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DATE: June 20, 2019

TO: SJVUAPCD Governing Board

FROM: Samir Sheikh, Executive Director/APCO
Project Coordinator: Morgan Lambert



RE: **ITEM NUMBER 12: AUTHORIZE DISTRICT TO PARTICIPATE IN NEW STATEWIDE PRESCRIBED BURN REPORTING AND MONITORING SUPPORT PROGRAM**

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the attached Resolution approving and authorizing the Executive Director/APCO to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association to participate in the new statewide Prescribed Burn Reporting and Monitoring Support Program.

BACKGROUND:

Air pollution generated from wildfires can routinely overwhelm emission reduction efforts in the San Joaquin Valley and result in periods of excessively high particulate matter and ozone concentrations. Due to exceptionally dry drought conditions, the buildup of combustible materials through decades of forest mismanagement, and the mortality of millions of trees from the drought and bark beetle infestation, the state is experiencing record-setting large wildfires that are directly impacting the Valley's air quality and health of Valley residents. At the November 2015 Governing Board meeting, your Board discussed the need to further use prescribed burning as a tool to remove excess fuels in the forested areas of the District to reduce the number and severity of wildfires in the future. Your Board also discussed the need to develop potential changes to the District's rules, policies, and procedures to facilitate a more effective use of prescribed burning. Based on this direction, and in collaboration with local Land Management Agencies, over the last several years the District has

employed more flexible policies to facilitate the use of prescribed burning as a tool to reduce fuel more rapidly.

With the Sierra Nevada still experiencing the consequences of California's tree mortality epidemic, this issue is still very relevant as the region has experienced a number of the largest wildfires in state history in recent years. The purpose of today's item is to approve a resolution to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) to participate in the new statewide Prescribed Burn Reporting and Monitoring Support Program in an effort to facilitate increased levels of prescribed burning across the state.

DISCUSSION:

State leaders and agencies are recognizing the need for decisive actions to restore California's forested lands to resiliency. In the February 2018 Little Hoover Commission report entitled *Fire on the Mountain: Rethinking Forest Management in the Sierra Nevada*, the Commission concluded that a century of poor forest management policies has interrupted the natural and historical cycle of fire and has left forests vulnerable to disease, insects, catastrophic fire and drought. The Commission recommended that the Governor and members of the Legislature take swift actions to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration through agency collaboration, create a culture where fire is a tool and not a threat, develop a long-term plan for forest materials, and educate Californians on forest resiliency. The Commission praised the efforts of Governor Brown's Tree Mortality Task Force (created in November 2015), but recommended that the task force evolve beyond the immediate crisis into a long-term forest management entity with funding to guide a transformation in managing California forests. The Commission also highlighted the need for greater teamwork between the state and federal government, the latter of which owns nearly 60 percent of the forested land in California.

In 2018, the Governor issued several directives and the Legislature passed several bills aimed at improving forest resiliency and reducing the risk of wildfires in California. Of particular note are two bills, Senate Bill (SB) 1260 (Jackson) and SB 901 (Dodd), which focus on fire prevention and forest management. Consistent with the Governor's directives and new legislative mandates, the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) 2018-19 Budget contains \$2,000,000 in Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds to develop and implement the new Prescribed Burn Reporting and Monitoring Support Program. Under the program, CARB will be working with local air districts to facilitate the increase in prescribed burns called for to meet statewide goals, enhance air quality and smoke monitoring, and provide public outreach regarding the benefits of prescribed burns. To aid in the coordination and administration of the program, CARB has contracted with CAPCOA to coordinate the necessary statewide reporting as well as administer funds to reimburse local air district costs for participating in the program.

The program will require participating districts to support a range of tasks associated with the expected increase in prescribed burning. Districts signing onto the program would agree to:

1. Keep track of prescribed fires in their district and report this data to CAPCOA quarterly using the statewide Prescribed Fire Information Reporting System (PFIRS).
2. Work with CAPCOA to place air monitors at approximately 60 prescribed burns across the state over the next year. CAPCOA will work with districts to decide which projects to monitor.
3. Work with CAPCOA, CARB and other state agencies on messaging to the public about why more prescribed burning is needed, informing the public where burns are occurring, and providing increased access to air quality information.

Participation in this new program is entirely voluntary, with additional costs incurred to be reimbursed under new funding available from the state. Consistent with your Board's direction to promote and facilitate enhanced forest management practices including prescribed burning, the District recommends participating in this new program. Under the proposed MOU, the District would be reimbursed for prescribed burn program implementation costs up to \$122,500, with additional funding of up to \$500,000 available statewide to districts for reimbursement of costs associated with air monitoring of prescribed burn projects as well as any necessary travel and training. To participate in the program, the District will need to enter into a MOU with CAPCOA. The MOU is still being finalized; therefore, the item before you today would grant the Executive Director/APCO the authority to enter into the MOU once finalized.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There are sufficient appropriations included in the FY2018-19 Budget to cover the limited work that may be performed under this program in the remainder of FY2018-19. The District's proposed FY2019-20 Budget contains sufficient appropriations to cover implementation of the program. No changes to the Budget are necessary at this time.

Attachment: Board Resolution (3 pages)

San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District
Governing Board Meeting
June 20, 2019

**AUTHORIZE DISTRICT TO PARTICIPATE IN NEW STATEWIDE
PRESCRIBED BURN REPORTING AND MONITORING SUPPORT
PROGRAM**

Attachment:

BOARD RESOLUTION
(3 PAGES)

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**BEFORE THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE
SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY UNIFIED
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT**

IN THE MATTER OF APPROVING AND
AUTHORIZING THE DISTRICT TO
PARTICIPATE IN THE NEW STATEWIDE
PRESCRIBED BURN REPORTING AND
MONITORING SUPPORT PROGRAM

RESOLUTION NO. _____

WHEREAS, the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District (District) is a duly constituted unified district, as provided in California Health and Safety Code sections 40150 to 40161, and;

WHEREAS, the District is authorized by California Health and Safety Code section 40702 to make and enforce all necessary and proper orders, rules and regulations to accomplish the purpose of Division 26 of the Health and Safety Code, and;

WHEREAS, air pollution generated from wildfires can routinely overwhelm emission reduction efforts in the San Joaquin Valley and result in periods of excessively high particulate matter and ozone concentrations; and:

WHEREAS, the District has advocated for fuel reduction and forest management efforts, including prescribed burning, to improve the health and resiliency of forested lands and improve future air quality by lessening the frequency and severity of wildfires; and:

WHEREAS, the District operates a smoke management program intended to permit, regulate, and coordinate the use of prescribed burning and hazard reduction burning while minimizing smoke impacts to the public; and:

WHEREAS, in 2018 Governor issued several directives and the Legislature passed several bills (including SB 901 and SB 1260) aimed at improving forest resiliency and to reduce the risk of wildfires in California; and

WHEREAS, SB 856 appropriates \$2 million to CARB for local air districts to support the implementation of SB 901 and SB 1260 related to air monitoring of prescribed fires and public outreach; and

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1 **WHEREAS**, CARB established the new Prescribed Burn Reporting and Monitoring
2 Support Program to work with local air districts to facilitate the increase in prescribed burns
3 expected to meet statewide goals, enhance air quality and smoke monitoring, and provide
4 a public outreach regarding the benefits of prescribed burns; and

5 **WHEREAS**, the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA)
6 has contracted with CARB to coordinate and administer the reimbursement of funds for
7 the Prescribed Burn Reporting and Monitoring Support Program; and:

8 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IS RESOLVED THAT**

9 1. The Governing Board approves and authorizes the Executive Director/Air
10 Pollution Control Officer (APCO) to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
11 with CAPCOA to participate in the statewide Prescribed Burn Reporting and Monitoring
12 Support Program; and

13 2. The Governing Board directs staff to participate in the Prescribed Burn
14 Reporting and Monitoring Support Program, accept funds to reimburse the District's cost
15 in implementing the program, and maintain program compliance with the criteria contained
16 within the MOU.

17 3. The Governing Board approves and authorizes the Executive Director/Air
18 Pollution Control Officer (APCO) to enter into subsequent agreements with CAPCOA
19 and/or CARB to participate in the statewide Prescribed Burn Reporting and Monitoring
20 Support Program in future years.

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THE FOREGOING was passed and adopted by the following vote of the Governing Board of the SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY UNIFIED AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT this 20th day of June, 2019, to wit:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY UNIFIED
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

By _____

Ernest Buddy Mendes, Chair
Governing Board

ATTEST:

Clerk to the Governing Board

By _____

Michelle Franco