

Air Quality Priority: Open Burning and Illegal Dumping

Purpose of Document

The purpose of this document is to summarize the Eastern Coachella Valley (ECV) Community Steering Committee (CSC) air quality concerns and provide potential strategies and actions to address these concerns in the Community Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP). The CSC will determine the final strategies and actions proposed in the CERP. The ECV CERP will be considered for adoption by the South Coast AQMD Governing Board.

Community Concerns (CC)

The ECV CSC expressed air quality concerns about open burning and illegal dumping. The concerns raised by the CSC include:

- CC-1 Adverse health effects of air pollution from open burning (i.e., smoke, particulate matter (pm), potential pesticides being burned).
- CC-2 Emissions from burning occurring near schools, childcare centers, and homes, and the health impacts on those community members.
- CC-3 Burns that are not permitted and burn uncontrollably (e.g., the 2019 50-acre mulch fire at a recycling center in thermal).
- CC-4 Open burning (e.g., agricultural and non-agricultural) occurring on tribal lands, which falls outside of South Coast AQMD’s jurisdiction, and are therefore not subject to South Coast AQMD’s open burning regulation.
- CC-5 Emissions from permitted agricultural burning, where there may be opportunities to further reduce emissions (e.g., rule amendment, incentivize alternatives to burning).
- CC-6 Waste is being illegally dumped because of a lack of regulatory enforcement and may subsequently catch fire.

Emissions from Agricultural Burning¹

2017 Criteria Pollutants (in tons per year)*

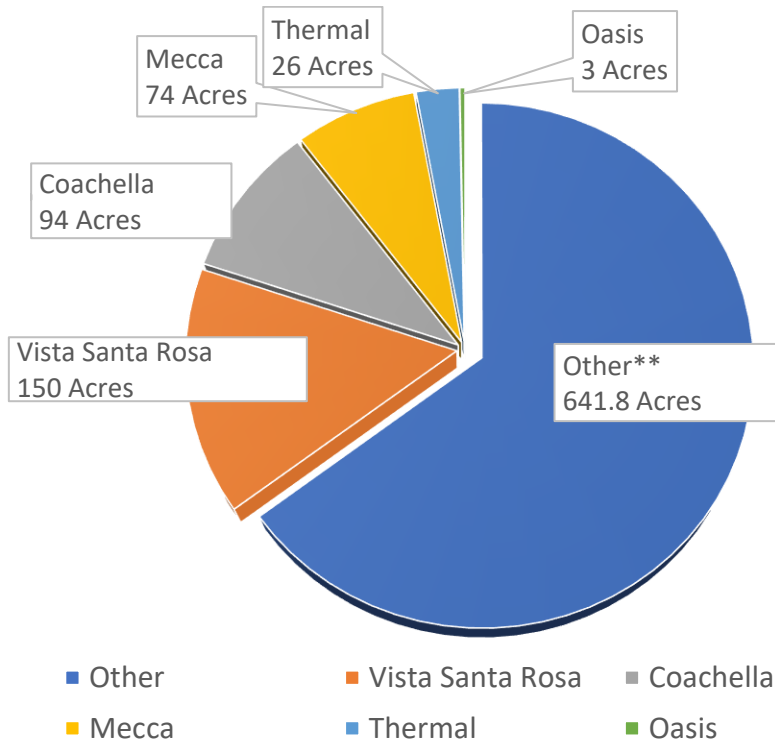
	VOC** (tons/year)	NOx** (tons/year)	CO** (tons/year)	PM10** (tons/year)	PM2.5** (tons/year)
Agricultural Burning	2.15	24.87	1.43	2.97	2.82

*Emissions data from 2017 was developed by South Coast AQMD staff.

**VOC= volatile organic compounds; NOx=oxides of nitrogen; CO=carbon monoxide; PM10=particulate matter of less than or equal to 10 microns in diameter (inhalable PM); PM2.5=particulate matter less than or equal to 2.5 microns in diameter (fine PM).

¹ The information in this section was provided to the CSC in the Open Burning (agriculture and non-agriculture) Infographic: [Open Burning \(agriculture and non-agriculture\)](#)

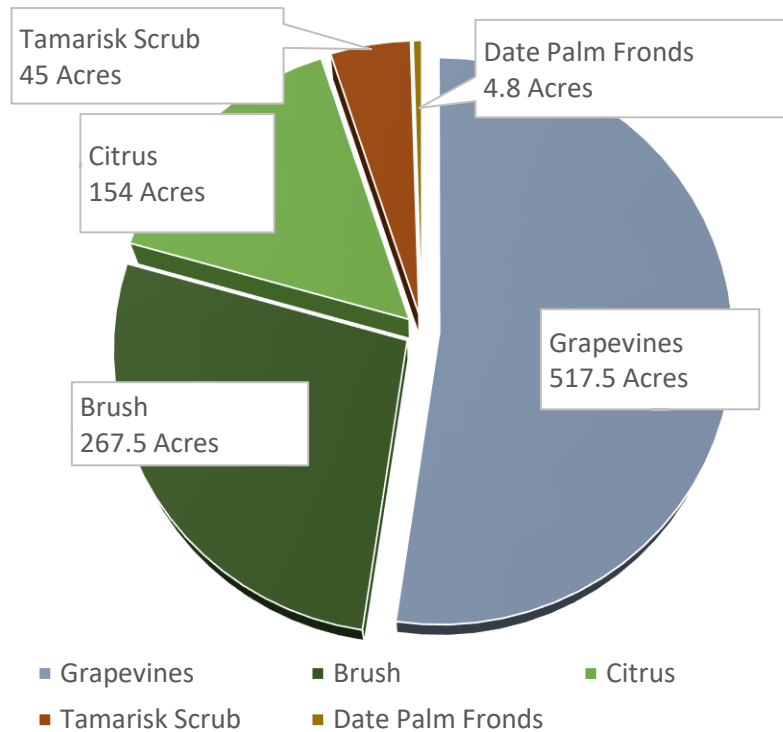
Total Acres Burned by Location – Year 2017*



*Data does not include burns on tribal lands, nor burns that are not permitted by the South Coast AQMD (e.g., illegal burns).

**Areas outside cities and census designated places.

Type of Material Burned in Acres – Year 2017



Potential Strategies and Actions to Address Open Burning and Illegal Dumping

Below are potential strategies and actions to address CSC concerns. The final strategies and actions in the proposed CERP will be determined by the CSC. The proposed CERP will be considered for adoption by the South Coast AQMD Governing Board.

Goals:	Potential Strategies and Actions
Reduce emissions from open burning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue emission reductions from open burning by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developing a list of available technologies, best practices and alternatives to be distributed to farm owners and operators, and ○ Assessing the feasibility of new requirements for open burning (e.g., alternatives to open burning of agricultural waste) based on the list <p>Community Concern(s) Addressed: CC-1, CC-2, CC-5</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue existing and pursue additional collaborative partnerships with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ local tribes to identify opportunities to reduce open burning through outreach, enforcement, and/or open burning regulations (e.g., technical guidance, burn and no-burn days, permitting system) ○ Riverside County Fire Department to conduct focused enforcement at illegal burn sites ○ Combustible Material Task Force to support green waste complaint-reporting and follow-up investigations <p>Community Concern(s) Addressed: CC-1, CC-2, CC-3, CC-4, CC-6</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue funding opportunities for equipment to be used as an alternative to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ agricultural burning (e.g., chippers, grinders, digesters, air curtain destructors, etc.) ○ emergency burning for freeze-prevention (e.g., fan systems) <p>Community Concern(s) Addressed: CC-1, CC-4, CC-5</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct outreach to farm owners/operators/workers to encourage best burn practices/methods to reduce emissions (e.g., conservation burning, cleaner piles, no rolling, cleaner ignition device) <p>Community Concern(s) Addressed: CC-1</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide community members and farm owners/operators/workers information (e.g., workshops/presentations) relating to rules and regulations on open burning and ways to report burning <p>Community Concern(s) Addressed: CC-1, CC-2, CC-3, CC-6</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deploy low-cost sensors to establish a monitoring network to identify illegal burning emissions and conduct follow-up investigations, as needed <p>Community Concern(s) Addressed: CC-1, CC-2, CC-3, CC-5, CC-6</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue collaborative partnerships with:

<p>Reduce exposure from open burning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Riverside County Fire Department to develop informational materials relating to open burning, fire safety, and air pollution ○ community organizations to distribute informational materials relating to open burning, fire safety, and air pollution in the community (e.g., Growing Coachella Valley, Alianza, Leadership Counsel, Communities for a New California) <p>Community Concern(s) Addressed: CC-1, CC-3, CC-4, CC-5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pursue opportunities to develop an online system (e.g., notification system, database) that informs the community when South Coast AQMD permitted burning is expected to occur <p>Community Concern(s) Addressed: CC-1, CC-5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pursue funding opportunities to install air filtration systems at schools, and homes located near frequent burn sites <p>Community Concern(s) Addressed: CC-1, CC-2, CC-6</p>
<p>Improve monitoring network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deploy low-cost sensors to establish a monitoring network to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ gain a better understanding of the locations, frequency, and magnitude of smoke impacts from legal and illegal burning occurring in the community ○ identify pollution hotspots and gather more information to identify potential source(s) of emissions ○ improve public information on PM2.5 levels in the community (e.g. better characterize the spatial and temporal variability of PM2.5 in the community) <p>Community Concern(s) Addressed: CC-1, CC-2, CC-3, CC-4, CC-5, CC-6</p>
<p>Reduce illegal dumping</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pursue collaborative partnerships with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Riverside County Code Enforcement to conduct focused enforcement of illegal dumping laws and to improve reporting system ○ Riverside County Fire Department to notify them of potential fire hazards resulting from illegal dumping ○ community-based organizations to establish a complaint-report tracking system to better track illegal dumping activities <p>Community Concern(s) Addressed: CC-1, CC-2, CC-3, CC-4, CC-6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct outreach to community members and farm workers on how to report illegal dumping activities <p>Community Concern(s) Addressed: CC-1, CC-3, CC-4, CC-6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pursue funding opportunities to provide funding for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ waste collection services (agricultural and non-agricultural waste that has been dumped illegally) ○ non-agricultural waste disposal (e.g., tire disposal) <p>Community Concern(s) Addressed: CC-1, CC-3, CC-6</p>