TO: Board of Directors, Air Pollution Control District

FROM: Gary E. Willey, Air Pollution Control Officer

DATE: May 22, 2019

SUBJECT: Public Outreach Update

SUMMARY

The Air Pollution Control District (APCD) conducts public outreach to increase awareness on air quality issues countywide. As identified in our mission statement, one of the APCD's primary functions is to promote community and individual responsibility for clean air through education. This agenda item is to provide an update since the previous Board update on the public information and education efforts performed by staff.

RECOMMENDATION

That your Board receive and file the information provided.

DISCUSSION

The APCD's outreach efforts fall into five main categories as described in the 2017 - 2022 Public Outreach Plan: 1. Air Quality Information, 2. APCD Programs & Policies, 3. Interagency & Coalition Participation, 4. Community Engagement, and 5. New APCD Initiatives. Below is an update on several of the key outreach efforts staff have made since the previous Board update.

1. **Air Quality Information:**

    AirAware Text Notification System: APCD continues to promote their AirAware Text Notification System. Users can sign up on their mobile phones and receive text messages when we issue press releases related to major air quality events throughout the county. There is also a notification for "early alerts for blowing dust on the Nipomo Mesa." This month, staff re-distributed an e-flyer for this program through the PeachJar website to schools in the Lucia Mar School District and the Paso Robles School District. We currently have over 700 people signed up for alerts. To sign up for any of our AirAware alerts, click the "AirAware Alerts" icon on the SLOCleanAir.org homepage.

- **Air Quality Index (AQI):** The daily and forecasted AQI continues to play an important role in increasing awareness of air quality throughout SLO County. The color-coded AQI tool is used nationwide to inform the public on air quality conditions and steps they can take to reduce their daily exposure to pollution. Currently, 848 individuals have registered with EnviroFlash to receive daily AQI emails for SLO County air quality conditions. The AQI program helps individuals and organizations track local air quality conditions and potential health impacts via several information sources including EnviroFlash emails, the APCD website, Twitter, telephone recordings, and local newspapers. The APCD has partnered with the National Weather Service to provide Air Quality Alert notifications via the National Weather Service website, Twitter and some phone providers where the Air Quality Alert message can be provided directly to smart phones. This program is especially helpful when there are smoke impacts from wildfires, as the public can view the current AQI for their location and act to protect their health during periods of significant smoke impacts. There tends to be a large increase in EnviroFlash air quality forecast subscribers when there are wildfires.

- **Oceano Community Monitoring Project:** The Community Air Protection Program allows implementation funds to be spent on community air monitoring systems in order to fill gaps in the region's air monitoring network. Based on a need for and request by community members, staff is implementing a plan for community level monitoring in the low-income community in Oceano. An AirVisual PM sensor and two temporary reference sensors (the BAM 1020 FEM PM sampler and the Particle Air Profiler 212) have been placed at the Oceano Community Services District. A wind sensor also accompanies the three monitors. The two reference sensors will be used to calibrate measurements from the AirVisual PM sensor, which uses relatively new technology. Two other AirVisual PM sensors are also being hosted by volunteers in Oceano. Staff has also developed a webpage on the APCD website where Oceano community members can acquire information about the Oceano Community Monitoring Project and the data from the 5 monitors.

2. **APCD Incentive Programs & Policies:**

- **Community Air Protection (CAP) Funds:** An updated webpage for the CAP Program is now live on the APCD website. As required by the California Climate Investment (CCI) Guidelines, the webpage displays the details of funding decisions for two new all-electric school buses and an electric bus charger for Paso Robles Joint Unified School District, four electric vehicle chargers for the San Luis Obispo County Hospital Health Campus, and one electric vehicle charger for Cal Poly's Facilities Operations and Maintenance Department. The CCI and the CAP Funds Supplement to the Carl Moyer Program 2017 Guidelines also state engagement to the AB 1550 designated low-income communities should be ongoing through the program's implementation, in order to select and fund projects that provide a benefit within the community. In order to understand the concerns of the low-income communities, staff attended the Day of the Child event in Oceano and Children's Day at the Plaza at the SLO Mission Plaza and surveyed approximately 130 community members.

Staff continue to work with potential applicants to evaluate if they meet the specified criteria outlined on the APCD CAP webpage. Possible projects include electric vehicle charging infrastructure for local businesses, transit agencies, school districts, and hospitals. Staff will coordinate with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) on potential projects prior to contracting.

- **Wood Burning Device Change-out Program:** The Woodsmoke Reduction Program is part of a statewide program supported by the "California Climate Investments" (CCI) program that provides grants to qualified applicants who replace existing uncontrolled wood burning stoves or fireplaces that are used as a primary source of heat in their home. Applicants can replace their old device with a natural gas or propane heating device, or a USEPA-certified wood stove or wood stove insert. The first program in FY17/18 was extremely successful, and when all of the change-outs are complete, will have replaced 90 dirty wood burning devices with new, cleaner burning technologies. Of the projects already provided vouchers, 16 were to low-income households. Staff are currently working with CAPCOA and CARB to release the second round of funding for this program, complete with updated guidelines for the program. The launch of this new funding is expected this summer. The upcoming program will also provide preference to low-income households for the first 60 days of the program.

  Staff are also currently working on outreach measures to reach additional homeowners in the Nipomo and Paso Robles area to help expend existing and new mitigation funding for woodsmoke reduction projects in those areas.

- **EPA STAR Community Grant:** South Coast Air Quality Management District is working collaboratively with SLO County APCD in an EPA-funded study that allows South Coast to test the accuracy of low-cost community air monitors throughout California. Through this community effort, it was determined that the low-cost sensors are not accurately reflecting particulate matter concentrations during significant blowing dust events on the Nipomo Mesa. APCD has co-located PurpleAir sensors at established APCD monitoring sites (Nipomo-CDF and Atascadero) for direct comparison with the EPA-approved BAM monitors, with the goal of helping with this investigation. In April, South Coast AQMD hosted a conference call with APCD staff and an active participant to provide an update on the status of the monitoring project, preliminary data analysis, and an opportunity for the community to provide feedback on the sensors and the process.

- **Lower Emission School Bus Program:** Staff will use the eligibility list from applications received in 2018 and existing selection criteria to determine the school bus grant awardee for this year's funding. We are waiting for delivery of the county's first all-electric school bus, late this summer, to Paso Robles Joint USD. Staff communicate regularly with local school districts to inform them of funding opportunities (both from the APCD and other sources, of which there are several statewide funding efforts) for the purchase of new lower or zero-emission school buses. This program significantly reduces school children's exposure to both cancer-causing and smog-forming pollution.

- **Old Car Buy Back Program:** The APCD Old Car Buy Back Program continues to provide $1,000 to eligible vehicle owners in SLO County who choose to retire their 1995 and older cars and pickups. To increase awareness and participation, staff recently doubled the number of postcards that are regularly sent to owners of older vehicles in SLO County whose registrations are coming due. Staff has found direct mail postcards to be one of the most effective ways to encourage participation in the program, thereby reducing mobile source emissions in the county.

- **Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Program:** In January, your Board approved $316,888 for alternative fuel and ZEV infrastructure projects. To bring awareness to this funding, staff issued a press release and published an ad for two days in the local Tribune newspaper – which included online and print distribution. Staff has received interest from local businesses and agencies who are interested in installing electric chargers at their locations for private and public use. Staff also discussed this opportunity with local businesses interested in switching fleet vehicles from diesel to compressed natural gas.

- **Zero Emission Vehicle Implementation Plan:** The APCD has been working with the Santa Barbara and Ventura Air Districts, Community Environmental Council, and Central Coast Clean Cities Coalition (C5) to implement the Zero Emission Vehicle Implementation Plan. Six candidates were selected for a free, electric vehicle site assessment. Those candidates included the SLO Guild Hall, SLO County Hospital, Paso Robles Unified School District's bus barn, Cal Poly, SLO City Corporation Yard, and San Miguel Laundry. The APCD partnered with ABM to host a webinar for the six selected candidates to explain the process of charging station installation and discuss how to obtain grant funding through the APCD's Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Program. To date, the SLO County Hospital, Cal Poly, the Paso Robles Unified School District, and San Miguel Laundry have submitted applications to the APCD's Alternative Fuel Infrastructure Program. The projects will be funded using Community Air Protection Funds or AB923/Moyer funds. In addition, one of the tasks associated with the Implementation Plan included the rebranding of the Plug-In Central Coast Website to ElectricDrive805. The website was launched in February and is active now at electricdrive805.org. The website's launch was a collaboration between the SLO, Ventura and Santa Barbara APCDs, the Ventura County Regional Energy Alliance, Central Coast Clean Cities Coalition, and Community Environmental Council. The coalition is dedicated to achieving rapid, equitable transition to electric vehicles.

3. **Community Engagement:**

- **APCD Video Project:** APCD staff have completed the production of a short video aimed at providing awareness of the APCD, its mission and main goals as an agency. The approximately 1-minute video is now on the SLO County APCD website and will be used on the APCD's social media channels. The video highlights several aspects of day-to-day programs across multiple APCD divisions.

- **Cal Poly Athletics:** APCD continues collaborating with Cal Poly Athletics to provide air quality information to the local community, students and sports fans. APCD highlights the "Air Quality and Your Health" message and promotes our AirAware text notification system in Game Day Programs for football, men's basketball and baseball. The partnership includes tabling opportunities at games, an advertisement on the LED rotational sign in Mott Athletic Center (used during basketball games, volleyball and wrestling), website recognition, as well as social media engagement. This sponsorship provides high profile visibility all year long to increase air quality awareness across a prime target audience identified in our 2014 Public Opinion Survey on Air Quality and Awareness.

- **May is Bike Month and May 17 was Bike to Work Day:** The month of May provides an opportunity for APCD to promote bicycling as a healthy alternative mode of personal transportation. This year the APCD will work on the third annual bicycle ridership count project during April and May in cooperation with the City of SLO, Bike SLO County and Rideshare.

- **Oceano Dunes Draft Particulate Matter Reduction Plan:** On May 1, staff held a public workshop at the South County Regional Center in Arroyo Grande to update the public on the progress and status of State Parks' Draft Particulate Matter Reduction Plan. The public was provided a forum to submit written comments and questions, hear from State Parks, SLO County APCD and the Scientific Advisory Group. Staff has posted the written comments on our webpage and is preparing responses to frequently ask questions.

- **Spring Outreach Events:** APCD participated in several outreach events this spring, with the help of our Clean Air Ambassadors. On April 7, staff attended the Day of the Child event in Oceano and on April 13, our Clean Air Ambassadors were at two events, the Outdoor Discovery Festival at Lopez Lake and Children's Day in the Plaza at the SLO Mission Plaza. All the events provided an excellent opportunity to provide air quality information to the public and solicit feedback on upcoming grant funding through AB617. Lastly, in collaboration with the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments, two of our Clean Air Ambassadors accomplished bike counts (separately from the bike counts completed as part of Bike Month) as part of the "Safety in Numbers" Regional Active Transportation Counts. These counts in May will be used as a comparison count to September's count during the official national counting week.

4. **New APCD Initiatives:**

- **Conservation Burn Training:** On April 11, the APCD, in collaboration with Vineyard Team and the Sonoma Ecology Center, hosted a workshop to provide classroom and hands-on training on methods to reduce emissions through conservation burns. The workshop was designed for vineyard, orchard and rangeland managers, forestry and tree contractors, fire personnel, ranchers and environmental science and ecology students. Conservation burns provide a significant opportunity to reduce emissions in our community during burn season and conserve vital land resources like carbon.

In doing these specialized burns, biochar is also created. Land managers can then use this soil amendment to increase crop production, retain nutrients and water, and sequester carbon safely in the soil. The workshop had over 25 people in attendance and was extremely informative, providing the opportunity to see the difference that moisture content, pile structure, and burn technique can have on overall smoke production. The APCD also collaborated with Monterey Bay Air Resources District staff to host identical training in Salinas on April 12.

- **Spanish Speaking Community Outreach:** Through work with our Clean Air Ambassadors, SLO County APCD has translated our popular children's activity booklet and story, *Percy's Story,* into a Spanish version. Staff also plans on developing a lesson plan, conforming with the state curriculum standards, to be used in local Spanish speaking classrooms in the fall. Staff also has placed an advertisement with a local TV station, KTAS. The commercial highlights important programs and information on how people can get local air quality information. Lastly, Clean Air Ambassador staff are helping with the translation of several documents in collaboration with ElectricDrive805.

UPCOMING OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The APCD does not have any scheduled upcoming outreach activities at this time.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

No other agencies were involved in developing this report.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Expenditures for the outreach efforts and activities described above are within the funds allocated for this purpose by your Board as part of the approved budget for FY 2018-2019. There are no additional financial impacts from this item.