
PRESS RELEASE

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June 22, 2007

SCAG URGES STATE AIR BOARD TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION ON SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PORTION OF STATE AIR PLAN

SCAG Board Leaders and Staff Cite Growing Air Crisis in Urging California Air Resources Board to Take Immediate Action

LOS ANGELES – Local elected leaders made a strong case today to the California Air Resources Board (ARB), urging them to take immediate action on the Southern California portion of the State’s Clean Air Plan. The officials called upon policymakers to take emergency actions to reduce emissions associated with goods movement activities. The meeting comes on the heels of a resolution adopted by the Southern California Association of Governments’ (SCAG) Regional Council in May to urge that a state of emergency be declared for the area due to poor air quality.

“We are in the midst of a very serious air quality crisis in Southern California, and further delays by the state will only exacerbate the situation,” said San Bernardino County Supervisor, SCAG President and Air Quality Management District (AQMD) Board Member Gary Ovitt. “The time to act is now, and I strongly urge the Air Resources Board to recognize the seriousness of this air quality and public health crisis and act immediately.”

In addition to Supervisor Ovitt, other SCAG officials who testified or were in attendance at the ARB hearing included:

- Long Beach City Councilmember Tonia Reyes-Uranga
- Alhambra City Councilmember Barbara Messina
- San Gabriel Mayor Pro Tem Harry Baldwin
- SCAG Executive Director Mark Pisano

(more)

The AQMD – which oversees air quality policy for portions of Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties and all of Orange County – is facing serious challenges in meeting federal standards for ozone and fine particulate matter (PM2.5), one of the primary pollutants associated with diesel emissions. Earlier this month, AQMD adopted its South Coast Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) and submitted it to ARB, but the state agency has since delayed consideration of the AQMP until October.

As the nation’s primary gateway for the movement of goods, Southern California derives significant economic benefits from hosting the nation’s two largest ports and an ever-growing logistics industry. However, the region is also subjected to serious public health consequences because of the air pollution produced by these activities. A recent ARB study found that the South Coast Air Basin suffers approximately 5,400 premature deaths, 2,400 hospitalizations, 140,000 cases of asthma and 980,000 lost work hours each year as a result of exposure to diesel-related pollution. Residents living in the South Coast Air Basin are exposed to 82 percent of the state-wide exposure and 52 percent of the national exposure of PM2.5 above the federal standard. One of the primary emission sources of PM2.5 in the region are goods movement activities from heavy duty diesel trucks, locomotives and ocean-going vessels.

Identifying local solutions to this challenge is further complicated by the fact that more than 80 percent of the emissions associated with these pollutants are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and ARB.

SCAG works closely with AQMD to bring further attention and action to the growing air quality crisis. AQMD is working with Sen. Barbara Boxer and Rep. Hilda Solis to author legislation that will reduce emissions from ocean-going vessels. In addition, a major air quality “summit” is being planned for later this summer, at which congressional and state leaders will hear directly from Southern California’s local elected leadership and health experts about the seriousness of the crisis, as well as to seek specific remedies.