

Rule 3160 – *Prescribed Burning Fee* Scoping Meeting

December 4, 2019
webcast@valleyair.org

Purpose of Today's Meeting

- Kick-off the public rule development process for potential changes to the District's prescribed burning fee rule (District Rule 3160)
- Share information regarding potential changes under consideration
- Seek public input
- Review opportunities for further public engagement
- Discuss next steps and rulemaking timeline

Wildfire Air Quality Impacts

- Air pollution generated from wildfires can be enormous and well exceed total industrial and mobile source emissions in San Joaquin Valley overwhelming all control measures
- Wildfires generate particulate, NO_x, VOC and other pollutants
- Cause excessively high PM_{2.5} and ozone concentrations
 - High PM_{2.5} levels during summer (generally low PM_{2.5} in summer)
 - Peak ozone levels this season due to wildfire pollution
- District supporting efforts to develop more effective fuel reduction strategies
 - Fuel buildup is key factor in causing increasing severe fires

District Supports Prescribed Burning and Other Fuel Reduction Efforts

- District has long been supportive of prescribed burning and other fuel reduction efforts such as mechanical thinning
- Prescribed burning has been used as a land management tool to mimic natural fires and bring better health to the forest ecosystem under planned and controlled conditions that lessen air quality impacts
- Since November 2015, District has worked with land managers to enhance fuel reduction strategies aimed at minimizing wildfire impacts

Enhanced Strategies in Support of Prescribed Burning

- Flexible in decision-making for proposed prescribed burn projects
- Allowed projects to occur even under marginal dispersion conditions, being careful to ensure projects were remote in location and nearby communities were not impacted
- Authorized all requested prescribed burning without requiring segmentation of burn projects into multiple smaller burns resulting in quicker project completion, while also reducing personnel costs

Rule 3160 – *Prescribed Burning Fee*

- Provides the District with a means to recover costs associated with implementing its obligatory smoke management duties as mandated by state law
- Applies to any agency or person that conducts prescribed burning within the District's jurisdiction
- On an annual basis, agencies/persons must report acreage burned
- Fees are assessed annually for the previous calendar year based on:
 - Number of blackened acres for broadcast burning
 - Number of acres treated for pile burning
- First 40 acres are not subject to the fee

New Statewide Prescribed Burn Reporting and Monitoring Support Program

- AB 1260
 - Required ARB and local air districts to enhance air quality and smoke monitoring associated with prescribed burns
- CARB's 2018-19 Budget contains \$2,000,000 to implement the new Prescribed Burn Reporting and Monitoring Support Program
- In June 2019, District entered into MOU to participate in the new program
 - District may be reimbursed for prescribed burn program implementation costs up to \$122,500 over the next two years

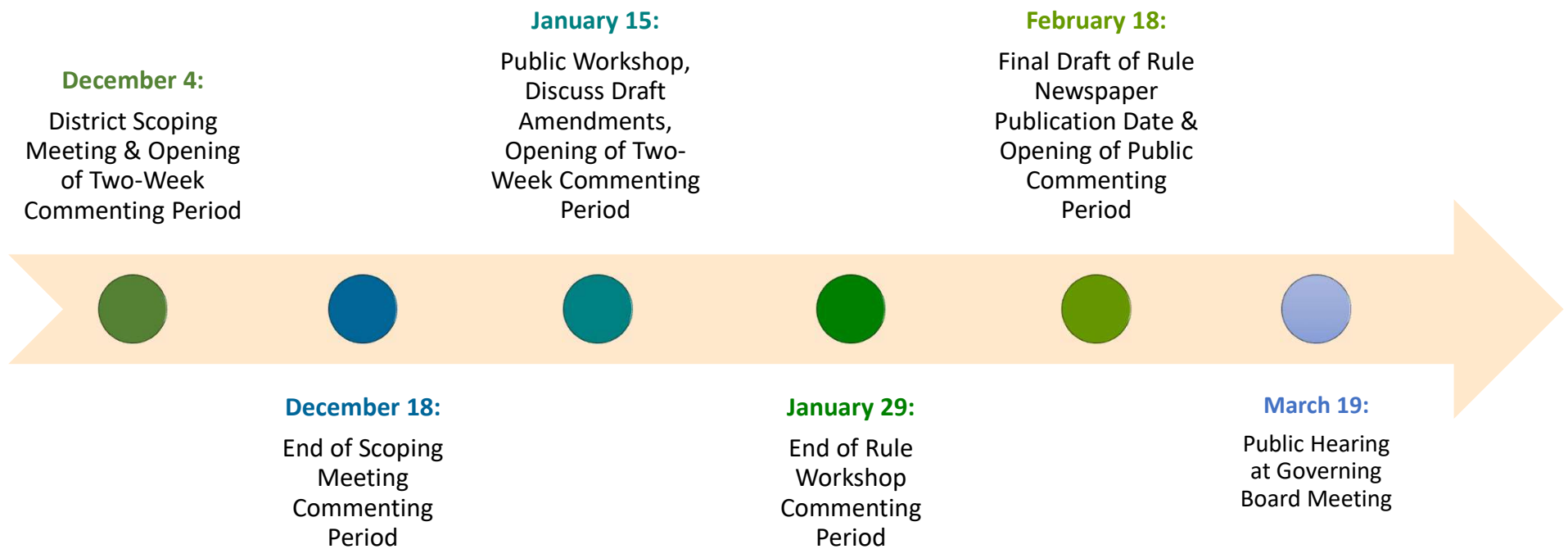
Why the District Is Considering Amending Rule 3160

- Reimbursement under the MOU may fund in whole, or in part, the District's prescribed burn program
- Rule 3160 does not currently provide a mechanism by which the District can suspend or prorate the established fees when alternative funding is available
- District Governing Board directed staff to develop potential amendments to provisionally suspend the collection of fees on the condition that adequate funding is received from the state to cover the costs associated with administering and implementing the District's prescribed burn program

Potential Changes to Rule 3160

- Fees would be provisionally suspended, or collected on a prorated basis, based on the amount of funding received from the state relative to the District's prescribed burning program costs
- May limit eligibility for suspended/prorated fees to projects that benefit the public interest by providing an enhancement of public safety or a long-term air quality benefit

Next Steps...



Comment Period

Please submit comments in writing by December 18, 2019, at 5:00 pm

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Comments?