

Action Summary Minutes

San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District

GOVERNING BOARD MEETING

Central Region Office, Governing Board Room
1990 E. Gettysburg Avenue, Fresno, CA

**Thursday, April 15, 2021
9:00 a.m.**

Meeting held via Zoom Webinar and video teleconferencing with the Central Region Office (Fresno). This meeting was also webcast. Given the international COVID-19 pandemic, and consistent with the California Department of Public Health's recommendations and Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-29-20, no physical location was provided for public attendance.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER – The Chair, Supervisor Craig Pedersen, called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.
2. ROLL CALL – was taken and a quorum was present.

Present:

Drew M. Bessinger, Councilmember	City of Clovis
Vito Chiesa, Supervisor	Stanislaus County
David Couch, Supervisor	Kern County
Christina Fugazi, Councilmember	City of Stockton
Deborah Lewis, Mayor Pro Tem	City of Los Banos
Buddy Mendes, Supervisor	Fresno County
Tania Pacheco-Werner, Ph.D.	Appointed by Governor
Lloyd Pareira, Supervisor, Vice Chair	Merced County
Craig Pedersen, Supervisor, Chair	Kings County
Alvaro Preciado, Mayor*	City of Avenal
Monte Reyes, Mayor	City of Porterville
Robert Rickman, Supervisor	San Joaquin County
Alexander Sherriffs, M.D.	Appointed by Governor
Amy Shuklian, Supervisor**	Tulare County
Tom Wheeler, Supervisor	Madera County

* Arrived at 9:24 a.m.

**Arrived at 10:15 a.m.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT CALENDAR – Item Numbers (16 – 23): *These matters are routine in nature and are usually approved by a single vote. Prior to any action by the board, the public was given the opportunity to comment on any consent item.*
16. APPROVE ACTION SUMMARY MINUTES FOR THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY UNIFIED AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD MEETING OF THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2021
17. RECEIVE AND FILE LIST OF SCHEDULED MEETINGS FOR 2021
18. RECEIVE AND FILE OPERATIONS STATISTICS SUMMARY FOR MARCH 2021
19. RECEIVE AND FILE BUDGET STATUS REPORTS AS MARCH 31, 2021
20. APPROVE CONTRACT WITH ATMOSPHERIC ANALYSIS & CONSULTING, INC. TO PROVIDE LABORATORY ANALYSIS OF NON-METHANE ORGANIC COMPOUNDS FOR A TOTAL OF \$104,942
21. APPROVE CONTRACT WITH ATMOSPHERIC ANALYSIS & CONSULTING, INC. TO PROVIDE LABORATORY ANALYSIS OF CARBONYL COMPOUNDS FOR A TOTAL OF \$39,138
22. RECEIVE AND FILE QUARTERLY UPDATE TO THE BEST AVAILABLE CONTROL TECHNOLOGY (BACT) CLEARINGHOUSE
23. APPONTMENTS TO THE DISTRICT’S ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY GROUP

Public Comment: None

Moved: Wheeler
Seconded: Pareira
Ayes: Bessinger, Chiesa, Couch, Fugazi, Lewis, Mendes,
Pacheco-Werner, Pareira, Reyes, Rickman,
Sherriffs, Wheeler, Pedersen
Nays: None

Motion unanimously carried to approve Consent Calendar (Items 16 - 23)

5. PUBLIC COMMENT – *The following persons commented on this item:*
- Connie Young, Citizens Climate Lobby
 - Manuel Cunha, Nisei Farmers League
 - Janet Dietz-Kamei, Fresno Resident

6. S.T.A.R. RECOGNITION (Service, Teamwork, Attitude, Respect)
Chenecua Dixon, Personnel Director, formally recognized staff who reached a service milestone in the first quarter of 2021.

Five Years of Service

Jessica Olsen, Program Manager
Artemiza Velasco, Staff Technician

Ten Years of Service

Robert Gillis, Air Quality Analysis and Research Supervisor
Jason Lawler, Air Quality Compliance Manager
Deu Moua, Air Quality Specialist

Fifteen Years of Service

Sajjad Ahmad, Air Quality Engineer
Glenn Ramming, Senior Air Quality Inspector
Francisco Reyes, Accounting Technician

Twenty Years of Service

Steven Davidson, Senior Air Quality Engineer
Sheraz Gill, Deputy Air Pollution Control Officer
Andrea Ogden, Air Quality Engineer
Aaron Tarango, Program Manager

7. REPORT ON DISTRICT CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES – the written report of recent Citizens Advisory Committee activities was included with the agenda.

8. ACCEPT \$1,511,320 IN CARL MOYER STATE RESERVE PROJECT FUNDING
– Todd DeYoung, Director of Grants and Incentives, presented this item and recommended the Board accept \$1,511,320 from the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Carl Moyer Program State Reserve Project Funding Solicitation to fund eligible zero-emission infrastructure projects throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

Samir Sheikh, Executive Director/Air Pollution Control Officer, outlined how this program fits into the broad scheme of the District's grant programs. He said the Board has long advocated for zero emission transit, school bus, and heavy duty vehicle programs. He said zero-emission infrastructure has arisen as one of the major barriers to moving forward with these types of projects, and he felt there would be significant demand for this funding.

Supervisor Mendes wanted to confirm this was a new program without a current wait list. He said there would be a lot of public entities applying because they would get up to 100% funding on some of these items. He asked staff to report back to the Board on the progress of this program. Mr. Sheikh responded affirmatively and said this would be a new solicitation without an existing backlog.

Dr. Pacheco-Werner congratulated staff for continuing to be at the forefront of these infrastructure challenges. She added that one of the things she continues to raise at the state level is the infrastructure challenges in the rural areas. She asked if rural areas can leverage other types of funding that is out there to help make this money go further. She also asked if there was any research or sense of trying to prioritize superchargers over regular chargers, and how to best build infrastructure in the rural areas particularly.

Mr. Sheikh said the District is always looking to leverage additional funding sources and said it was encouraged to extend the reach of whatever funding we have. In terms of prioritizing amongst different types of charging stations, he said the District developed a Plug-In Vehicle Readiness Plan that identifies the need for both DC fast charging and level 2 charging stations strategically located throughout the Valley.

Mayor Preciado arrived at 9:24 a.m.

Dr. Sherriffs thanked staff for being proactive, getting this funding, and bringing it to the Valley. He also thanked Dr. Pacheco-Werner for highlighting the rural issue. He said recently he and his wife were driving their electric car across the Valley and when they got to their anticipated charging point, there were repairs being done nearby which closed off the charging station. He said this highlighted that it is good to have options, which will give people more confidence moving forward. Dr. Sherriffs said it is important for the District to develop a clear sense of our priorities and a road map to guide funding in that direction.

Mr. Sheikh highlighted there is a lot of attention to this issue legislatively, and there are a variety of efforts taking place that will not only expand funding but also perhaps remove some of the policy barriers and issues. He said when looking at the transitions that are being called for to electric vehicles, it is critical that the infrastructure be there to support the transition. He said the issues that Dr. Sherriffs raised are really important issues that require a concerted effort. Mr. Sheikh said there is significant focus at the statewide level with a priority being placed on projects that benefit disadvantaged communities. He said at this point, staff recommends maintaining first come, first served in this program and then see if it makes sense to come up with some kind of a readiness plan for the other sectors as we work with our partners statewide.

Public Comment: *The following persons commented on this item:*

- Janet Dietz-Kamei, Fresno Resident

Moved: Mendes

Seconded: Pareira

Ayes: Bessinger, Chiesa, Couch, Fugazi, Lewis, Mendes, Pacheco-Werner, Pareira, Preciado, Reyes, Rickman, Sherriffs, Wheeler
Pedersen

Nays: None

Motion unanimously carried to accept \$1,511,320 in Carl Moyer State Reserve Project Funding

9. ACCEPT \$1,900,000 IN ADDITIONAL REVENUE FROM THE CALIFORNIA AIR RESOURCES BOARD TO FUND THE DISTRICT'S DRIVE CLEAN IN THE SAN JOAQUIN VEHICLE REPLACEMENT PROGRAM – Brian Dodds, Program Manager, presented this item and recommended the Board accept up to \$1,900,000 from the California Air Resources Board to be utilized in the District's Drive Clean in the San Joaquin vehicle replacement program and to authorize the Executive Director/APCO to execute agreement with Valley Clean Air Now for the continued implementation of the Drive Clean in the San Joaquin Vehicle replacement program.

Vice Mayor Fugazi commented on a local car dealership in the Stockton area that has completely changed their business model from selling trucks to hybrid plug in vehicles due to their successful participation in this program. She said the program has been successful in getting participation from people that have been traditionally skeptical and have not purchased electric vehicles. She said she was very happy that we are able to put more funds into this program, because she knows there is a list of people who want to participate.

Councilmember Bessinger said that this was his favorite District program. He said during his time in law enforcement he has pulled over many people driving gross polluters, and the drivers expressed concern that they did not have the resources to get their cars repaired. He said having been at some of these events, he has seen people with smiles on their faces knowing that they are going to get their problem resolved either through repair or potentially replacement of their vehicle. He added that it especially helps the disadvantaged communities and is glad this is the focus of the program.

Dr. Sherriffs thanked staff for this fabulous program. He said Valley Clean Air Now has done a tremendous job making it successful. He asked about opportunities moving forward to get even greater reductions in criteria pollutants and greenhouse gases from this program.

Mr. Sheikh responded there is growing interest and discussion at the state level about how these programs can be more effective, particularly to the benefit of disadvantaged communities. He said the District's program continues to evolve as opportunities arise and continues to serve as a model statewide.

Mayor Preciado thanked staff for these programs because of the benefits that they have brought to rural communities throughout the Valley.

Mayor Pro Tem Lewis said being new on the Board, she was still learning about this program. She said she would certainly be contacting staff to find out how to get her city involved so they are able to access this funding for their citizens.

Public Comment: *The following persons commented on this item:*

- Tom Knox, Valley Clean Air Now

Moved: Fugazi

Seconded: Wheeler

Ayes: Bessinger, Chiesa, Couch, Fugazi, Lewis, Mendes, Pacheco-Werner, Pereira, Preciado, Reyes, Rickman, Sherriffs, Wheeler, Pedersen

Nays: None

Motion unanimously carried to accept \$1,900,000 in additional revenue from the California Air Resources Board to fund the District's Drive Clean in the San Joaquin Vehicle Replacement Program

10. REPORT ON 2020-21 WINTER RESIDENTIAL WOODSMOKE REDUCTION STRATEGY – Jon Klassen, Director of Air Quality Science and Planning, and Jaime Holt, Chief Communications Officer, presented the District's Report on the 2020-2021 Winter Residential Woodsmoke Reduction Strategy, detailing the following:

- Valley air quality during 2020-2021 winter season
- Effectiveness of District's control strategy
- Public health benefits of strategy
- Air quality and meteorology compared to previous seasons
- Impact of exceptional events during 2020-2021 winter season
- District's wood burning device change-out incentive program
- Extensive public outreach efforts
- Enforcement and compliance assistance activities

Supervisor Shuklian arrived at 10:15 a.m.

Supervisor Wheeler said this program has been very successful from the beginning. He voiced appreciation for District staff who have participated in many Madera County town hall meetings to get the word out about this program and

said their county has one of the highest participation rates. He added that this program has helped to tremendously improve winter air quality in the Oakhurst area by reducing woodsmoke.

Dr. Pacheco-Werner thanked staff for their great work on this program. She said this is an important topic and she appreciated the District efforts to bring about a cultural shift, but doing so in a targeted manner as the issues are very different in urban versus rural communities. She said she would like to see a further transition into the messaging for those that do have alternatives to burning for heating their homes to not just check before they burn, but to not burn at all. She asked if staff saw a need to target the outdoor fire pits that have become very popular in urban areas during the upcoming season.

Mr. Sheikh thanked Dr. Pacheco-Werner for her comments. He said staff would continue to look for opportunities to enhance the messaging going into next winter to make sure residents are aware of the requirements and preferably reducing their wood burning whenever possible.

Ms. Holt added that the District ran a commercial this past season that was directly targeted at outdoor fire pits and this was also included in staff's messaging when speaking to the media.

Mayor Reyes thanked staff for this great program. He commended staff on approaching outreach for this program with more social media efforts and other ways to really zero in on the target area that we want to reach. He said the efforts to use local representatives to reach their constituents has been a successful part of the outreach strategy and will continue to pay dividends for communication and relationships in the future.

Councilmember Bessinger said he and his wife participated in this program and were very happy. He said aesthetically it is a great improvement and from a heating option, it is also very good. He encouraged residents to not hesitate to participate in this program.

Dr. Sherriffs said this work that the Board and District staff are doing with this program is right up there with Drive Clean in terms of impact and benefits to the Valley communities. Because this strategy focuses on reducing direct PM2.5 emissions, it is cost-effective and has much less negative impact on the economy compared to the NOx reduction efforts. Additionally, the strategy is the most impactful in terms of health effects because it targets direct PM2.5 which is the most unhealthy. He said getting reductions in direct PM2.5 will have the biggest health impact in terms of reducing cancer, heart disease, and death. He said this is very important and has been very successful. He said it was important to note that when the air quality is unhealthy for sensitive groups, that represents includes residents over the age of 65, children, and people with cardiovascular disease and other risk factors which make up half of the population.

Dr. Sherriffs asked for an assessment of the District enforcement efforts regarding the wood burning prohibitions in the rule. Mr. Sheikh responded in regards to the overall residential wood burning enforcement strategy, one of the key components has been the outreach efforts and has relied on increasing public acceptance of the program. District assigns inspectors to conduct surveillance on curtailment days and to respond to public complaints of burning when they are received. He said his overall assessment is that the District has a very strong enforcement program. The vast majority of violations of this rule are first time offenders and we have seen a very low recidivism rate. He said staff have seen behaviors change over time with all of the education and outreach we have done. Although, he added there continues to be a diversity of viewpoint on this issue. He noted there were many wood smoke impacts in the summer from wildfire impacts that have also contribute to the behavior change.

Mr. Sheikh added staff hoped to conduct another scientific survey during the next fiscal year to gather information on updated behaviors and opinions about this issue. He added based on the feedback from the Board, staff will continue making adjustments to the program. He said if we find opportunities based on this and other ongoing discussions between now and the winter season, he anticipated that staff would be able to come back to the Board with more potential enhancements to that program.

Vice Mayor Fugazi commented it was important to get the message out about this program to any business that provides this type of unit, including major retailers and independent businesses. She also suggested providing information on this program to participants in the District's Tune In Tune Up, and Drive Clean programs to encourage them to participate in this one as well. She said it was important to reach more people because they are still burning wood.

Mr. Sheikh thanked Vice Mayor Fugazi for her great suggestions. He said the District has continued to ramp up outreach to participants in other District programs during events, community settings, and town hall meetings. He said staff would keep trying to find even more opportunities.

Mayor Pro Tem Lewis echoed Councilmember Bessinger's comments and said she had her wood burning fireplace removed before the rule went into effect and she loves her new gas insert. She asked if there has been consideration to extending the Burn Cleaner program to outdoor devices. Mr. Sheikh responded that these devices are not currently eligible as the focus of the program has been on devices fulfilling interior space heating needs. He said the outdoor devices are really more about a social environment. He added there were no restrictions that would prevent the District from perhaps offering some sort of rebate or modest financial incentive for some of these types of devices, especially if it continues to be a growing trend and something that the Board would like to consider to try and address.

Supervisor Shuklian shared that she has participated in the Burn Cleaner program in the past to convert her device from wood burning to gas and said it was a lot nicer to push a button and have flames, rather than going out in the cold to bring in the wood. She voiced her strong support for this program.

Supervisor Chiesa said he considered this issue a very high priority and asked for clarification on the Hot Spot counties. Mr. Sheikh responded that through the development of the 2018 PM2.5 Plan, it was determined that additional reductions were necessary in the three Hot-Spot counties to bring the Valley into attainment of the federal PM2.5 standards. Supervisor Chiesa said that trying to get residents to convert from wood burning to gas devices faster is important to him and would be a great benefit to Valley communities.

Public Comment: *The following persons commented on this item:*

- Janet Dietz-Kamei, Fresno Resident
- Thomas Menz, Fresno Resident
- Clare Statham, Fresno Resident

Chairman Pedersen suggested holding additional discussions on this topic during the next Governing Board Study Session, which typically affords more time for in-depth and lengthy discussions.

11. UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ALTERNATIVES TO AGRICULTURAL BURNING INCENTIVE PROGRAM – Mr. DeYoung presented an update to the Board on the implementation of the District's Alternatives to Agricultural Burning Incentive Program and recommended that the Board increase the funding allocation for Program up to an additional \$3,000,000 to ensure sufficient program funding for the remainder of the 2020-21 fiscal year.

Dr. Sherriffs said this was an important topic. He asked what was the source of the funding for this program and if it would help for the permanent transition to no agriculture burning. Mr. Sheikh responded that staff is intending to use funding that was collected from abatement fees, in addition to emission penalty fees collected for non-compliance with the District's furnace rule. Regarding long term benefits, he said this was really a transition period right now. He added that as the District works toward the goal of a near complete phase out by January 1, 2025, the District, CARB, and Valley stakeholders are wrestling with how to leverage programs like the District's Alternatives to Agricultural Burning Incentive Program to ensure a successful transition away from open agricultural burning. He said while local funding may be modest in the grand scheme of things, nonetheless it is still certainly very important as growers explore alternative practices.

Public Comment – *The following persons commented on this item:*

- Janet Dietz-Kamei, Fresno Resident

- Roger Isom, Western Agricultural Processors Association, and California Cotton Ginners Association
- Manuel Cunha, Nisei Farmers League
- Thomas Menz, Fresno Resident

Moved: Mendes

Seconded: Pareira

Ayes: Bessinger, Chiesa, Couch, Fugazi, Lewis, Mendes,
Pacheco-Werner, Pareira, Preciado, Reyes, Rickman,
Sherriffs, Wheeler, Pedersen

Nays: None

Motion unanimously carried to increase funding allocation for the Alternatives to Agricultural Burning Incentive Program up to an additional \$3,000,000 for the continued implementation of this program to ensure sufficient program funding for the remainder of the 2020-21 fiscal year; and authorize the Executive Director/APCO to make administrative changes to the program as necessary to ensure successful implementation of the program

12. VERBAL REPORT ON CALIFORNIA AIR RESOURCES BOARD ACTIVITIES – Dr. Pacheco-Werner provided an update on highlights from the CARB Board meeting held on March 25, 2021.
13. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/APCO COMMENTS – Mr. Sheikh said that the Governor signed a \$536 million wildfire package aimed at supporting wildfire suppression, improving first health, and building resilience in communities to help protect residents and property from catastrophic wildfires. He added that the District is following this closely and will determine whether there is anything we can do to support anything related to these funds in our counties and communities.
14. GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS – None
15. CLOSED SESSION – Annette Ballatore, District Counsel, announced the Governing Board would hold a Closed Session pursuant to the Ralph M. Brown Act as follows:
 - CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATOR – Chenecua Dixon, Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6. Employee Organization – San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Employees Association

Public Comment: None

Chairman Pedersen adjourned the meeting at 11:52 p.m.

ADJOURN

The next scheduled meeting of the Governing Board is: Thursday, May 20, 2021, at 9:00 a.m. The meeting starts at 9:00 a.m., in the Central Region Office, Governing Board Room, 1990 E. Gettysburg Avenue, Fresno. The meeting will be held via Zoom audio and video teleconference (VTC).