

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 May 19, 2022.

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 May 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:
 - Marine Shipping Program, 2021 results: *KCLU*, *GCaptain*, and *Long Beach Post*
 - High Fire Season news conference: *KEYT*, *KSBY*, and *Noozhawk*
 - Board of Supervisors' discussion on idle oil wells: *Santa Barbara Independent*, *Santa Maria Times*, and *Santa Ynez Valley News*
 - Prescribed training burn: *KSBY* and *KEYT*
- **High Fire Season news conference:** On May 20, the Santa Barbara County Fire Department, and other Fire agencies, declared the start of High Fire Season. The District was pleased to be invited to share the perspective of wildfire smoke preparedness. Director Arlin Genet provided information about the health effects of smoke and various ways to create a “clean air room” at home, encouraging people to purchase materials now instead of during the height of wildfire season when they can become backordered or unavailable. She also pointed people to our website with many relevant bilingual resources, including hourly air quality readings and daily forecasts, plus options for signing up to receive text messages and/or email notifications when we issue Air Quality Alerts with County Public Health.

Community Programs

- **Wildfire Smoke Clean Air Centers for Vulnerable Populations Incentive Pilot Program:** The District issued a news release in May regarding funding availability for a regional clean air center, and has since conducted follow-up outreach to eligible entities. The funding comes from a pilot program administered by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association. Applicants can choose to apply for one of these project types: 1) HVAC upgrades, 2) high-efficiency air filter purchases, or 3) portable air purifier purchases. Facilities located in low-income or disadvantaged communities are encouraged to apply. Entities that receive funds will need to make their facility publicly available as a “clean air center” during wildfire smoke incidents. Applications are due June 30, and the District is available to help interested parties with their applications. More information is on our website: www.OurAir.org/050522-news.

Interagency and Regulatory Support Efforts

- **Prescribed Burns:** During this period, District staff coordinated with the Santa Barbara County Fire Department on a small prescribed burn for training purposes near Los Olivos. 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 advisory is issued the day before the burn occurs. As needed, portable air quality monitors are installed nearby to monitor for any smoke impacts to surrounding areas.

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.