

Work Group: Air Quality
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Quarter: 1st 2008 (January – March)
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Description of Activity by Goal and Objective

Air Quality Work Group Monthly Meetings

The Air Quality Work Group (AQWG) held two meetings in the first quarter in January and February. Issues covered include the Air District's Healthy Air Living Summit, DMV Fee legislation, Short Sea Shipping, Prop 1B Goods Movement Emission Reduction Program, Valleywide expansion of the School Flag Program, and the Air District's PM 2.5 plan.

Goal 1: Achieve U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards for 8-hour ozone and PM2.5 by the current attainment date, or as soon as practicable thereafter

- **Fast Track Task Force (FTTF)**

AQWG participated in monthly meetings of the Air District's Fast Track Task Force (FTTF) on Jan. 15, Feb. 12, and March 11. FTTF is responsible for progressing initiatives to help bring the Valley into attainment as quickly as possible.

Goal 2: Encourage EPA adoption of tighter federal emission control standards

No action taken.

Goal 3: Implement incentive mechanisms to accelerate adoption of air quality mitigation technologies

- **Air Quality Empowerment Zone**

Staff attended the Air District's advocacy trip to Washington, D.C., seeking additional incentive funding and the creation of a federal Air Quality Empowerment Zone (AQEZ). As a result, Senator Boxer agreed to take the lead on legislation, form an AQEZ, working in partnership with Senator Feinstein and Congressmen Costa and Radanovich.

- **Proposition 1B – Goods Movement Emissions Reduction Program**

With assistance from the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley's AQWG, the Valley received \$250 million, or 25%, in Goods Movement Emission Reduction Program funding. The California Air Resources Board approved the funding at its February meeting. The state's FY 2007-08 budget included the first installment of the total bond funding of \$250 million; the Valley's percentage of the funding will be made available through the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to primarily help fund the replacement, repower, or retrofit of heavy-duty diesel trucks traveling along the Central Valley Corridor as determined through the guidelines approved by the ARB on Feb. 28, 2008. In addition, it is expected that the funding allocated to modernization of the truck fleet servicing the ports also will bring some emissions reductions as many of those trucks traverse the Valley.

Goal 4: Promote clean energy projects (with Energy Work Group)

- **San Joaquin Clean Valley Energy Organization (SJVCEO)**

AQWG continues to participate in meetings of the established SJVCEO and provide input as necessary. Additionally, staff continues to provide legislative support as needed.

Goal 5: Improve transportation mobility and goods movement (with Transportation Work Group)

- AQWG consultants remain engaged in activities of the Transportation Work Group and the COG Regional Policy Council regarding goods movement plans and high speed rail.
- High-Speed Rail (HSR): Representatives from the Partnership have been invited to participate in a Working Group to pursue the idea of a "hybrid" Altamont route (higher speed rail) connecting the Valley. The Partnership is participating on this informal committee with the understanding that participation does not mean board support for the concept or a change in policy.

Assemblymember Galgiani introduced a bill to modify the HSR bond, AB 3034. The Steering Committee has been working to analyze the bill and seek amendments that would include Altamont as a segment of construction in the bond, and prioritize the construction through the Valley. Staff continues to work with the Authority and the Administration to secure these amendments.

- Short Sea Shipping (SSS): AQWG helped coordinate the Traffic Congestion, Highway Safety & Air Quality Conference held in January in Fresno to convene stakeholders around the state for the purposes of discussing the potential for Short Sea Shipping on the Pacific Coast. Those in attendance included Ports throughout California, the Longshoremen, State Transportation services, and local and state government. Efforts currently under way include the creation of a release for proposals so that the SSS study can be completed.

Goal 6: Encourage “green” local government policies and sustainable communities

AQWG is working through the FTTF to schedule a Clean Air Technology Conference in coordination with EPA Region IX.

Goal 7: Accelerate research on emission-reduction strategies and clean-air technologies, establishing the San Joaquin Valley as a leader in innovation

No action taken.

Goal 8: Improve public understanding of air quality issues and solutions

- **Health Air Living Campaign**

AQWG is working with the Air District to prepare for its launch of “Healthy Air Living.” It is a new, comprehensive, outreach initiative designed to further the District’s mission to improve the health and quality of life for all Valley residents through efficient, effective and entrepreneurial air quality-management strategies. It replaces the District’s long-running Spare the Air program. The new Healthy Air Living Week is scheduled for July 7-13, 2008. Healthy Air Living will help reduce Valleywide ozone precursor emissions and will supplement the District’s very strong regulatory measures.

- **Seed Grant Award for Air Quality Education in Environmental Justice Areas**

The Maddy Institute was awarded \$225,000 to team with The Project Team of Community Focus and Valley Clean Air Now (CAN), to implement a pilot project aimed at reducing air pollution in the Valley in three communities: Arvin, Avenal, and Parlier. They held the Tune-In Tune-Up event in Parlier in March.

Planned Activities by Goal and Objective (for next 3-6 months)

Continue to work with the High-Speed Rail Altamont Working Group and the Administration to pursue modifications to the HSR bond that takes the Valley into consideration.

Work with the District to ensure that the Prop 1B Goods Movement Emission Reduction Program is successfully implemented in the Valley. Additionally, Air Resources Board (ARB) staff is developing a regulation to reduce diesel particulate matter (PM) and other emissions from in-use heavy-duty diesel powered vehicles operating in California. A proposed regulation is planned to be presented to the ARB in mid-2008. The proposed regulation would apply to diesel shuttle buses and vehicles greater than 14,000 pounds. AQWG will follow ARB’s activities on this “truck rule” as it stands to greatly impact the trucking industry throughout the state and the Valley.

Follow the rollout of the District’s PM 2.5 Plan which will be considered by the ARB on April 30.

Challenges/Problems/Bottlenecks/Feedback

Challenges include maintaining momentum and effectively engaging all stakeholders in activities. In an effort to address this and more directly to minimize meetings and redundant information, staff will propose at the April AQWG meeting to invite members of the AQWG to attend the monthly FTTF meetings which are open to the public. Additionally, the AQWG would continue to hold meetings, but now on a quarterly meeting schedule with the potential for ad hoc meetings to be called in the event that something requires immediate action.

If you have coordinated any outreach, please describe briefly

AQWG remains directly involved with legislators and their staff, conducting consistent legislative outreach. The Partnership and Interagency Task Force convene Valley district office staffers from both the Congressional and State delegations monthly in which the AQWG attends and fully participates. Staff participated in the Fresno COG’s One Voice legislative advocacy trip to Sacramento and spoke about the Partnership in most meetings. Additionally, as stated above, staff participated in the legislative advocacy trip to Washington, D.C., reaching out to Valley federal legislators and Administration officials on key air quality issues facing the Valley.