

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH STRATEGIES: **SUBCOMMITTEE MEASURES**

## **CURRENT OUTREACH PROGRAMS**

The District's Outreach and Communications team conducts air quality outreach throughout all eight counties of the San Joaquin Valley. The District coordinates events, delivers presentations, responds to the media 24/7, manages social networks, pilots outreach campaigns like the Healthy Air Living (HAL) Schools and the winter residential "No Burn" programs, and connects with the public in multiple languages across any medium. In addition to offering media interviews, answering questions posed by the public, partnering with local institutions, and accepting speaking engagements, the District also conducts paid advertising and informational campaigns regularly to spread air quality awareness across social media, digital networks, television, radio, billboards, and other venues. Through the development of innovative tools like RAAN and the Valley Air App, over 10,000 registered users receive automated notifications when the air quality at any location they choose to follow becomes unhealthy, allowing them to make informed decisions about their outdoor activities to limit their own exposure.

## **COMMUNITY CONCERNS AND COMMENTS**

The Committee recommended that the District engage in a wide variety of multi-lingual outreach efforts via both traditional and social media to allow community members to see and learn about air quality issues, take advantage of grant programs, and provide real-time access to information from air monitoring equipment deployed as part of the AB 617 process. Members of the Steering Committee acknowledged the District's ongoing air quality outreach and education efforts, but expressed concern about effectiveness given perceived public indifference. Effectiveness could be improved by increasing the volume and types of outreach, focusing it to a truly localized level, and using partnerships with key local organizations to better understand how to deliver needed information to the Stockton community residents.

## **STRATEGIES DEVELOPED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN COMMUNITY**

The Community Air Quality Outreach Strategies go beyond current outreach efforts to provide community-specific information about local conditions and measures the public can take to protect themselves during episodes of poor air quality through new media campaigns, workshops hosted in partnership with local civic and community organizations, and other outreach methods as identified by the community and the District.

### *O.1: MULTILINGUAL OUTREACH TO INCREASE COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF AIR QUALITY*

Overview: The goal of this strategy is to increase community awareness of available tools to keep informed of real-time changes in air quality, clean air efforts and how communities can get involved through multi-lingual educational campaigns, videos and partner workshops. The strategy looks to focus outreach on areas of Stockton CSC and resident concerns, including fireworks, illegal burning, trash burning, educating trucking operations about impacts of idling, promotion of biking (including bike paths and trails),

public transportation (including, bus, rail, ferry, and others) and other topics of concern/interest. An understanding of what conditions constitute poor air quality, the relative seriousness of a poor air quality episode, and any potential health impacts is necessary for the public to make informed decisions about how and when to limit their exposure.

This strategy would aim to increase Valley Air App downloads and social media followers among members of the community. A partnership with local civic and community organizations would be established to host workshops at locations commonly available to the public such as libraries, schools, and community, health, or recreation centers. Both the social media outreach and live workshops would promote real-time tools such as myRAAN website, the Valley Air App, the Real-time Outdoor Activity Risk (ROAR) Guidelines, the wildfire page of the District's website, as well as information about general air quality education, wildfire smoke impacts, health effects, and similar topics. This strategy would aim to increase myRAAN website registrations, Valley Air App downloads, and social media followers among members of the community. In addition, this strategy would increase awareness of air quality issues with workshops hosted in locations commonly available to the public such as libraries, schools, and community, health, or recreation centers and on Zoom or other online platforms.

Annual goals for these actions include:

- Attend/host 4 community meetings, in-person or online, to share information
- 1 community targeted social media campaign

*Implementing Agency:* SJVAPCD

*Strategy Type:* Outreach

*Quantifiable mitigation:* Minimize emissions and exposure around schools.

## RESIDENTIAL BURNING

### BACKGROUND

The wood burning fireplaces and wood burning heaters source category includes emissions from wood burning fireplaces, wood burning heaters, and outdoor wood burning devices. This source category contributes 5.4 tons per year of PM<sub>2.5</sub> towards area sources of emissions in the community of Stockton, representing 4.3% of the total PM<sub>2.5</sub> inventory. During winter, residential wood burning, including illegal open burning, is one of the largest sources of particulate pollution. Given the significant localized health impacts associated with residential wood smoke, reducing emissions from residential wood burning is a high priority for Stockton. Many scientific studies have found that prolonged inhalation of wood smoke contributes to adverse impacts on human health, especially among children, elderly, and people with certain medical conditions, and individuals who are sensitive to the impacts of air pollution. A number of environmental justice communities experience a disproportionately high level of directly emitted PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions from residential wood burning.

### COMMUNITY CONCERNS AND COMMENTS

The community of Stockton raised concerns with residential wood smoke, both from the use of wood burning fireplaces and wood burning heaters and illegal open outdoor burning. The CSC provided recommendations to implement the enhanced financial incentives for residents to replace existing wood burning devices and pellet stoves with natural gas or electric technologies which will reduce the smoke impacts associated with residential wood burning for downwind communities. The Stockton community made recommendations to ensure significant efforts are made to conduct outreach and education in support of this measure and to increase compliance rates with District Rules 4901 – *Wood Burning Fireplaces and Wood Burning Heaters* and Rule 4103 – *Open Burning*.

### CURRENT CONTROL PROGRAMS

The District's comprehensive strategy to reduce emissions from residential wood burning includes implementation of stringent wood burning curtailment requirements through Rule 4901, strong outreach and education to establish the necessary public support, and deployment of financial incentives to transition away from wood burning to cleaner alternatives. This approach that combines regulatory and incentive based strategies is designed to improve the public health by reducing toxic wood smoke emissions in Valley neighborhoods during the peak PM<sub>2.5</sub> winter season (November through February). The District has continually enhanced the strategy since adopting the first regulation in 1993. Today, the District has the toughest and most effective residential wood burning strategy in the nation as it reduces emissions when and where most needed, such as during multi-day periods of stagnation, in the evening hours, and in neighborhoods where residents live and play. Additionally, the District enforces the requirements of Rule 4103 which prohibits the use of open outdoor fires for the purpose of disposing of waste materials.

## **STRATEGIES DEVELOPED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN COMMUNITY**

Due to the priority that the Steering Committee and members of the public placed on reducing PM2.5 and toxic air contaminant emissions that originate from residential burning in and around the community, targeted measures have been developed to reduce emissions from this source category. Building upon the effective implementation of the District's wood burning emission reduction strategy, the District commits to providing enhanced incentives to replace existing wood burning devices and increased outreach efforts to educate the public about harmful impacts of wood smoke and specific actions they can take to reduce pollution and comply with District requirements.

### **The following are proposed measures that are within the Air District's statutory jurisdiction to implement:**

#### *RB.1: INCENTIVE PROGRAM FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING WOOD BURNING DEVICES AND PELLET STOVES WITH NATURAL GAS OR ELECTRIC TECHNOLOGIES*

*Overview:* The goal of this strategy is to reduce the impact of PM2.5 pollution associated with residential wood burning by replacing approximately 100 wood burning devices in Stockton with new natural gas devices or electric heat pumps. During the winter months, one of the largest sources of particulate pollution comes from residential wood burning. Emissions are the result of incomplete combustion and are emitted into Valley neighborhoods where residents live and play. Multiple scientific studies show that prolonged inhalation of wood smoke has adverse impacts on human health. Inhalation of wood smoke contributes to lung disease, and pulmonary arterial hypertension, which can eventually lead to heart failure. Through the District's existing Board approved Burn Cleaner program, incentives are currently offered to replace existing wood or pellet burning inserts or free-standing stoves with new natural gas devices or electric heat pumps. The proposed program under this strategy would offer up to \$3,000 to replace an existing wood burning device with a natural gas device and up to \$4,000 for an eligible electric heating source, such as an electric heat pump.

*Implementing Agency:* SJVAPCD

*Strategy Type:* Incentives

*Budgeted Amount:* \$300,000

*Quantifiable Emission Reductions:* Estimated emission reductions associated with this measure includes up to 49 tons of PM2.5.

### ***RB.2: EDUCATE PUBLIC REGARDING HARMFUL EFFECTS OF RESIDENTIAL WOOD BURNING FIREPLACE AND WOOD BURNING HEATER SMOKE***

*Overview:* The goal of this strategy is to conduct outreach in the community to educate residents regarding the harmful health effects of residential fireplace wood burning and wood burning heater smoke and the importance of reducing it. Residential wood burning education is important because airborne particles produced by wood smoke (such as PM 2.5) negatively impact human health, especially sensitive populations such as children and seniors who may live in areas where residents burn wood for heating, cooking, or recreation. This strategy's focus includes providing information about programs available to support the transition to natural gas and electric devices, as well as the winter no wood-burning season and District Rule 4901.

This strategy would create a series of four (4) public workshops to educate Stockton residents about wood burning topics and to address questions and concerns interactively and accessibly within a forum setting. Workshops would take place in locations commonly available to the public such as libraries, schools, and community, health, or recreation centers. Depending on circumstances, workshops could also be held in a virtual environment such as Zoom. Wood burning infographics and educational materials would also be circulated to at least six (6) community spaces throughout the Stockton community and the surrounding community with the goal of continuing to spread awareness and increasing applications for incentive funds supporting the transition to natural gas and electric devices. The District will look to coordinate and work with the CSC, community based organizations, and Stockton residents to develop the materials and to provide outreach for the events.

*Implementing Agency:* SJVAPCD

*Strategy Type:* Outreach

*Quantifiable Emission Reductions:* Reduction in localized PM2.5, PM10, NOx, VOC, and CO emissions through higher compliance rates.

### ***RB.3: REDUCE ILLEGAL BURNING THROUGH RESIDENTIAL OPEN BURNING EDUCATION***

*Overview:* The goal of this strategy is to reduce illegal burning of residential waste, such as trash, through outreach and education while focusing on areas of concern identified by the CSC, including residential areas and homeless encampments. It is important to continue to educate residents of the localized, harmful emissions created through the burning of residential garbage and how it negatively effects health. Smoke from burning trash and yard waste contain toxic pollutants which are harmful to human health.

This strategy would include working with the City of Stockton and the fire agencies to better understand the illegal open burning issues within the AB 617 community, establish a series of public workshops to educate Stockton residents about illegal open burning, the health impacts of burning waste, and to address questions and concerns interactively and accessibly within a forum setting either in person or in an online platform such as Zoom. In person workshops would take place in locations commonly available to the public such as libraries, schools, and community, health, or recreation centers when possible. Videos will be used as an outreach tool and be available in languages such as Spanish, Tagalog and others.

*Implementing Agency:* SJVAPCD, City of Stockton, and local fire agencies

*Strategy Type:* Outreach

*Quantifiable Emission Reductions:* Reduction in localized PM2.5, PM10, NOx, VOC, and CO emissions through higher compliance rates.