

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 June 25, 2026.

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 (i.e., X – formally known as Twitter/X, 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 June 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, prior to the docket deadline, media interest in the District included the following coverage:
 - 2026 Clean Air Grants Program: *Noozhawk* and *Edhat*

- Hearing Board Meetings Re: Sable: *Santa Barbara Independent*, *Noozhawk*, *Edhat*, *Santa Barbara News-Press*, *Bloomberg Law*, and *New York Post*
 - Goleta's 4th of July Drone Show, sponsored by the District: *KEYT* and *Edhat*
 - Protecting Blue Whales & Blue Skies Program: *Santa Barbara Independent* and *Edhat*
 - Wildfire Smoke Preparedness: *KEYT* and *Edhat*
- **“Clean Air, Clean Solutions” Event in Sacramento:** On August 3, the Executive Director attended an event at the State Capitol called “Clean Air, Clean Solutions,” put on by the South Coast Air Quality Management District and the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) and attended by many of the 35 air districts in California. The District’s booth at the event featured highlights of our work on a variety of programs and projects: wildfire smoke preparedness, prescribed burns, Protecting Blue Whales & Blue Skies, air quality sensors, grant programs, and programs for underserved communities. Participating agencies were also recognized on the Assembly floor.
 - **Wildfire Season—Preparing for Smoke Impacts:** With wildfire season underway, the District has made sure our wildfire smoke response program is updated. In July, the District issued a news release encouraging Santa Barbara County residents to prepare for future smoke impacts by taking three simple steps: 1) familiarizing themselves with how to check local air quality on the District’s website, 2) creating a “clean air room” at home by either purchasing an air purifier or making a DIY version, and 3) signing up to receive the District’s Air Quality Alerts via email and/or text. This news release was featured in the County’s newsletter and resulted in a media interview. Another component of wildfire season are Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events initiated by utility companies; this July, just like in wildfire seasons in the past, the District issued a reminder notification to a broad list of stakeholders regarding the District’s role with backup diesel generators.

Community Programs

- **PM Study – Outreach:** The District’s grant-funded study of particulate matter in the Santa Maria Valley recently got underway, and the District has contracted with a consulting firm to conduct multi-lingual outreach and community engagement work connected to this process. The District is in the initial stages of discussing an outreach and engagement plan with our consultant, and your Board will be kept updated as details and events occur.
- **Air Quality Sensors Program Outreach:** For several months, the District has been installing air quality sensors throughout the county. Our first priority is installing the sensors at schools, followed by government and nonprofit buildings. Sensors capture neighborhood-level air quality conditions and complement the District’s network of permanent air monitoring stations, making sensors a great decision-making tool during wildfires. Interested parties can submit information via our [online form](#).
- **Cuyama Clean Air Rooms Program:** As approved by your Board in June, the District is working on a Clean Air Rooms Program for Cuyama Valley residents and classrooms, providing free air purifiers to help people create “clean air rooms” to protect against wildfire smoke. The District has been working with the Cuyama Valley Family Resource Center to plan and implement a one-day giveaway event in early fall. Similar to past Clean Air Rooms programs, participants will need to provide proof of address, and air purifiers will be

distributed on a first-come, first-served basis, while supplies last and limited to one per address. The District is working on outreach about this event and will keep your Board updated.

- **Clean Air Grants Program:** This year's Clean Air Grants program opened on July 27 and will be accepting applications through September 4. Approximately \$2.3 million is available this year for voluntary projects that reduce emissions and support the adoption of cleaner technologies across Santa Barbara County. Examples of eligible projects include on-road heavy-duty vehicles, alternative fueling infrastructure, off-road equipment, agricultural pumps, locomotives, marine vessel engines (regulated and non-regulated commercial vessels), and — new this year — stationary emergency diesel generator replacement and diesel particulate filter installation. Eligible projects could receive a grant with a range from \$10,000 to \$250,000, and emission reductions from the projects must be surplus to any rule or regulation. Grant applications are currently available on the District's website, with assistance available for Spanish speakers. More information is available on our website: www.OurAir.org/grants.
- **Central Coast Clean Cities Coalition (C5):** C5, administered by the District, is a coalition of regional stakeholders committed to advancing clean transportation across the Central Coast. On June 29, C5 hosted Electric Ride 805's Residential Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Solutions Lunch & Learn—a free webinar to inform homeowners, renters, property managers, housing providers, and community partners about funding opportunities and resources available to reduce the cost of installing EV chargers at single- and multi-family residences. The event drew 80 registrants and featured five presentations, including one from the District highlighting the upcoming 2026 Clean Air Grants Program. C5 is also collaborating with UCSB staff to host a Clean Transportation Showcase at the Central Coast Sustainability Summit on October 14. To support this effort, C5 has conducted outreach to local fleets interested in displaying EVs and other clean transportation technologies at the event.

Interagency and Regulatory Support Efforts

- **Prescribed Burns:** During this time, the District worked with the Vandenberg Space Force Base (VSFB) Fire Department on public notifications about prescribed burns that occurred on the base in June. The purpose of these burns was to train newly assigned fire personnel on fighting wildfires, and the burns were deemed a success. The District follows a two-step public notification process for prescribed burns; a news release is issued several weeks ahead of the intended burn date, and a follow-up notification is issued either the day before or morning of the first day of burning. People can sign up for notifications on our website: www.OurAir.org/subscribe.

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.