



Air Pollution Control District
San Luis Obispo County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 14, 2020

**Media Contact: Gary Willey, 805-781-5912
Air Pollution Control Officer**

OCEANO DUNES SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY GROUP PROVIDES INFORMATION ON THE TEMPORARY CLOSURE'S EFFECT ON PARTICULATE MATTER EMISSIONS

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA: – In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Governor of California ordered the temporary closure of all camping at California State Parks effective March 17, 2020. Soon thereafter, the Governor ordered the full closure of California State Parks to all recreational vehicular traffic effective March 29, 2020. Currently, recreational access to the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreational Area (Oceano Dunes) is limited to non-campground and non-vehicular uses of outdoor areas. The sole motivation for these temporary changes is the need to reduce crowding and disease transmission to address the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency.

SLO County APCD staff has received several inquiries as to what immediate and long-term impacts may be realized from the temporary closure of the Oceano Dunes. The abrupt closure occurred in the midst of a multi-year effort to reduce the emissions of particulate matter (PM) from the Oceano Dunes. Many have questioned whether the abrupt closure will show PM emissions eliminated or substantially reduced to “natural” levels during this closure period. Most simply, the Scientific Advisory Group (SAG), a group that has been actively working on researching and working to reduce particulate levels from the Oceano Dunes, does not expect a few weeks or months of temporary OHV restrictions to substantially alter the balance of human versus natural contributions to PM emissions. Only through continued and sustained restoration projects does the SAG expect to see a significant reduction in PM emissions.

The SAG has developed a formal letter and guidance on this topic, and it is currently available on the SLO County APCD website. The SAG remains committed to supporting State Parks in an adaptive management process for ODSVRA dune restoration to maximize these PM emissions reductions while minimizing impacts on off-highway vehicle recreational opportunities.

To see the complete letter provided by the SAG, or to find out more about the efforts to mitigate dust emissions from the Oceano Dunes, visit SLOCleanAir.org/air-quality/oceano-dunes-efforts.

##