


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 October 19, 2023.

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 October 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:
 - MTD Clean Air Grant and Clean Cities Award: *Santa Barbara Independent* and *Edhat*
 - Prescribed burns: *KSBY*, *Edhat*, *KEYT*, *Santa Maria Times*, and *Lompoc Record*
 - Central Coast Agriculture and Hearing Board: *Santa Barbara Independent*
 - Tajiguas Landfill: *Noozhawk*
 - Burn Permit Program: *Santa Ynez Valley News* and *Lompoc Record*

Community Programs

- **Clean Air Rooms Pilot Program – Replacement Filters:** In November, the District held events at the Guadalupe Dunes Center to provide a limited number of free replacement filters for participants in the 2021 Clean Air Rooms Pilot Program; under the program, the District gave away approximately 800 free air purifiers to residents of Guadalupe and Casmalia. Outreach for the November replacement filters giveaway included multiple bilingual social media posts on Nextdoor to the Guadalupe and Casmalia “neighborhoods,” other social media posts, and information provided by the District for the schools to share with parents. The District has remaining replacement air filters and will be developing a plan to distribute the remaining units.
- **Santa Barbara MTD Clean Air Grant and Clean Cities Awards:** In October, the Air Pollution Control Officer (APCO) and District staff were proud to attend Santa Barbara MTD’s celebration of their first 40-foot zero-emission bus and new heavy-duty, Level 3 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. The District’s Clean Air Grants program contributed funding to bring those projects to fruition, as part of the \$3 million the District’s program has put toward local on-road vehicle replacement and EV charging infrastructure projects since 2011. As part of MTD’s celebration, the APCO also congratulated MTD and the County of Santa Barbara for their recent “Alternative Fuel Vehicle Leadership” awards, presented at the U.S. Department of Energy’s Clean Cities Stakeholder Summit and National Workshop. At that workshop, another award was given to the Central Coast Clean Cities Coalition (administered by the District) for supporting the “Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies” program. More information on the Clean Cities awards was shared via a news release: www.OurAir.org/101723-news-cleancities/.

Interagency and Regulatory Support Efforts

- **Rule 210 Outreach:** Following the October Board meeting in which the District shared about our Long-Range Fiscal Strategy, District staff proceeded with the process to make amendments to District Rule 210 (Fees), including publishing a draft staff report along with the draft revisions to the rule. On November 30, a [Notice of a Virtual Public Workshop](#) was issued to the District’s Public Notices listserv as well as contacts for all permitted facilities and cannabis industry stakeholders; the notice provided Zoom meeting information for the workshop along with a link to all rule development materials. The public workshop was

held on December 14, with approximately 10 attendees. During the workshop, District staff answered any questions posed by attendees and also encouraged anyone with further questions to schedule an “office hours” meeting with District staff using an online scheduling tool. Following the workshop, the District sent another notification to the same contacts who received the original notice, pointing people to the [rule development webpage](#) and the “office hours” scheduling tool. On January 10 the draft rule was presented to the Community Advisory Council (CAC), and an additional CAC meeting will be scheduled within the next month to address questions identified during the January meeting.

- **Prescribed Burns:** During this period, District staff worked with partner agencies in planning for and implementing several prescribed burns. The District worked with the Santa Barbara County Fire Department on the Spaulding/Midland prescribed burn, County Fire and UCSB Sedgwick Reserve on a TREX training burn, and U.S. Forest Service on prescribed pile burns on Los Padres National Forest land. People can sign up to receive future prescribed burn notifications on the District’s website: www.OurAir.org/subscribe.
- **Burn Permit Program News Release:** Earlier this month, the District collaborated with the Santa Barbara County Fire Department to issue a bilingual news release regarding the annual transition from a High Fire Season to a Winter Preparedness Level. With that transition comes the start of the time of the year when individuals with a valid burn permit — issued by County Fire — can conduct permitted burning on permissive burn days. The District appreciated the opportunity to partner with County Fire on this news release and provide information about our agencies’ respective roles with permit burning, as well as rules and safety tips to minimize smoke impacts. The news release can be found on the District’s website: www.OurAir.org/010424-news/.
- **Permitted Facilities Map Revamp:** During this period, District staff launched efforts, working with a vendor, to redesign our Permitted Facilities Map: www.OurAir.org/about-permitted-facilities-map/. Focus elements of the redesign will include an upgraded interface and improved functionality. The map shows all facilities permitted by the District, along with each facility’s current permit and most recent annual report. Once the redesign is complete, the District will conduct outreach on the new design and features.
- **County’s Environmental Justice Element:** During this period, District staff met with County of Santa Barbara staff regarding the development of the county’s first Environmental Justice Element and components that pertain to the District and our work. Sections relevant to the District include: wildfire smoke exposure, grant funding related to air quality improvements, industrial business operations, air quality monitoring, and pollution-reduction measures for stationary sources. The District provided feedback to the County and will continue to be a partner in this effort.

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.