




MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 30, 2023

TO: Community Advisory Council (CAC) Members

FROM: Aeron Arlin Genet, Air Pollution Control Officer 

SUBJECT: Community Advisory Council Update

The last meeting of the Community Advisory Council (CAC) occurred on February 22, 2023. Per the CAC By-Laws, District staff provides a quarterly update to the CAC to maintain continuity during periods when there are no planning or rulemaking matters to discuss. The items below are provided as a quarterly status update, and a listing of the previous status updates can be found [here](#) on our website.

Assembly Bill 617 BARCT Efforts

District staff continues to work on the remaining projects related to the District Board-adopted Assembly Bill (AB) 617 Best Available Retrofit Control Technology (BARCT) Rule Development Schedule.¹ To date, District staff has completed four of the six BARCT assessments, and the final two assessments are briefly described below. As a reminder, the BARCT assessment only apply to six AB 617 industrial facilities within Santa Barbara County (i.e., ExxonMobil – Pacific Offshore Pipeline Company, ExxonMobil – Las Flores Canyon, Pacific Coast Energy Company – Orcutt Hill, Cat Canyon Resources – Cat Canyon West, Imerys Filtration Minerals, Inc. (“Imerys”), and Windset Farms).

BARCT for Miscellaneous Combustion Units (Draft Rule 362)

“Miscellaneous Combustion Units,” which includes devices such as dryers, kilns, and furnaces, are typically used to directly heat products or materials. For this BARCT project, District staff is evaluating whether it is technologically feasible and cost-effective to require the Miscellaneous Combustion Units to comply with lower nitrogen oxides (NOx) standards. The lower NOx standards would be achieved by retrofitting or replacing the existing, conventional burners with low NOx burners. Currently, the District does not have a specific rule that focuses on Miscellaneous Combustion Units, but new requirements may be feasible based on the recent prohibitory rules adopted by neighboring air districts, such as Ventura County APCD and San Joaquin Valley AQMD. Imerys is the only facility that is anticipated to be affected by this BARCT analysis. District staff have been evaluating various options to secure emissions reductions from these devices and discussing it with Imerys staff. District staff plan to bring this item to the CAC in August.

¹ More information is available at www.ourair.org/wp-content/uploads/2018-12bd-d5.pdf

BARCT for Stationary Gas Turbines (Draft Rule 358)

Stationary gas-fired turbines are often used to generate both electricity and heat for industrial processes. Of the six AB 617 industrial sources in the District, ExxonMobil – Las Flores Canyon is the only facility that uses turbines. The Las Flores Canyon facility is currently not operating due to the 2015 rupture of the Plains All American Pipeline; however, the air quality operating permit for the facility remains current and active. This BARCT project is investigating lower permitted emission limits for the facility's gas turbine and the associated duct burner. This equipment is currently controlled with steam injection and a Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) system, but additional equipment refinements and operational adjustments could be incorporated to further reduce the permitted emission rate. District staff plan to bring this item to the CAC in the fall of 2023.

Vessel Speed Reduction Program

In December 2022, the District's Board adopted the 2022 Ozone Plan, which illustrated the impact of marine shipping on Santa Barbara County's ozone precursors emission inventory – during the 2018 baseline year, 42% of the combined reactive organic compound (ROC) + NOx emissions were attributed to ocean-going vessels. The District has worked for decades to raise awareness of the local impact of marine shipping, identifying these emissions in Clean Air Plans since 1994. Vessel Speed Reduction (VSR) has been demonstrated as an effective method to significantly reduce NOx and other criteria pollutant emissions and has been one of the District's key strategies to attain and maintain the State's Ozone Standard since the adoption of the 2013 Clean Air Plan.

Since 2014, the District and partners have implemented the Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies VSR [program](#) for immediate air quality and whale protection benefits. Since the program's inception in 2014 through 2022, it has achieved 792,359 slow speed miles, a reduction of more than 3,200 tons of oxides of nitrogen and over 108,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions, and decreased the risk of fatal whale strikes during prime migration season by 44 percent in the targeted coastal areas. This voluntary program asks operators to decrease their vessel speeds to 10 knots or less, which increases the fuel efficiency of most vessels and reduces emissions of multiple air pollutants, including NOx, greenhouse gases (GHGs), particulate matter (PM), and toxic air contaminants. Reducing NOx emissions through voluntary incentives is a critical part of the District's strategy to help prevent exceedances of the state and federal ozone standards.

District staff provided an update on the VSR program and other activities related to large ocean-going vessels to the District's Board of Directors at the May 18, 2023 Board [meeting](#). The presentation included an update on the successful implementation of the 2022 VSR program, as well as the launch of the 2023 VSR program on May 1, 2023. The 2023 VSR program includes a few key changes from prior years, including program expansion to include tanker vessels and a newly formed Monterey Bay VSR zone, which will result in participating vessels slowing down for approximately 80 more nautical miles when entering or exiting the southern route of the San Francisco Bay Region. More information on the 2022 and 2023 VSR programs is available on the District's [news release](#) that was issued this past April.

Related to the VSR program, Assembly Bill (AB) 953 was introduced in February 2023 by Assemblymembers Gregg Hart and Damon Connolly. This bill would task the Ocean Protection Council — in coordination with California air districts along the coast and in consultation with the federal Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Navy, the Coast Guard, the California Air Resources Board, and other stakeholders — to create a statewide voluntary vessel speed reduction and sustainable shipping program for the California coast. The bill would build upon the existing Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies program in order to reduce air pollution, the risk of fatal vessel strikes on whales, and harmful underwater acoustic impacts.

The District has been working with the Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies program partners to help urge the passage of AB 953, as it would provide additional support for continuing and expanding the emission-reduction impacts from the current VSR program. The bill has unanimously passed through the Assembly Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife, the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources, the Assembly Committee on Appropriations, and the Assembly Floor. The bill now moves over to the Senate, where it will soon be heard by the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water.

This concludes the status update for this quarter. If you have any questions, please contact me (aag@sbcapcd.org) or Alex Economou (aje@sbcapcd.org).

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The CAC's charter is to consider issues related to air pollution planning and rulemaking for which the District has jurisdiction, and to render advice to the District Board and the APCO. The CAC serves an important function by providing expertise and representation of community interests during planning and rulemaking. The CAC's advice has helped the District Board adopt plans and rules, which have contributed to improving air quality in our county, and District staff appreciate the care and consideration you show in carrying out your service. These updates will also be posted to our website at www.ourair.org/community-advisory-council-info.