

# District Highlights

January 21, 2016 Actions by the Governing Board

## **Board Adopts 2016 Legislative Priorities and Strategy for Modernizing the Federal Clean Air Act**

The Governing Board approved the District's 2016 Legislative Platform and adopted a strategy to seek minor changes to the Clean Air Act that, if enacted, provide for expeditious attainment of the federal health-based standards while minimizing costly sanctions that can be devastating to the region. First, the District will pursue a bipartisan introduction of the District's Clean Air Act modernization legislative proposal as a stand-alone measure. If this effort fails to garner bipartisan backing and support from environmental advocates, then the District will work to incorporate the proposed legislation into bills being introduced by Congressman Pete Olson (R-Texas), Congressman Matt Salmon (R-AZ), Senator Jeff Flake (R-AZ), and Senator John Thune (R-SD) addressing the setting and implementation of the federal ozone standards, including measures such as Ozone Regulatory Delay and Extension of Assessment Length Act of 2015 (ORDEAL) Act, and offering the District's support for the legislative package as a whole.

As a part of that action, the District is seeking broad-based support of its Clean Air Act Modernization proposal from all stakeholders, including engaging in dialogue with the Citizen's Advisory Committee and the Environmental Justice Advisory Group (EJAG).

In the coming year, the District will continue to advocate on air quality issues that impact the Valley. The District's priority issues include:

- (Federal) Seek legislative improvements to the Federal Clean Air Act, as detailed in the District's Clean Air Act Modernization Proposal, retaining the core elements in the Act that serve to protect public health while streamlining the administrative requirements in the Act, and ensuring expeditious air quality improvement considering technological and economic feasibility.
- (Federal) Support the Commonsense Legislative Exceptional Events Reform (CLEER) Act that will bring more certainty and streamline the EPA exceptional events approval process
- (State) Advocate for an increase in state subvention funding to help offset the impacts of inflation and increased responsibilities
- (State) Seek revenue from the Cap and Trade program
- (State/Federal) Insure that greenhouse gas emissions reduction programs are not at the expense of criteria pollutant programs
- (State/Federal) Ensure that disadvantaged communities are not "redlined" and that local control over resources to assist these communities is maintained
- (State/Federal) Seek adequate funding from state/federal government for the installation and operation of air quality monitoring instruments
- (State/Federal) Support efforts that provide for cost-effective alternatives to agricultural burning

- (State/Federal) Seek state and federal funding for technology advancement projects
- (State/Federal) Support for adequate resources/policies to reduce the air quality impact of wildfires

### **District's Effective and Timely Communication to the Public of Air Quality Information**

In addition to complying with the federal requirement to report the Air Quality Index (AQI) to the public, the District has instituted a more mature and advanced public education program using the District's groundbreaking Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) system which provides Valley schools, parents and the general public with real-time access to hour by hour local air quality conditions. With the recent EPA action to reset the AQI scale, the District will begin a focused public outreach effort to help the public avoid confusion with the new AQI while encouraging the utilization of the District's more health-protective RAAN system. The District will also assess the need for potential changes to the Real-time Outdoor Activity Risk (ROAR) guidelines for ozone.

The formulas used for calculating AQI are tied to the national ambient air quality standards set by EPA for each pollutant. Therefore, as standards change, the calculated AQI changes accordingly. In October 2015, EPA lowered the federal 8-hour ozone standard from 75 parts per billion (ppb) to 70 ppb and in turn changed the AQI scale.

The Governing Board took action to avoid public confusion while achieving maximum public health protection as the District begins to use the new AQI scale. As required by federal law, the District will adopt the new AQI scale before the 2016 ozone season for reporting, forecasting, and analysis. In addition, the District will be conducting a public outreach campaign aimed at achieving a greater public understanding of the AQI, air quality progress to date, and air quality information tools provided by the District that can be used to protect public health. The District will couple this education effort with the Healthy Air Living Schools initiative to further educate individuals about RAAN and the AQI. Finally, District staff will consult health experts and work with schools to gauge anticipated participation under varying RAAN action levels that may potentially be changed by the new AQI scale. District staff will return to the Board with a detailed analysis and specific recommendations.

### **District Receives High Marks in Financial Audit**

Over the course of the last several years, the District has been successful in bringing hundreds of millions of dollars in state and federal funds that are reinvested in Valley communities to reduce air pollution. In exercising its fiduciary responsibilities, the District places a high priority on public accountability and transparency. The District prepares and publishes its annual financial report, which is audited annually by an independent accounting firm, in accordance with Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) highest standards and has won GFOA awards.

At the January Board meeting, Osvaldo Gutierrez, CPA, Audit Manager of Brown Armstrong Accountancy Corporation presented the results of a recent independent audit of the District's financial statements and federal awards programs. The purpose of the audit was to assure that District financial statements conformed to strict governmental standards and that all federal dollars were spent in accordance with program requirements. The audit results presented by Mr. Gutierrez showed that the District received the highest possible scores, with no need for corrections, and maintained its status as a federal low-risk auditee.

## December District Activities

### **Outreach and Communications**

- The District spent December traveling throughout the Valley issuing out the Kids Calendars to schools. The month of December was also about Check Before You Burn awareness followed with lots of calls, and advertising which encouraged Valley residents to register their devices. The District is also revamping the Kids Kit which started off with a survey to seek the input of those whom have requested one.
- In December, District staff responded to 18 media calls and 106 public calls and 35 emails, issued two news releases and attended 7 events and presentations.

### **Grant and Incentive Programs**

- In December, the District received 703 incentive program applications. 497 were for the Wood Stove Change-Out Program and 51 were for the Heavy Duty Engine Program.
- In December, \$2,538,646.62 was placed under contract in the Heavy Duty Engine Program and 38 claims were paid.
- In December, \$1,009,924.27 was paid out in REMOVE II program claims.
- In December, \$424,670.46 was paid in Burn Cleaner program claims and 265 claims were processed.

December 2015	Applications	Grants Offered		Grants Executed		Amount Paid	
Program	Number Received & Entered	Number of Contracts sent out	Sum of Grant Funding	Number of Contracts Executed	Sum of Grant Funding	Number of Claims paid	Sum of Grant Funding
Heavy Duty	51	59	\$2,538,646.62	126	\$4,981,181.32	38	\$1,430,208.02
School Bus	4	1	\$92,626.39	3	\$387,947.48	4	\$38,424.13
On-Road Prop 1B	0	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	11	\$480,000.00
Lawn and Garden	5	8	\$1,645.62	8	\$1,645.62	1	\$150.00
REMOVE	142	347	\$359,170.00	353	\$462,770.00	1,193	\$1,009,924.27
Burn Cleaner	497	598	\$1,010,500.00	596	\$1,007,500.00	265	\$424,670.46
Technology Advancement	1	1	\$498,400.00	0	\$0.00	2	\$67,644.55
Public Benefit	3	21	\$1,071,724.37	17	\$3,538,841.91	10	\$629,480.93
<b>Totals</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>1035</b>	<b>\$5,572,713.00</b>	<b>1103</b>	<b>\$10,379,886.33</b>	<b>1,524</b>	<b>\$4,080,502.36</b>

Reductions from Executed Contracts (tons)			
Nox	PM	ROG	Total
554	222	54	830

Smoking Vehicles	13
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### **Operations Overview**

- Completed 4830 inspections in December, and 345 NOVs were issued. Mutual settlement case completions totaled 173.
- Received 117 permit applications in December, and 197 permits were issued.
- Received 13 smoking vehicle reports in December.
- Received 162 environmental documents in December.

## ***Upcoming Meetings***

**Governing Board\***

**9:00 a.m. Feb. 18, 2016**

**Citizens Advisory Committee\***

**10:00 a.m. Mar. 1, 2016**

**Enviro. Justice Adv. Grp.**

**5:30 p.m. Mar. 3, 2016**

*Meetings are held in the Fresno office Governing Board Room and via video teleconference to the Modesto and Bakersfield offices. Details: [www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org)*

*\*Webcast*