

SOUTH COAST AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT



FINAL 2016

AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN



MARCH 2017

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Dedicated in remembrance of

John J. Benoit

Supervisor, Fourth District, Riverside County

South Coast Air Quality Management District Governing Board Member 2010–2016

The 2016 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) is dedicated to the late SCAQMD Governing Board Member John J. Benoit, who actively participated in the development of the 2016 AQMP as well as the extensive public dialog on its contents.

“The basic theme of this year’s AQMP is to reach specific air quality goals in an integrated way, through collaboration and innovation, while continuing to support our region’s growth and livability. What this means is, as a resident of the South Coast Air Basin, you’re part of the team that will oversee how this plan is finalized and carried out.”

- From Supervisor Benoit’s opening remarks
at a July 14, 2016 Public Workshop in Palm Desert
on the Draft 2016 AQMP

Supervisor Benoit was a champion for clean air and a positive force on the Governing Board throughout his term of service. He was highly respected by his colleagues and will be greatly missed. His legacy will live on, as a role model for strong leadership toward balanced clean air progress.

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Preface

Southern California's historic battles with poor air quality are well documented. Since the mid-20th century, the greater Los Angeles region has been at the forefront of air pollution science, low-emissions technology development, and innovative air quality regulation. As long-time residents of the South Coast Air Basin can attest, these efforts have led to substantial and noticeable improvements in air quality and public health, all during a period of dramatic increases in economic activity, population, and vehicle miles traveled. Technological advances in pollution controls, pollution prevention, clean fuels, alternative energy, and combustion processes have been and will be the key to past and future progress. Less than two decades ago, newly established PM_{2.5} standards seemed unattainable. However, through strong emission reduction efforts at the local, state and federal levels, the Basin has met the original standards and is on track to meet the revised, more stringent standards by their statutory deadlines.

Despite these successes, the health of our residents continues to be seriously affected by the poor air quality that confronts the region. Our unique topography and meteorology, along with emissions from millions of vehicles and a thriving goods movement industry, continue to produce the worst ozone pollution in the nation. New scientific information on the health impacts of air pollution has led to progressively more stringent air quality standards to better protect public health. Limited local authority to control certain sectors of mobile sources that account for the majority of emissions poses policy challenges. Future climate variation and the effect of drought conditions add further uncertainties. Finally, as the most cost-effective emissions controls are implemented, it becomes harder to identify and implement new cost-effective control measures while minimizing impacts to the local economy and businesses.

Existing rules, regulations and programs are not sufficient to fulfill the South Coast Air Quality Management District's public health mandate. In the next seven to fifteen years, the region must achieve substantial additional reductions in nitrogen oxide emissions in order to attain the ozone standards by the approaching deadlines. Previous Air Quality Management Plans have relied heavily on unspecified future technological developments to get us there. But given the short time horizons and the emission reduction needs, there is now a need to develop specific pathways to attainment in order to clarify and accelerate the required actions to achieve our air quality goals. These actions necessarily include aggressive new regulatory approaches, and a significant expansion of incentives programs. More stringent mobile source emission standards are desperately needed to spur further development and production of zero- and near-zero emission technologies. But even with more stringent standards, natural turnover of existing vehicles and equipment will not be fast enough to achieve the requisite technology penetration. Therefore, regulations and incentives to accelerate fleet turnover in the Basin are a major element of this Plan. While previous incentive programs have been very successful in achieving real emission reductions, the incentive funding levels needed for attainment are significantly more than what has been allocated to date. Securing the necessary funding will not be easy, and will require coordinated advocacy and outreach, integrated planning, coalition building, key partnerships, and political will.

Fortunately, there is reason to be optimistic. For the first time, the specific technologies needed to achieve the ozone standards are well-defined. Many are or will be commercially available within the next few years. New technology costs have dropped and will continue to do so with refinements and higher-volume production. We can now envision future technology deployment scenarios that are consistent with attainment.

When the public, health advocates, business stakeholders, and policy makers come together and express that the national poster-child of poor air quality can actually achieve what was once thought impossible, when we articulate the benefits to public health, the local economy, and the attractiveness of the region, and when we demonstrate how disparate interests can unite in a common cause to solve environmental problems, the investments in our future should follow. This 2016 Air Quality Management Plan provides the basis to continue and strengthen the region's campaign for clean air and a healthful future for our residents.