




MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 30, 2026
TO: Community Advisory Council (CAC) Members
FROM: Aeron Arlin Genet, Air Pollution Control Officer 
SUBJECT: Community Advisory Council - Quarterly Update

Per the Community Advisory Council (CAC) By-Laws, District staff provides quarterly updates to the CAC to maintain continuity during periods when there are no planning or rulemaking matters to discuss. The last quarterly update to the CAC occurred in March 2026, and a listing of the previous status updates can be found [here](#) on our website. The information below is provided as the quarterly status update for June 2026.

2025 Annual Air Quality Report

In 2025, the District operated a network of 12 ambient air quality and meteorological monitoring stations throughout Santa Barbara County. These stations measure concentrations of key pollutants including ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM₁₀), and particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter (PM_{2.5}). Two of the stations measure odorous air pollutants from industrial facilities. Wind speed, wind direction, and ambient temperature are also measured at most stations.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency has established National Ambient Air Quality Standards for six criteria pollutants: ozone, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, lead, and particulate matter. The California Air Resources Board has established state standards for those same pollutants – which are equal to or more stringent than federal standards – as well as standards for four additional pollutants: sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, vinyl chloride, and visibility reducing particles.

In 2025, the state 24-hour PM₁₀ standard of 50 µg/m³ was exceeded 15 days in total, all recorded at the Santa Maria monitoring station. All fifteen exceedance days were attributed to high wind events in the Santa Maria Valley. The state and federal ambient air quality standards were met for all other measured pollutants in 2025.

On June 25, 2026, District staff presented the 2025 Annual Air Quality Report to the District Board of Directors. The Board letter and presentation can be found [here](#) on the District's website.

Grants and Incentives Update

Since 1988, the District has successfully implemented a variety of voluntary grant and incentive programs, leveraging over \$60 million in state and local funds to voluntarily secure several thousand tons of emission reductions throughout the county. The District's portfolio of grant programs includes the Carl Moyer Program, Community Air Protection Program, FARMER Program, \$2 DMV Surcharge Revenue, Clean Air Fund, Climate Heat Impact Response Program (CHIRP), and Heat Clean Program.

During FY 2025-26, the District allocated over \$2,900,000 for 29 Clean Air Grant projects benefiting businesses, public agencies, multi-family housing, and schools throughout Santa Barbara County. Projects included 18 off-road equipment replacements, eight electric vehicle charging station projects, two electric school bus projects, and one marine diesel engine repower. The District also implemented several incentive programs over the course of the past year. As of June 30, the District's Old Car Buy Back program funded the purchase and destruction of over 378 older, high-polluting vehicles. The District's Heat Clean program funded 49 projects, replacing wood-burning heaters with 12 heat pumps and 37 electric fireplace inserts. Lastly, through the Clean Air Rooms program, the District was able to procure and distribute more than 1,500 air purifiers to residents of the disadvantaged communities of Guadalupe and Old Town Goleta.

In FY 2026-27, the District will launch its 2026 Clean Air Grants program on July 27, 2026, and will accept grant applications through September 4, 2026. Similar to last year's program, the District will accept applications for infrastructure, off-road, marine, heavy-duty on-road, locomotive, and school bus projects. Additionally, emergency diesel-fueled backup generator replacement projects are a new Clean Air Grant project category this year. Lastly, the District's Heat Clean Program will continue to operate on a first-come, first-served basis in FY 2026-27 until funding runs out.

On June 25, 2026, District staff presented an update on the District's grant and incentive programs to the District Board of Directors. The Board letter and presentation can be found [here](#) on the District's website.

Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies Program (BWBS) Update

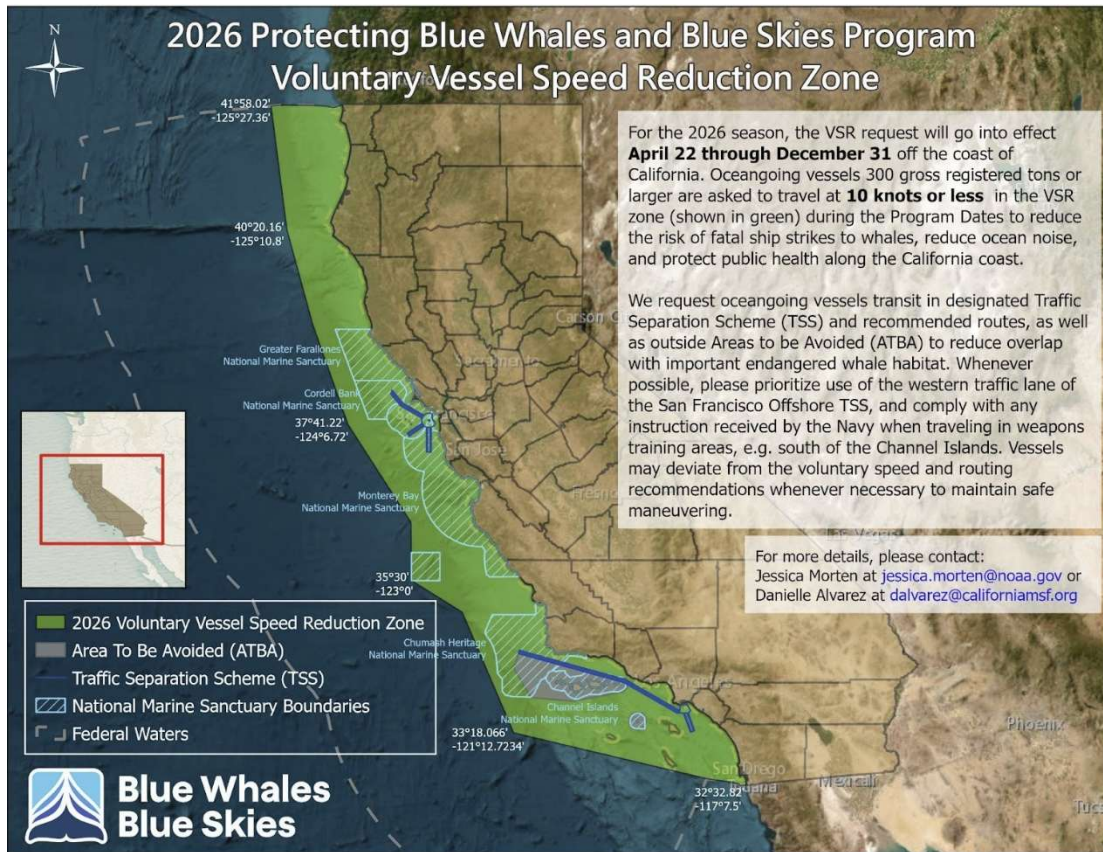
The BWBS Program incentivizes the world's largest shipping companies to voluntarily opt in to reduce speeds to 10 knots or less in the designated Vessel Speed Reduction (VSR) zones off the California coast to help reduce air pollution, fatal ship strike risk to whales, and underwater noise pollution. After each VSR season, the BWBS Program analyzes vessel Automatic Identification System data to determine the cooperation levels of the enrolled fleets. This data is used to recognize the shipping companies whose fleets consistently adhered to the reduced speed request and continues to demonstrate how these voluntary efforts translate to quantifiable environmental benefits for the marine environment and coastal California communities.

The 2025 season of the BWBS Program included VSR zones off the San Francisco, Central Coast, and South Coast regions and began on May 1 and concluded on January 15, 2026. [Results](#) show that the 11th annual season of the BWBS Program was the most effective year to date, with a cooperation rate of 85%. In 2025, participation included 787 vessels operated by 44 different shipping companies. In total, the shipping companies reduced smog-forming NOx emissions by almost 1,500 tons, diesel PM emissions by 8.9 tons, and greenhouse gases by over 55,000 metric

tons along the California coast in 2025. Additionally, the risk of deadly ship strikes to whales was reduced by 40% and the acoustic intensity of the underwater noise during vessel transits was reduced by 70%. On April 22, an award ceremony for the 2025 BWBS Programs was held at Scott's in Jack London Square, near the Port of Oakland.

The 2026 BWBS Program launched on April 22 and will run through December 31, 2026. There are a number of changes that have been incorporated for the 2026 season as the program expands statewide in accordance with the recent signing of Assembly Bill (AB) 14 – authored by Assemblymember Gregg Hart. The final 2026 voluntary vessel speed reduction zone is shown below in Figure 1. Other key changes this season include: (1) cooperation rates to meet the award tiers were relaxed to ease the transition to the expanded zone; (2) cruise lines are now invited to participate for the first time; and (3) a transitional period runs through June 30, after which performance tracking and program award tier recognition fully shifts to the new statewide zone. As of June 25, enrollment in the 2026 season has reached a record-breaking 60 shipping lines with a cumulative cooperation rate of 80% across the expanded 2026 VSR zone.

Figure 1: 2026 Voluntary Vessel Speed Reduction Zone Map and Coordinates



For the 2026 VSR season, the program is also welcoming new partners to this collaborative effort, such as the California Ocean Protection Council, the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District, and the Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District. For more information on the BWBS Program, a full list of the parameters for the 2026 program, and the District's involvement as a program partner, please visit www.bluewhalesblueskies.org/.

On June 25, 2026, District staff presented an update on the Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies Program to the District Board of Directors. The Board letter and presentation can be found [here](#) on the District's website.

This concludes the status update for this quarter.

We will be scheduling a Community Advisory Council meeting on July 23 to present on the draft Ozone Plan and provide an update on cannabis fees under the Cost Reimbursement Basis that was previously discussed as part of the Rule 210 recommendations by your Council.

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 are also posted to our website at www.ourair.org/community-advisory-council-info.