


Board Agenda Item

TO: Air Pollution Control District Board

FROM: Aeron Arlin Genet, Air Pollution Control Officer 

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SUBJECT: Update on Public Outreach Activities

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file this update on District outreach activities.

BACKGROUND:

The District conducts public outreach throughout Santa Barbara County to provide air quality information. This regular agenda item will provide an update on recent outreach efforts by District staff since the previous Board meeting on March 16.

DISCUSSION:

The District uses a variety of methods to share information about air quality and District programs. Those methods include the District website, news releases, air quality alerts, social media (Twitter, Instagram, and Nextdoor), school and civic group presentations, interagency coalitions, events and festivals, media interviews, and phone calls with the public. Efforts are made to provide information in English and Spanish. For this recurring agenda item, outreach activities will be organized into the following categories as needed: Agency Awareness, Community Programs, and Interagency and Regulatory Support Efforts. This update covers outreach efforts from the docket deadline of the March meeting to present.

Agency Awareness

- **Media Relations:** The District regularly receives questions from the media regarding specific District programs as well as general air quality topics. During this time period, media interest in the District included the following coverage:
 - Prescribed burns: *KEYT* and *KSBY*
 - Santa Barbara Earth Day Festival: *Edhat*
 - EV Charging Station in Carpinteria: *KEYT* and *Edhat*
 - Marine Shipping Program: *KSBY*, *Safety4Sea*, *KEYT*, *GCaptain*, and *EIN News*

During this time, the District Public Information Officer (PIO) joined other local PIOs in attending a meet-and-greet at KEYT, hosted by the California Association of Public Information Officials (CAPIO). The visit provided an opportunity to build relationships with news partners at KEYT and also included a tour of their remodeled studio.

- **Earth Day:** The District was excited to support two Earth Day events this year. On April 22, the District's PIO attended a Guadalupe community clean-up, sponsored by the District. On April 29-30, the District had a booth at the Santa Barbara Earth Day Festival, shared with the Central Coast Clean Cities Coalition (C5) and located in the Green Car Show area. At the booth, the District shared information about air quality and health, wildfire smoke preparedness, our website resources, upcoming incentive programs, and ways to stay informed about District news and Air Quality Alerts. C5, a regional organization led by District staff, shared information about electric vehicles. We also displayed one of the District's new inspector vehicles, a plug-in hybrid Toyota RAV4 Prime.

Community Programs

- **EV Charging Station Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony:** On April 10, the District was proud to attend a ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating a new electric vehicle (EV) charging station in Carpinteria – the first direct-current fast-charging station in the city. The station, at 1001 Casitas Pass Road, was installed by The Towbes Group and supported by the District's Clean Air Grants program. The station is public and provides two charging ports to allow for two cars to charge simultaneously; the charger can charge an electric car up to 100 miles in 10 minutes. The Towbes Group secured approximately \$100,000 in funding from our Clean Air Grants program to help cover the installation costs. Since 2011, our Clean Air Grants program has contributed more than \$3.1 million toward electric vehicle infrastructure projects in Santa Barbara County, including 274 chargers that are currently publicly available or in development. The Air Pollution Control Officer (APCO) was pleased to join District Board Members Das Williams and Al Clark in speaking at the ceremony.

Interagency and Regulatory Support Efforts

- **Prescribed Burns:** During this period, District staff continued to coordinate with the Los Padres National Forest fire crew on prescribed pile burns on various remote forest sites; this series of burns concluded for the season during this period. For prescribed burns, the District works with fire partners to complete a two-step public notification process: 1) a news release is issued once the burn window is identified, and 2) a follow-up media

advisory is issued the day before or morning of the selected burn day. The District posts information about all burns on our social media accounts and sends a text alert to subscribers the day before burning starts. As needed, portable air quality monitors are installed nearby to monitor for any smoke impacts to surrounding areas. During this period, the District's PIO shared information about our two-step public notification process as part of a communications panel during a prescribed burn training led by California Air Pollution Control Officers Association.

- **Meetings with County Departments:** During this period, District staff held meetings with new representatives for several County departments that the District works with regularly. These introductory meetings were a great opportunity to share important goals and projects at the District and ways in which we can collaborate to serve the community. The APCO and PIO met with the new County PIO to share communications goals. The APCO and PIO also met with the new County Public Health Director and County Public Health PIO to discuss our Air Quality Alerts process during wildfires and other air quality and health matters. The APCO, PIO, Compliance Manager, and Air Quality Specialist who oversees our Clean Air Grants program also met with the new County Agricultural Commissioner and his deputies to discuss areas of overlap. Also, during this period, the PIO presented to the County's internal Emergency Preparedness Committee about the District's Air Quality Alerts for wildfire smoke; the PIO will give a similar presentation to the larger County OEM Emergency Preparedness Committee soon. Next month, the PIO will also provide a wildfire smoke preparedness presentation to your Board.
- **School District Transportation Plans (AB 181):** The District recently created a new webpage providing information to school districts about Assembly Bill 181, which adds a section to the Education Code requiring school districts to develop a plan by April 1, 2023 (and updated annually) describing their transportation services, in consultation with air districts. The District does not review these plans; however, we do offer several funding programs, outlined on our webpage, that school districts may utilize when implementing their plans. School districts that receive and consider the information provided on our webpage are considered to have consulted adequately with the District. Here is a link to that webpage: www.OurAir.org/school-district-transportation-plans/.
- **Regional Transit Electrification Subgroup:** Recently, the District met with representatives from the air districts in San Luis Obispo County and the Monterey Bay area, along with transportation and transit agencies in the three counties, to discuss future infrastructure grant projects related to electrification of fleets. The partners will continue meeting to consider opportunities for regional projects. Funding is available from Central Coast Community Energy (3CE); our District also anticipates nearly \$1 million in AB 617 Community Air Protection funds.
- **Marine Shipping Program:** Last month, the District issued a joint news release with our Protecting Blue Whales & Blue Skies Program partners regarding results from the 2022 program, as well as information on the 2023 program, now underway. More information will be shared as part of a Discussion item on today's meeting agenda, and more

information is also available on the program website: www.BlueWhalesBlueSkies.org

- **County Nuclear Power Plant Emergency Response Plan:** The Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is leading efforts to develop the County's Nuclear Power Plant Emergency Response Plan. The District was identified as a key stakeholder in this planning effort and will be participating in the Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group for the project, joining representatives from specific County departments and partner agencies that would have a role in the County's response to an emergency at Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant. MAC Member Agencies will contribute to the plan's development through cross-agency coordination, general feedback, subject-matter expertise, data sharing, draft plan review, and occasional meetings throughout the lifespan of the project. The District will seek information from San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District about their response protocol as well. The first meeting for this effort started during this period; the District will keep your Board apprised of our role as the project continues.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The costs for the outreach efforts and activities described above are included in the budget approved by your Board. There are no additional fiscal impacts.