

Highlights

District Activities for March 2006



March 16, 2006 Actions by the Governing Board

- The Governing Board accepted **\$5,563,000 in Lower Emission School Bus Program** funds from the California Air Resources Board for the District's heavy-duty engine program. The funds will be used for school bus replacement and retrofit and are part of \$25 million in school bus funding authorized by the Governor and the State Legislature. The program's goal is retire and replace the state's oldest buses with new, lower-emitting models. The funding will pay the full cost of 31 school buses in six District counties with no matching funds required by the school districts. Delivery on the first buses is expected in August 2007.
- The Governing Board received and filed the following items and will consider them for adoption at the April 20 meeting:
 - Proposed amendments to **Rule 4702** (Internal Combustion Engines – Phase 2) and
 - **Rule 4307** (Small Boilers, Steam Generators and Process Heaters – 2.0 MMBtu/hr to 5.0 MMBtu/hr).
- The Governing Board received an end-of-the-season report from staff on the **2005-06 residential wood-burning fireplace and woodstove** program. This season, wood burning was prohibited at least once in each of the eight Valley counties and the first-ever District-wide mandatory curtailment was issued Dec. 13. The final prohibition of the season took place Feb. 14 for the valley portion of Kern County. In 2005-06, District totals showed a total of 19 days of mandatory curtailments, depending on the county, and between six and 44 voluntary days. Mandatory curtailment totals by county for 2005-06 were: The Valley portion of Kern, 16; Kings, 13; Fresno, 11; Tulare, 9; Stanislaus, 3; Madera and Merced, 2; and San Joaquin, 1.
- This compares to 2004-05 where only three mandatory curtailment days were called, two each in Fresno, Kern and Tulare. In the program's first year, 2003-04, only two days of mandatory curtailments were recorded, one each in Fresno and the Valley portion of Kern.
- The Governing Board approved a voluntary **Air Quality Mitigation Agreement** with JC Williams Company to receive \$85,550 in funds for the purpose of mitigating air quality impacts of the company's new residential development project in Kern County.
- The Governing Board received an informational report on the District's response and action plan for the **2003 California Air Resources Board Evaluation** of the District's air quality programs. The final report, issued in November 2005, describes the District's significant accomplishments in implementing air quality improvement programs, as well as ARB staff recommendations for future efforts. The District has adopted many of the report's recommendations and has prepared a detailed action plan to address the rest. District cost-effectiveness thresholds are lower than other air districts and are a specific area of concern. ARB advises raising them so that more new air pollution control technologies could be required. However, current District thresholds have resulted in the adoption of many BACT and some of the most stringent rules in the nation.

Public Relations, Legislative, Outreach and Education

Public Information managed 42 news media inquiries and responded to 83 public calls in February. Staff also took an active part in outreach activities at the World Agricultural Expo in Tulare. More than 10,000 face-to-face interactions occurred and District staff provided information on a wide variety of issues including Conservation Management Practices, dairy permitting, agricultural burning and general air quality awareness. The District issued four news releases in February concerning the new Indirect Source Review (ISR) Rule, the end of the residential wood-burning season, the Natural Event Action Plan (NEAP) and a wind event alert.

A new graphic design template has been developed to upgrade the District's public awareness brochures and to give the District a more consistent and professional "look." In February two, four-color brochures were produced using this new template, one for Compliance explaining *Hazard Reduction Burning* and one for Planning on ISR.

Grants and Incentive Program Activities

- The District received 19 Ag Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) applications in February for a total of 46 engines. The District has received 178 applications to date for a total of 675 engines.
- \$82,035 in heavy-duty component REMOVE II grant funds was placed under contract in February.
- \$563,521 was paid out in Heavy-Duty Program component claims in February. These funds were divided among Ag Engines – \$360,403, Off Road – \$98,176, and On Road – \$104,942.

Operation Overview

- 1,313 inspections were conducted by **Compliance** in February. 47 NOVs were issued and 121 mutually settled cases were recorded.
- 217 **Permit** applications were received and 304 permits were issued in February.
- **Planning** received 262 environmental documents and held 11 rule and plan workshops in February. 65 smoking vehicles were reported.

Other District News – Update

In the February Highlights, it was incorrectly reported that the District recently purchased its first Toyota Prius. Both Toyota and Honda hybrids have been in the fleet for many years. This was, however, the first of the new Prius model design.

Upcoming Meetings

Citizens' Advisory Committee – 10 am Tues., April 4

Governing Board – 10 a.m. Thurs., April 20