

Meeting Highlights*

AB 617 South Central Fresno Community Steering Committee Meeting #25

September 16, 2020, 5:30pm - 7:30pm

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Action items for the Fresno Community Steering Committee (CSC):

- Email SJVAPCD if interested in joining the Truck Rerouting Subcommittee
- Contact Tree Fresno to join its committee on vegetative barriers
- Contact SJVAPCD with any future CSC meeting agenda suggestions
- Contact SJVAPCD to submit edits or provide feedback on the draft Annual Report
- Contact SJVAPCD to request a printed copy of the draft Annual Report

Action items for San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District SJVAPCD):

- Email CSC the CARB enforcement report
- Email CSC the CARB Board Meeting agenda and links to watch the meeting

Welcome and Introductions:

Erica Manuel, Facilitator & CEO/Executive Director, Institute for Local Government (ILG)

Ryan Hayashi, Deputy Air Pollution Control Officer, Valley Air District

Ivanka Saunders, CSC Community Co-host

Erica introduced herself and the ILG team, welcomed all participants, and went over virtual housekeeping items, translation services, and the stipend process.

She then gave an overview of the meeting agenda and transitioned to Ivanka Saunders for co-host remarks. Ivanka introduced herself and her role in the CSC, thanked everyone for attending, and wished all attendees well.

Ryan thanked everyone for attending and Ivanka for co-hosting.

Truck Rerouting Subcommittee Update:

Scott Mozier, Public Works Director, City of Fresno

Scott gave an update on the truck re-routing study RFP and process. Presentation highlights:

- The city is preparing a draft RFP.
- The RFP will be provided to the Truck Rerouting Subcommittee with enough time to go through it in detail and provide feedback.
- The report is on schedule to be shared with the Subcommittee in September and the Subcommittee should have approximately 30 days or more to review.
- The city's soft match funds are still secure.

Comment: It is nice to see so many people from the Subcommittee on the phone tonight. The Subcommittee is open for people to join. At the meetings we conduct deep dives on individual measures.

Answer: That is a really good point. If your schedule allows, it would be great to have that participation.

Question: Is it possible to give feedback even if you are not in the subcommittee?

Answer: Yes, everyone should feel welcome to provide comments.

School Filtration and Bus Subcommittee Update:

Jaime Holt, Chief Communications Officer, Valley Air District

Jaime provided an update on the School Filtration and Bus Subcommittee. Presentation highlights:

- SJVAPCD continues to work with CARB to find a way to be flexible with this program and meet the needs of the different schools.
- The HVAC assessment that all schools need to do in order to see what filters they need, should be able to be covered under the grant program, so schools will not have to pay out of pocket.
- Some companies have said that they can provide MERV filters at the levels we need them to be in the same kind of HVAC equipment where MERV 8 filters were operating before.
- SJVAPCD is looking at Butte County and Imperial County, as well as South Coast AQMD to see how they are running their programs.
- SJVAPCD has reached out to several trustees about the school buses and have heard back from one, who is happy to meet with us.

Question: The CSC has suggested several board members for the SJVAPCD to contact. Have you tried to approach the others? It might be better to meet with multiple people at once instead of one by one.

Answer: I have sent emails to those other trustees you recommended. If any CSC members have personal connections, let us know and we can reach out to them through you.

Question: Can the SJVAPCD provide the CSC with a list of possible funds specific to the air filtration? The deeper we investigate the cost of HVAC systems, the more we will know. I think there are other funds out there.

Answer: That's a good point and I think it's worthwhile to look into what additional means may be available for funding above and beyond the CAPP funding.

Question: Did you say there was a local vendor who can provide MERV 14 filters that can be changed out for the MERV 8 without having a negative impact on the airflow?

Answer: SJVAPCD has heard there are manufacturers that are claiming you can take a MERV 14 or MERV 16 and put it where the old MERV 8 was. We have put one on our building to see if it is working. It has been up for 14 days and is as black as black can be, which means it is working. SJVAPCD will continue to keep this committee in the loop.

Air Quality and Fire Season Update:

Jon Klassen, Director of Strategy & Incentives, Valley Air District

Jaime Holt, Chief Communications Officer, Valley Air District

Jon gave a brief update on recent air quality impacts from the wildfire season and Jaime updated the CSC on recent outreach activities. Presentation highlights:

- This year's wildfire season is unprecedented, with over 3.3 million acres burned statewide to date.
- The San Joaquin Valley is surrounded by fires to the north, south, east and west, so smoke continues to come into the Valley; a unique situation.

- California is also breaking records for the largest individual fires.
- Since the middle of August, the Valley has had a number of very unhealthy air days for PM 2.5.
- SJVAPCD has been focused on getting the word out through as many mediums as possible.
- Thank you to the CSC for re-tweeting and re-posting what SJVAPCD has posted on social media.
- SJVAPCD has done press conferences, interviews, social media, and press releases, all bilingually.
- SJVAPCD has seen a huge increase in use of our app.
- If you can get your hands on an N95 mask, you should.

Question: N95 masks are required to be provided by the employers for agricultural workers when the AQI is above 150. I have been talking with farm workers and they are not provided these masks. I recommend SJVAPCD partner with the Ag Commissioners because they receive N95 masks from the state and they then provide them to the growers. Secondly, if someone lives near Roosevelt High School and wants to see the readings on the PM 2.5 monitor, where can they go for that information?

Answer: That information is on the AB 617 website on your CSC page, under air monitoring. All the monitors are listed.

Comment: May I request outreach materials about AB 617 so the CSC can have some information to share with our fellow community members about where they can find these monitors on the website?

Comment: CARB had a study of indoor and outdoor measurements in some houses and we tried the DIY box filter and it really does work. If you make one, watch it for a while. Be cautious because they do work, but the device should be watched for the first few hours that you run it.

Answer: Thank you.

Comment: I think SJVAPCD should do an infomercial about the air quality and the risks of PM 2.5 with the local weather people and talk about why filters are important. Is there any talk about the PM 2.5 filters that you can actually put in your masks? They are not N95 masks, but they do stop some of the particulate matter.

Answer: Those are great ideas, thank you.

Comment: My company has been dealing with CalOSHA requirements and they are pretty clear—employers are required to provide N95-quality masks. Most agencies are trying to reserve those for emergency workers. We purchased some which are foreign knockoffs and the OSHA website did certify them.

Answer: Thank you.

Question: Is there any chance we could encourage logging to come back and get some responsible forest cleanup so we can avoid these fires next year?

Answer: I know there is a lot of conversations happening around the state about forest management.

Comment: It is frustrating to see the lack of management and accountability on the federal level. I am hoping SJVAPCD can work with CARB and there can be some improvements made.

Answer: Thank you.

Comment: In regards to box fans, the new ones today have safety features, so fire risks are much lower than if you use an older fan. Secondly, there are two websites that use the same monitors as Purple Air, but they have calibrated the data, so it is much closer to what SJVAPCD's are reading. One is fire.airnow.gov and run by EPA and the second one is SJVair.com. I recommend using either one of those sites to give you the best picture of local air quality.

Answer: Thank you! Please feel free to put those links in the chat.

Community Air Monitoring Results:

Chay Thao, Program Manager, Valley Air District

Chay gave a brief update about the community air monitoring results. Presentation highlights:

- SJVAPCD is working with Central Unified and installing equipment at Madison Elementary. We will continue to work on installing equipment at Edison High School.
- SJVAPCD has been using the air monitoring van to respond to community concerns. Once we have the data downloaded and ready, we can give everybody an update on that.
- The next quarterly report is close to being completed and it will be posted to the website soon.
- The West Fresno Elementary site is ready to go and they are eager to move forward.
- SJVAPCD is not giving up on the Orange Center site but they have not been getting much traction with the school leadership.
- With the CSC's support, SJVAPCD will proceed with placing a monitor at the West Fresno site immediately and then continue to try to get approval for a monitor at Orange Center.
- The CSC approved of this approach.

Question: In regards to the Belmont/Palm area, the monitor was only there for four hours and I would like to see SJVAPCD go back and stay longer. What is the likelihood of that being done at this time?

Answer: That is something that we will need feedback from the full CSC about. The CSC will need to decide if they want to divert the mobile van resources from locations the CSC had already agreed it wanted to monitor.

Vegetative Barriers and Urban Greening:

Mona Cummings, CEO, Tree Fresno

Mona gave a presentation with partners about next steps for vegetative barriers and urban greening measures. Presentation highlights:

- Fresno Trees is an environmental project in partnership with Sonoma Tech.
- The two organizations came together in 2016 to evaluate how well vegetative barriers, using trees and shrubs, protect people from exposure to air pollution downwind of major roads.
- Sonoma Tech will measure air quality of areas with and without near-road vegetation and Tree Fresno will plant more than 3,000 trees and model vegetation, which will quantify vegetative barrier benefits.
- In the Fresno area, between 5,000 and 18,000 heavy duty trucks travel daily on state highways.
- Tree Fresno will measure pollution at several locations within 150 meters of Fresno area highways.
- During the first quarter of the year, the partnership resulted in planting nearly 150 new trees along Highway 99.
- Suitable locations need to be approved by agencies responsible for those properties.
- Tree Fresno has a new partnership with the Fresno Metro Black Chamber of Commerce, which will address climate change impacts to disproportionately impacted communities of color.

Question: In the AB 617 report on page 10 it says that we are going to spend \$680,130 with Tree Fresno on a multi-year project aimed at evaluating trees. Am I perceiving this wrong or does the report need to be tweaked?

Answer: I think that is a refinement we need to make to the Annual Report giving more clarity about the program and funding we have approved.

Question: Do you have growers that are willing to bring tree seedlings to a place where you can plant them?

Answer: Typically, we are buying from local nurseries and they give us good prices. We are having discussions with the horticultural center at Fresno State about having the students start to propagate some trees for us.

Question: Is there a subcommittee devoted to this project? What is the process going to be for identifying locations for vegetative barriers—where is the community input going to come from?

Answer: We have just started building the vegetative barriers this year. There have been some pre-approved projects previously identified that might be good locations to put a vegetative barrier. It is a complex process. We have Sonoma Tech to make sure that if we build a barrier, it is not going to make the conditions actually more dangerous. We do need to create a committee that can submit ideas for where these barriers can go. I think there is a little bit of confusion about the funding source.

Answer: The program that is funding this project comes from state enforcement actions that result in fines that are paid. The state has a program that allow polluters who have to pay fines to put a portion of the fine money into mitigation projects that benefit the community where the violation occurred. The Tree Fresno project funding we're discussing now is from those fines, not from AB 617 or the SJVAPCD.

Answer: Tree Fresno will be convening its own subcommittee to move forward with this vegetative barriers project. CSC members are welcome to join this subcommittee, even though it is technically separate from the CSC's AB 617 work. The projects are complimentary.

Question: Has this CSC allocated funds to vegetative barriers through AB 617?

Answer: SJVAPCD is waiting for CAPP funding guidelines regarding how CAPP funding can be spent for this type of project. It is not a 100% done deal. Tree Fresno, ReLEAF CA, and possibly one other organization are listed as potential partners. But that has not yet been finalized.

Urban Greening & Regional Planning Efforts

Ivanka Saunders, Community Co-host, LCJA

Ivanka provided some updates on regional planning efforts and how they may align with the AB 617 work. Highlights of her presentation include:

- The City of Fresno is currently planning for the South Central Specific Plan.
- Even though our city may want to see this become the next economic growth area for the city, there are still community residents who live there. The region covers our 617 area; it's the same land mass.
- This CSC is trying to improve air quality and we have the city trying to make sure that this is the next facility industrial growth area, which could cause some of the biggest pollution in this area.
- Opposing efforts are working at the same time.
- As this community grows into an industrial area, part of being a good neighbor means we cannot continue to allow what has already happened to happen again. For example, we cannot allow an Ultra facility to be sited next to a playground. We don't want that bad planning to continue.
- We need to make sure there are mitigations -- not just trees -- as the single filter between somebody's home or sensitive receptors like daycares. We know that these areas are cancer hot spots.

- We need to make sure there is a coordinated planning process that takes place that incorporates everything the CSC has done..

Question: What happened with the MOUs that were part of the resolution that was passed in February?

Answer: We have heard the committee and understand that is a priority. We have had an initial discussion with the city on this and as it moves forward, we will have more communication with the CSC.

Draft Annual Report Review:

Jaime Holt, Chief Communications Officer, Valley Air District

Jaime reviewed the draft Annual Report with the CSC. Presentation highlights:

- SJVAPCD has to submit a written report to CARB later this year; the CSC communicated that they wanted to be involved in the reporting process and provide input on the work that has been done.
- All documents are in both English and Spanish. Printed copies of the draft report were mailed to all Spanish speaking CSC members before the meeting.
- The report is the culmination of what the CSC has done since the CERP was adopted and is part of the annual report that is required of SJVAPCD to submit to CARB in December.
- The report is posted on the CSC community webpage.
There are numerous report sections, including community engagement, community emissions inventory and ongoing technical assessment, several pages on air monitoring, the different strategies in the CERP related to enforcement (where we are to date, what's been done), regulatory measures, toxics reports, BARCT, etc.
- The CSC does not need to provide edits right now. Just email SJVAPCD or call Jaime in the next few weeks to provide any suggested updates.

CARB: CARB will send our annual enforcement report in PDF to the CSC. In this report, you will find the inspections of heavy duty vehicles, what we did in 2019 and the compliance rates of different programs, as well as a map of where the inspections were performed. It will include strategy updates and the strategies that CARB committed to. The report lists the outreach and trainings that have been developed and the things being done to achieve the strategy updates.

Question: Who do I send my comments or concerns to?

Answer: Contact Jaime about edits to the draft annual report and she will coordinate.

Question: How do we know what SJVAPCD's report will be to CARB next week?

Answer: That is our next agenda item.

CARB: The CARB board meeting is scheduled for September 24. Links to the Board Meeting agenda and ways to watch it will be posted in the chat. CARB will also send the meeting details to SJVAPCD to distribute that information to the CSC. There are two agenda items before AB 617; one is on our toxics hot spots program, which you may want to listen to. The AB 617 item will not start until 4:00pm. Even if the first two agenda items end early, the CARB board is going to stop the meeting and wait until 4:00pm to start the AB 617 implementation update. The Annual Report that SJVAPCD is working on will not be covered at the CARB board meeting on 9/24.

Wrap Up/Next Steps:

Erica Manuel, Facilitator & CEO/Executive Director, Institute for Local Government (ILG)

Erica thanked everyone for participating in a productive meeting and urged CSC members to suggest future agenda items they may want to discuss. She reminded the qualifying residents about the stipend program. Erica thanked the translators for providing verbal translation and chat translation throughout the meeting. Erica thanked Ivanka for being Community Co-host and asked CSC members to volunteer to be one in the future. Ivanka thanked Erica for keeping the CSC on task.

Public Comment:

Comment: We should have grant money for masks for people who bicycle to work or do not have any other transportation besides a bicycle.

Answer: Thank you. If we can address this at a future meeting, we will.