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DATE: August 20, 2015

TO: SJVUAPCD Governing Board



FROM: Seyed Sadredin, Executive Director/APCO
Project Coordinator: Sheraz Gill

RE: **ITEM NUMBER 7: SEASONAL AIR QUALITY DATA AND END OF SUMMER PUBLIC OUTREACH STRATEGY FOR CALL TO ACTION TO MAINTAIN THE VALLEY'S CLEAN AIR TREND**

RECOMMENDATION:

Review and discuss seasonal air quality data and end of summer public outreach strategy for call to action to maintain the Valley's clean air trend.

DISCUSSION:

As we approach the end of summer, the San Joaquin Valley is on the verge of completing a record setting clean air season for ozone. This is unprecedented given the severe drought, strings of triple digit temperatures and multiple wildfires impacting the Valley. As we approach the beginning of the school season, maintaining this clean air pace requires diligence by the public in minimizing vehicular emissions associated with back to school traffic.

Record Setting Ozone Air Quality in 2015

Through the month of July, the 2015 ozone season air quality in the air basin is on track to be the best in recorded air quality history of the San Joaquin Valley. In fact, July 2015 alone recorded the best air quality for the month of July in the history of monitoring air quality in the San Joaquin Valley. Although the May to July 2015 time period has had times of good atmospheric dispersion from passing storms, it has also had a number of high pressure stagnation events with soaring temperatures with strings of triple digits, plentiful sunshine, and stagnant wind flow, all contributing to the potential for the formation of high concentrations of ozone.

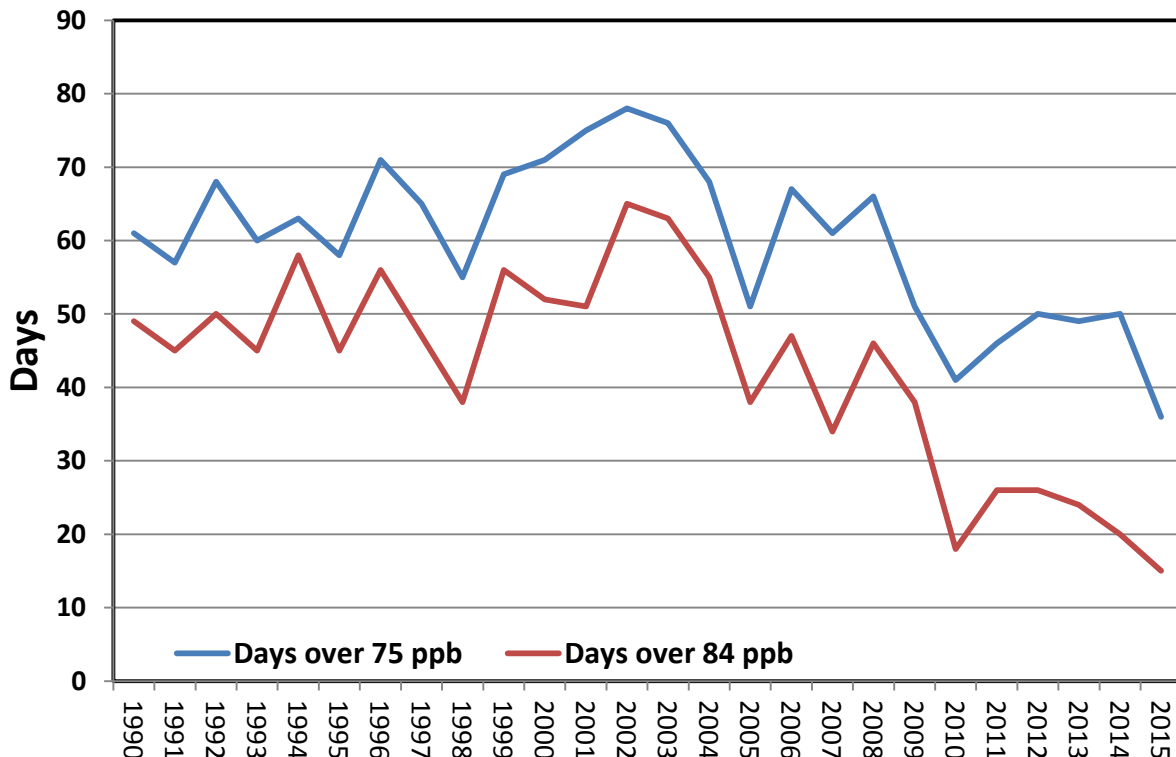
Despite these challenges, the Valley has shown tremendous improvement in ozone air quality this year compared to past years, and has already set new records for a number of metrics across a monitoring period of over 35 years. These improvements would not be possible without the success of the District's control strategy through its various attainment planning efforts, its robust incentive programs, and the commitment from the Valley's stakeholders in doing their part to reduce emissions as much as possible.

Specifically, for the May to July period of 2015, the Valley has:

- Set a new record low for the number of days the Valley exceeded the 2008 8-hour ozone standard of 75 ppb, with only 36 days recorded.
- Set a new record low for the number of days the Valley exceeded the 1997 8-hour ozone standard of 84 ppb, with only 15 days recorded.

The following charts provide detailed information regarding the ozone air quality experienced in the San Joaquin Valley over the last several decades. This progress is even more notable given that there are currently twice as many ozone monitors deployed throughout the Valley compared to the earlier years of ozone monitoring.

Figure 1 Valley Days Exceeding 8-hour Ozone Standards (May through July)

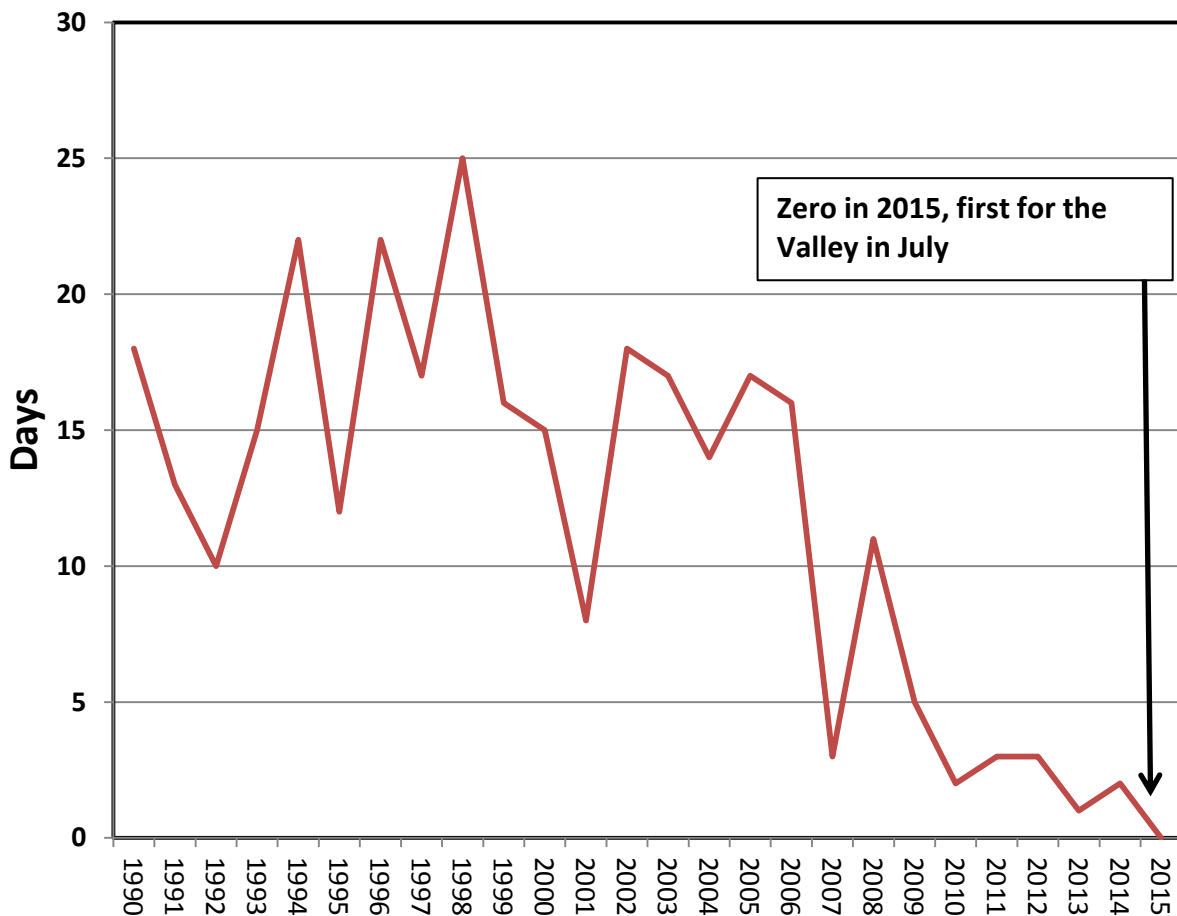


The month of July 2015 alone has set a new Valley record for the best ozone air quality ever recorded in the month of July, breaking records across a number of metrics.

Specifically, during the month of July 2015, the Valley has:

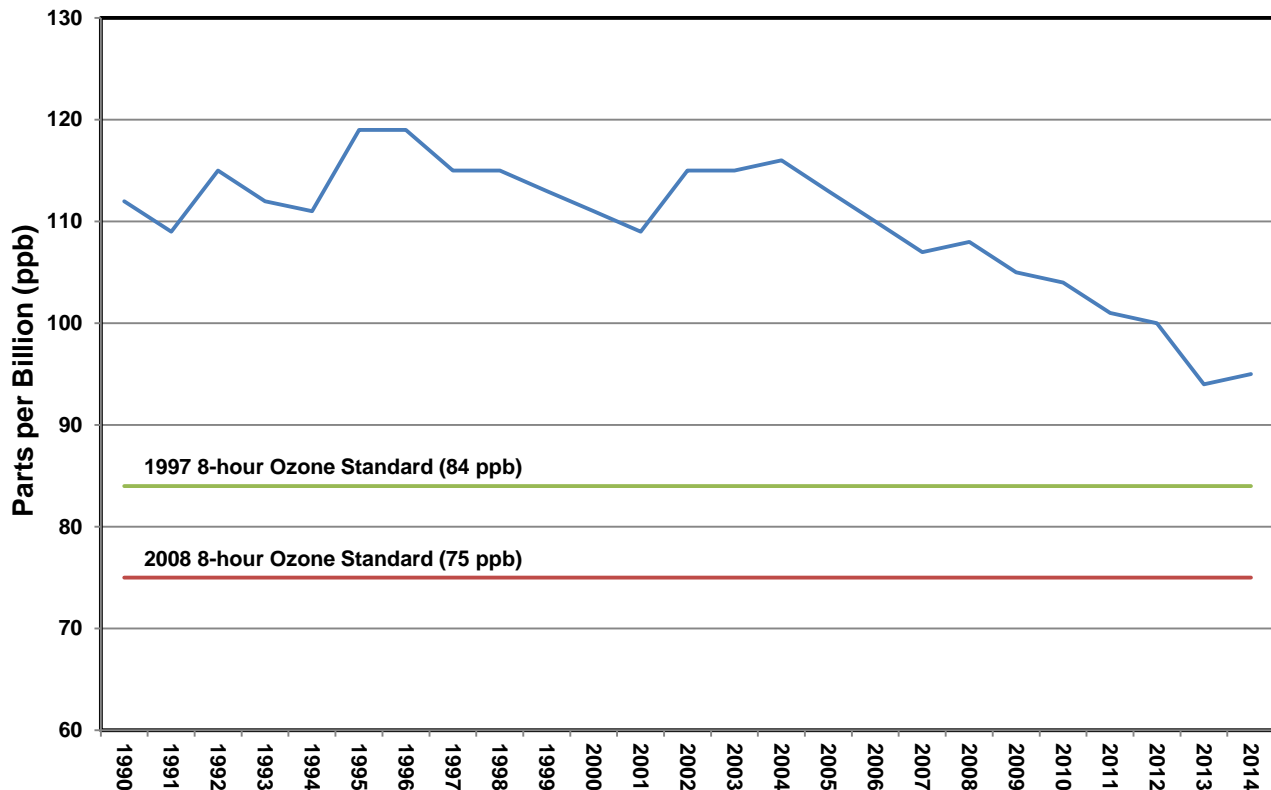
- Set a new record low for the number of days the Valley exceeded the 2008 8-hour ozone standard of 75 ppb, with only 10 days recorded, meaning there were 21 days during the month when every ozone monitor in the Valley met this federal standard.
- Set a new record low for the number of days the Valley exceeded the 1997 8-hour ozone standard of 84 ppb, with only 5 days recorded, meaning there were 26 days during the month when every ozone monitor in the Valley met this federal standard.
- For the first time recorded zero unhealthy ozone air quality days in the month of July in over 35 years of monitoring.
- Recorded the lowest July average 8-hour ozone concentration in Valley recorded history at 71 ppb.

Figure 2 Valley Unhealthy Ozone AQI Days in July



As a part of the positive trend in ozone air quality, the Valley is on track to meet the federal 1997 8-hour ozone standard of 84 ppb ahead of the projected 2023 attainment date as detailed in the *2007 Ozone Plan*. Additionally, improving progress toward meeting the stricter 2008 8-hour ozone standard of 75 ppb bodes well as the District prepares its attainment plan for this current federal standard; although many challenges still lie ahead. The design value, which is the official metric used by the EPA to determine whether an area is in attainment, has also improved greatly during the same time period. Since 1995, the Valley's 8-hour ozone design value has decreased by 24 ppb and is now only 11 ppb away from attaining the 84 ppb standard.

Figure 3 San Joaquin Valley 8-hour Ozone Design Value Trend



Impacts from Summer Wildfires

With the ongoing and increasing drought conditions that are afflicting the western U.S., and California to a greater degree, the potential for wildfire activity in the Sierra Nevada has never been so high. Within the District's boundaries this summer, the region has experienced three major wildfire incidents that have impacted the air quality in the foothill and mountainous areas of the San Joaquin Valley, those being the Willow, Cabin, and Rough fires.

Fortunately, the District has not yet experienced heavy smoke impacts in the more populated areas of the Valley floor, which has helped the region in marking a record setting ozone season through July of this year. As dispersion conditions fluctuate

throughout the rest of the summer season, smoke impacts to the San Joaquin Valley are still possible, especially as more wildfires are expected to move across the landscape through the end of the summer. Avoiding heavy wildfire smoke impacts, and the ozone creating precursors that they carry, will continue to be important if the Valley is to continue its record setting ozone season.

The District has created a wildfire specific webpage and has worked closely with local media to keep the public informed on any potential smoke impacts that might affect Valley residents.

End of Summer Public Outreach Strategy

In mid-August the District began this year's ozone season public messaging campaign which will intensify and continue through September urging the public to take action to minimize vehicular and other polluting activities. The District will also issue Air Alerts if high peak ozone concentrations are anticipated.

The theme for this year's ozone season messaging will be "We the People Pledge to Do Our Part" and will be disseminated through various means as follows:

- Press events which promote Air Alert, No idling and the usefulness of the Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) and the Web-based Archived Air Quality (WAAQ) System
- Outreach media packets including graphics and air quality improvement charts to be used on-air
- Radio and TV commercials
- Cinemedia spots preceding first-run summer blockbusters
- Outdoor billboards
- Convenience store "carteles" posters
- Digital outreach via Pandora, Facebook and Twitter
- Print media specifically targeted during Air Alerts and Back-to-School traffic

Outreach will be conducted primarily in English and Spanish with limited Hmong and Punjabi. The District will coordinate outreach with the media to secure on-camera interviews, hold press conferences, and leverage public affairs to discuss Air Alerts and the importance of driving less during this key time of year.