




air pollution control district
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Agenda Item: E-1
Agenda Date: March 21, 2024
Agenda Placement: Admin
Estimated Time: N/A
Continued Item: No

Board Agenda Item

TO: Air Pollution Control District Board

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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 January 18, 2024.

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 January 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:
 - Prescribed burns: *Santa Maria Times*, *Edhat*, *KEYT*, and *KCLU*
 - City of Santa Barbara cruise ship program: *Santa Barbara Independent*
 - Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies legislation: *KEYT*, *KCLU*, *Santa Maria Times*, *Santa Ynez Valley News*, *Santa Barbara Independent*, and *Santa Maria Sun*
 - Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies (2023 program): *Edhat*, *World Nation News*, *EIN News*, and *San Francisco Business Times*
- **E-newsletter:** The District issued a bilingual e-newsletter in February to approximately 1,700 subscribers. People can sign up to receive future news and alerts on the District website: www.OurAir.org/subscribe. Articles in the February edition covered the following topics:
 - Highlights from District programs and priorities in 2023
 - Information on how to find 24/7 air quality data on the District's website
 - A recap of the January Board of Directors meeting
 - A reminder to permitted sources about Annual Reports being due on March 1

Interagency and Regulatory Support Efforts

- **Rule 210 Outreach:** Following the October 2023 Board meeting in which the District shared our Long-Range Fiscal Strategy, District staff proceeded with making amendments to District Rule 210 (Fees), including publishing a draft staff report along with draft revisions to the rule. In November 2023, staff issued a public notice for a virtual public workshop regarding the proposed rule changes; that public notice was sent to our Public Notices listserv as well as contacts for all permitted facilities and cannabis industry stakeholders — approximately 2,000 total contacts. Following the virtual public workshop in December, District staff sent a follow-up notification to those same aforementioned contacts, pointing people to the rule development webpage and a virtual “office hours” scheduling tool for one-on-one meetings with District staff to address any questions. The District proceeded to hold two Community Advisory Council (CAC) meetings in January and February to address any questions, receiving unanimous support at the February meeting to bring these proposed rule changes to your Board. Ahead of this Board meeting's public hearing on this topic, staff issued another public notice — again, to our Public Notices listserv, permitted facility contacts, and cannabis stakeholders — letting them know about the additional comment opportunities at our March and May Board meetings. Lastly, since the virtual public workshop notice was issued in November, our website's homepage has prominently displayed a link to a detailed webpage about this process: www.ourair.org/rules-under-development/.
- **Prescribed Burns:** During this period, District staff worked with partner agencies in planning for and implementing prescribed burns. The District worked with the U.S. Forest Service on prescribed pile burns on Los Padres National Forest land and a burn planned for the Camino Cielo area. People can sign up to receive future prescribed burn notifications on the District's website: www.OurAir.org/subscribe.

- **Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies:** In February, the District was proud to participate in a news conference hosted by Assemblymember Gregg Hart regarding proposed state legislation to make the regional Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies program — of which the District is a founding partner — a voluntary statewide program. AB 2298 would expand the air quality and whale-protection benefits of the regional program along the California coast. You can find a news release about the proposed legislation on our website: www.OurAir.org/022124-news/. Also last month, the District issued a news release with our regional program partners regarding participating shipping companies' cooperation rates during the 2023 program. More information: www.BlueWhalesBlueSkies.org

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.