

## Response to Misinformation about the APCD's Role with Commercial Aerospace

Over the past two weeks, there has been a misinformation campaign<sup>1</sup> regarding the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District's (APCD's) involvement with commercial aerospace. The goal of this correspondence is to clear the air on the APCD's role as it relates to commercial aerospace operations at Vandenberg Space Force Base (VSFB).

Our agency's mission is to protect the people and the environment of Santa Barbara County from the effects of air pollution. To that end, and pursuant to authority established in the California Health and Safety Code, we permit stationary sources of air pollution. Our permit program is an important tool to meet all health-based air quality standards, while still allowing for new businesses to open and existing businesses to expand. For commercial aerospace, permitted activities typically include rocket fueling and fuel storage, support engines, and marine vessels used to support ongoing operations.

In contradiction to the misinformation that has been published, the APCD does not permit emissions from other mobile equipment, including the rockets themselves, marine vessels used for construction activities, and construction equipment like trucks and cranes. We have not put any restraints or conditions on barge operations for construction, and we have no requirement to return to a harbor in the event a barge is unable to dock at Vandenberg.

It's also important to know that the APCD does not have the final approval authority for expansion of launch cadences at VSFB. Our permit program has a limited scope that ensures commercial aerospace projects meet air quality rules and regulations. For example, for ongoing boat and barge operations, the APCD does not specify or require a specific route – it's up to the operator to determine how best to navigate the waters for their needs. We note that United Launch Alliance has had an APCD permit for routine boat operations for more than 20 years and has indicated no modifications to their current boat permit are needed for their upcoming Vulcan project.

Our agency understands the importance of the commercial aerospace industry to Santa Barbara County and our Country. Our staff work closely with commercial aerospace companies to efficiently review and finalize their permit applications to allow these essential projects to proceed while ensuring they meet all federal, state, and local air quality requirements, as well as continue to meet our agency's mission.

For more information on the APCD's commercial aerospace involvement, please visit [www.ourair.org/commercial-aerospace/](http://www.ourair.org/commercial-aerospace/)

Sincerely,



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Executive Director / Air Pollution Control Officer

August 9, 2024

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<sup>1</sup> July 25, 2024 Santa Maria Times Guest Commentary, A. Caldwell "Vandenberg's future threatened by a black hole"  
August 7, 2024 Noozhawk Opinion, R. Fink "APCD Trying to Stop Vandenberg's Space Mission"