February 23. Staff presented an update on 2023 State and Federal legislation, Lower-Emission School Bus program, and AB 617 Residential Air Filtration measures.

San Diego State University

On February 29, staff participated in San Diego State University's Center for Community Energy and Environmental Justice webinar on Unveiling Energy Justice: Exploring the Basics. The webinar provided an overview on energy reliability, community impacts, and examples of energy justice projects.

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.

Nova School of Science and Technology

On February 6, staff met virtually with a professor from Nova School of Science and Technology located in Portugal on air quality sensors, South Coast AQMD's real-time air quality map and wildfire smoke advisories.

Bonita High School

On February 21, staff presented to Bonita High School's Advanced Placement Environmental Science students on the challenges of enforcing air quality standards in Southern California.

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 February are summarized below:

Calls to South Coast AQMD's Main Line and 1-800-CUT-SMOG®	2797
Calls to South Coast AQMD's Spanish Line	24
Clean Air Connections	5
Total Calls	2,826

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 February is summarized below:

Calls Received by PIC	40
Calls to Automated System	142
Total Calls	182
Visitor Transactions	135
Email Advisories Sent	22,380

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 February.

- Provided permit application assistance to 184 companies, and
- Processed 97 Air Quality Permit Checklists.

Types of businesses assisted:

Architecture	Dry Cleaners	Restaurants
Auto Body Shops	Engineering	Warehouses
Beauty Salons	Manufacturing Facilities	
Construction	Offices	

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 February report is listed below:

Major Media Interactions	40
Press Releases	2
News Carousel	4

Major Media Topics:

- **Lawn & Garden Rebate Program:** 99% Invisible Podcast interviewed South Coast AQMD’s Vice Chair to discuss the air quality aspects of the statewide gas-powered leaf blower ban and the impacts of the Residential Electric Lawn & Garden Rebate Program.
- **U.S. EPA Actions:** Staff participated in an interview with China Global Television Network America to discuss U.S. EPA’s proposed rejection of South Coast AQMD’s ozone plan and participated in an interview with Civil Eats to discuss U.S. EPA’s tighter PM standards.
- **PM2.5 Pollution:** Los Angeles Times requested information on how much air pollution is attributed to PM2.5, ahead of U.S. EPA’s announcement to tighten standards. Response was provided.
- **State Implementation Plan:** Inside Washington News requested letters about PM2.5 referenced in the Federal Register. Response was provided.

- **Climate Change Report:** New York Times requested a comment on a statement from a report on climate change published by First Street. Response was provided.
- **Rule 317.1 Nonattainment Fees:** Inside Washington Publishers News requested information on Rule 317.1. Response was provided.
- **Chiquita Canyon Landfill:** CBS News requested images that were used in a Los Angeles Times article on Chiquita Canyon Landfill. Images were provided. Newsweek followed up with questions regarding air monitoring surrounding the landfill and a response was provided. NTD News inquired about Chiquita Canyon Landfill's strong odors and leachate (liquid) production, whether it poses any health or environmental risks, and whether the landfill failed to meet standards. Response was provided. KCRW 89.9 requested information on Chiquita Canyon Landfill. Response was provided. Los Angeles Times requested information on other landfills. Response was provided.
- **Warehouse Indirect Source Rule:** AEM.GREEN requested an interview to discuss the Warehouse Indirect Source Rule for a video and fact sheet to be distributed. Provided South Coast AQMD videos and informational items.
- **Hyperion:** ABC7 and KCBS/KCAL inquired about odor complaints related to Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant in El Segundo. Responses were provided. ABC7 followed up on whether the cause of the odor had been identified, and if there were any additional Notices of Violation since their last inquiry. Response was provided.
- **Silver Iodide:** ABC7 inquired about use of silver iodide for cloud seeding and health impacts. Reporter was referred to the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, who is the lead on a study about cloud seeding and silver iodide, and the Orange County Health Care Agency.
- **Air Quality Education:** A boy scout requested information on air quality and how young people can help to clean our air. Provided links to Why Healthy Air Matters program resources and information about our agency.
- **Air Filtration Media Event (2/29):** Pitched to local media outlets to attend event.
- **Metrolink Press Release (2/21):** Pitched to local media outlets.

News Releases:

- **South Coast AQMD invests in greener future with funding of cleaner Metrolink rail vehicles (February 21, 2024)** – Informed the public of approved funding for Metrolink to purchase zero-emission rail vehicles.
- **Visual Media Opportunity: South Coast AQMD and IQAir to Install Air Filtration Units at Los Angeles School, Announce more than 100 Additional Schools – February 29, 2024 (English and Spanish)** - Announced an opportunity for the media to cover the installation of air filtration systems at a local public school.

Social Media Posts:

- [AQ Forecast \(2/2\)](#): 797 Twitter Impressions
--RT by @LAFDtalk, @805weather
- [AQ Forecast \(2/11\)](#): 1,041 Twitter Impressions
--RT by @LAFDtalk
- [AQ Forecast \(2/19\)](#): 947 Twitter Impressions
--RT by @LAFDtalk
- [Metrolink Release \(2/21\)](#): 5,831 Twitter Impressions
--Liked by @SupervisorFoley

News Carousel:

- **“Keep up with the Latest News from South Coast AQMD”** – Linked to Jan/Feb Advisor newsletter webpage.
- **“College students, learn more about how South Coast AQMD cleans the air through a paid summer internship”** – Linked to program information webpage.
- **“Hurry! VW Program solicitations close on 2/23 for the Combustion Freight & Marine Projects and Zero-Emission Class 8 Freight & Port Drayage Trucks categories”** – Linked to application page.
- **“JETSI Partners Celebrate Milestone as NFI Deploys 50 zero-emission Trucks and Powers up Electric Charging Depot”** – Linked to article webpage.

Outreach to Community Groups and Federal, State and Local Governments

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

- U.S. Senator Laphonza Butler
- U.S. Senator Alex Padilla
- 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 Robert Garcia
- U.S. Representative Young Kim
- U.S. Representative Mike Levin
- U.S. Representative Jay Obernolte
- U.S. Representative Grace Napolitano
- U.S. Representative Adam Schiff
- U.S. Representative Michelle Steel
- U.S. Representative Mark Takano
- U.S. Representative Norma Torres
- Senator Bob Archuleta
- Senator Catherine Blakespear
- Senator Josh Newman
- Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas
- Assemblymember Issac Bryan
- Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo
- Assemblymember Lisa Calderon
- Assemblymember Diane Dixon
- Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia
- Assemblymember Cottie Petrie-Norris
- Assemblymember Eloise Gomez Reyes
- Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva
- Assemblymember Avelino Valencia

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

Agoura Hills	Duarte	Long Beach
Alhambra	Eastvale	Los Alamitos
Aliso Viejo	El Monte	Los Angeles
Anaheim	El Segundo	Lynwood
Arcadia	Fontana	Malibu
Artesia	Fountain Valley	Manhattan Beach
Azusa	Fullerton	Maywood
Baldwin Park	Garden Grove	Menifee
Banning	Gardena	Mission Viejo
Beaumont	Glendora	Monrovia
Bell	Hawaiian Gardens	Montebello
Bell Gardens	Hawthorne	Monterey Park
Bellflower	Hemet	Moreno Valley
Beverly Hills	Hermosa Beach	Murrieta
Big Bear Lake	Hidden Hills	Newport Beach
Bradbury	Huntington Park	Norco
Brea	Industry	Norwalk
Buena Park	Inglewood	Ontario
Calabasas	Irwindale	Orange
Calimesa	Irvine	Palm Desert
Canyon Lake	Jurupa Valley	Palos Verdes Estates
Carson	La Cañada Flintridge	Paramount
Cerritos	La Habra	Pasadena
Chino Hills	La Habra Heights	Perris
Claremont	La Mirada	Pico Rivera
Coachella	La Palma	Placentia
Colton	La Puente	Pomona
Commerce	La Verne	Rancho Palos Verdes
Compton	Laguna Beach	Rancho Santa Margarita
Corona	Laguna Hills	Redondo Beach
Costa Mesa	Laguna Niguel	Riverside
Covina	Laguna Woods	Rolling Hills
Cudahy	Lake Elsinore	Rolling Hills Estates
Culver City	Lake Forest	Rosemead
Cypress	Lakewood	San Clemente
Dana Point	La Puente	San Dimas
Diamond Bar	Lawndale	San Gabriel
Downey	Lomita	San Jacinto

San Juan Capistrano
San Marino
Santa Ana
Santa Clarita
Santa Fe Springs
Santa Monica
Seal Beach
Sierra Madre
Signal Hill
South El Monte

South Gate
South Pasadena
Stanton
Temecula
Temple City
Torrance
Tustin
Vernon
Villa Park
Walnut

West Covina
West Hollywood
Westlake Village
Westminster
Whittier
Wildomar
Yorba Linda

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

Alhambra Chamber of Commerce
Arcadia Chamber of Commerce
Association of California Cities, Orange County
Big Bear Chamber of Commerce
Brea Chamber of Commerce
Burbank Chamber of Commerce
Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Burbank Airport Authority
CalEPA
California Department of Insurance
Caltrans
CARB
Carson Chamber of Commerce
El Monte South El Monte Chamber of Commerce
Foothill Transit
Gardena Valley Chamber of Commerce
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Glendale Chamber of Commerce
Glendale Environmental Coalition
Glendora Chamber of Commerce
Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority
Hermosa Beach Chamber of Commerce
Inglewood Airport Area Chamber of Commerce
Inland Empire Resource Conservation District
International Longshore and Warehouse Union
League of California Cities, Los Angeles County Division
Lomita Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation
Manhattan Beach Chamber of Commerce

METRO

Metropolitan Water District

Mountain Transit

Omnitrans

Orange County Board of Supervisors

Orange County Business Council

Orange County Council of Governments

Orange County Transportation Authority

Pacific Merchant Shipping Association

Palos Verdes Peninsula Chamber of Commerce

Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy

Port of Los Angeles

Port of Long Beach

Redondo Beach Chamber of Commerce

Regional Chamber of Commerce San Gabriel Valley

San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors

San Bernardino County Fire Protection District

San Bernardino County Transportation Authority

San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy

San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority

San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments

San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership

San Gabriel Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District

San Pedro Chamber of Commerce

Santa Clarita Chamber of Commerce

SCAG

South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

South Bay Parkland Conservancy

South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce

Southern California Regional Energy Network

Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Energy, Efficiency, and Renewable Energy

U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Transportation Policy and

Research & Technology

U.S. EPA, Office of Air and Radiation

Upland Chamber of Commerce

Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District

Valley Association of Industry and Commerce

Western Municipal Water District

Western Riverside Council of Governments

White House Office of Climate Policy

Yucaipa Valley Water District

In February, staff represented South Coast AQMD and/or provided updates or a presentation to the following community and educational groups and organizations:
Academy of Scientific Exploration at Cesar E. Chavez Learning Academies

Active San Gabriel Valley
American Lung Association
Asian Pacific Islander Forward Movement
California State University, Fullerton
California State University, Dominguez Hills
California State University, Los Angeles
California State University, San Bernardino
Castaic Union School District
City of Hope
CivicSpark
Clean Power Alliance
Crafton Hills College
Del Amo Action Committee
Flintridge Preparatory School
Glendale Environmental Coalition
Grades of Green
La Sierra University
Legacy LA
Pacific Environment
Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy
Pasadena City College
Pasadena Neighborhood Connections
Pasadena Unified School District
San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps
Santa Clarita Valley International
Sierra Club
South Bay Parkland Conservancy
Sustainable Claremont
The Salvation Army USA
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, Riverside
Whittier College
William S. Hart Union High School District
Wilmington Neighborhood Council
Youth Science Center, Hacienda Heights