

# District Highlights

## January 18, 2018 Actions by the Governing Board

### **District Discusses and Solicits Public Suggestions Concerning the District's Effort to Provide Timely Air Quality Notification and Education to Valley Residents**

The Governing Board received a summary of the District's Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) program and how it can be used when the Valley experiences episodes of poor air quality. In addition to the RAAN program, the District alerts the public of poor air quality conditions through a number of other methods, such as the daily air quality forecast, health cautionary statement press releases, providing interviews with local media, air quality alerts through the National Weather Service, posting information to social media and the District's website, and much more. The Governing Board was also provided an overview of the poor air quality episode that affected the Valley from December 2017 into early January 2018, including the meteorology that occurred as well as the PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations that were experienced across the Valley. A comparison of the air quality from this recent episode to episodes in the past was presented to provide a context of how air quality has improved in the Valley even under similar poor dispersion conditions. Lastly, a discussion was held on how the RAAN program could be improved to reach more Valley residents by being a primary tool for understanding current air quality conditions.

### **Residential Wood Burning Survey Results and Options for Program Enhancements**

The District has the toughest and most effective residential wood burning strategy in the nation. The District's Rule 4901 (Wood Burning Fireplaces and Wood Burning Heaters) in conjunction with the District's *Burn Cleaner* grant program have proven to be extremely effective in advancing the District's objectives to attain the federal health-based standards. This approach, which combines regulatory and incentive based strategies, is designed to improve public health by reducing toxic wood smoke emissions in Valley neighborhoods during the peak PM<sub>2.5</sub> winter season.

Given the significant public health benefits that can be realized cost-effectively from reductions in wood smoke emissions, and to ensure continued effectiveness of the current strategy and explore potential enhancements, the District conducted a bilingual scientific survey assessing residential wood burning behaviors in the Valley. Survey findings suggest that of Valley residents that engage in wood burning, only 36% are aware of the detrimental health impacts associated with wood smoke. It is reasonable to conclude that with enhanced public education, more Valley residents could be persuaded to refrain from wood burning. The survey findings also suggest that of Valley residents who engage in wood burning, most, by a 3 to 1 margin, are English speaking and many, by a greater than 2 to 1 margin, have above-median income. Therefore, the following actions were recommended to the Governing Board:

- Increase emphasis on health impacts of wood smoke in *Check Before You Burn* outreach through messaging within paid advertisements, educational videos, brochures and other outreach collateral.

- Hold community workshops to discuss health impacts of smoke including its cost effectiveness in meeting federal mandates compared to costly regulations imposed on Valley businesses.
- Target a greater share of the outreach at the Valley's English-speaking population with above-median incomes.

Survey results indicate that the District has made significant gains in educating the public about the *Burn Cleaner* incentive program over the past few years. Twenty-four percent of the general population residents surveyed reported that they had heard of the *Burn Cleaner* incentives program, a statistically significant increase over the 17% reported in 2014. Furthermore, the number of Valley residents willing to switch to a cleaner device has increased from 29% in 2014 to 36%. Despite improvements, smoke from residential wood burning is a significant source of particulate matter in the Valley during the winter. Increasing the turnover of old, polluting wood-burning devices is still a key component of the District's PM2.5 control strategy, so the District must continue to look for ways to increase program participation. More respondents in the Fresno and Bakersfield urban areas were willing to purchase a clean device with at least a 75% incentive than they were initially without an incentive, indicating that increased, targeted incentives funding in this region would be more effective than targeting other regions. Therefore, the following actions were recommended to the Governing Board:

- Increase the incentive amount offered in the Valley's hot-spot areas.
- Increase the use of clean burning units through continued regulatory incentives by offering residents who switch to clean burning units more days to use their devices.
- Continue to offer greater financial incentives for natural gas conversion.

With respect to Valley residents' compliance with the District's burn prohibitions the survey results, although sample size is limited, are in line with the District's observations through extensive field enforcement activities that illustrate high compliance rate.

The overwhelming majority of the Valley residents (81%) believe that the current rule restrictions are either appropriate or too aggressive. As the District contemplates future changes to the rule, this may indicate that without public buy-in, continued high compliance rate may diminish resulting in a negative impact on air quality. However, attaining the latest federal standards is not possible without additional reductions from residential wood burning devices. As public acceptance is a key factor in achieving the desired compliance rate and resulting emission reductions, for the changes to be effective, incorporating all of the following components in the program is imperative:

- Meaningful financial incentives for upgrading to cleaner units.
- Maintaining regulatory incentives for Valley residents who switch to clean units.
- Strong public education regarding adverse health effects of wood smoke.
- Strong public education highlighting the effectiveness and low cost associated with residential wood burning curtailment regulations as compared to alternative regulations with great direct or indirect cost to Valley businesses and residents.
- Continue strong enforcement.

In addition to the above policy recommendations, the District will also use the survey results to guide the District’s ongoing work on updating and refining the emissions inventory for residential wood burning devices.

**District Receives Award for Excellence in Financial Reporting**

The Government Finance Officers’ Association (GFOA) awarded the District the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, the GFOA’s highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting. This award was for the latest District’s Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (fiscal year 2015-16 CAFR) representing a significant achievement for the District and representing its commitment to meeting the highest principles of governmental reporting and transparency to the public. To earn this award, an impartial panel judged the CAFR as meeting the high standards of the GFOA program, including demonstrating a constructive “spirit of full disclosure” to clearly communicate the District’s financial story and motivate the public to read the CAFR.

**December District Activities**

***Outreach and Communications***

- The District spent December distributing 20,000 Kids’ Calendars all throughout the Valley as well as reminding the public to Check Before You Burn. The District also promoted the Burn Cleaner program.
- In December, District staff responded to 27 media calls and 106 public calls and 59 emails, issued four news releases and attended 4 event/presentations.

***Grant and Incentive Programs***

- In December, the District received 751 incentive program applications. 325 were for the Wood Stove Change-Out Program and 143 were for the Heavy Duty Engine Program.
- In December, \$5,805,916.21 was placed under contract in the Heavy Duty Engine Program and 110 claims were paid.
- In December, \$841,661.78 was paid out in REMOVE II program claims.
- In December, \$428,673.00 was paid in Burn Cleaner program claims and 280 claims were processed.

	December 2017	Applications	Grants Offered		Grants Executed		Amount Paid	
Key	Program	Number Received & Entered	Number of Contracts sent out	Sum of Grant Funding	Number of Contracts Executed	Sum of Grant Funding	Number of Claims paid	Sum of Grant Funding
Burn Cleaner	Burn Cleaner - Wood Stove Change Out	325	329	\$544,500.00	329	\$544,500.00	280	\$428,673.00
Heavy Duty	Ag Engine	2	2	\$55,250.00	0	\$0.00	12	\$138,784.73
	Forklift	4	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
	Locomotive	0	0	\$0.00	1	\$864,500.00	0	\$0.00
	Off-Road	114	43	\$3,067,847.88	96	\$7,779,047.28	63	\$4,731,464.92
	Off-Road Forklift	1	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00
	On-Road Prop 1B	0	0	\$0.00	21	\$2,100,000.00	0	\$0.00
	On-Road TVP	22	73	\$2,602,510.07	73	\$2,602,510.07	26	\$734,382.33

	School Bus Replacement	0	1	\$80,308.26	0	\$0.00	3	\$299,680.80
	School Bus Retrofit	0	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	5	\$100,000.00
	School Bus Tank Replacement	0	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	1	\$17,295.33
Lawn Garden	Lawn Mower Replacement	11	11	\$2,550.00	11	\$2,550.00	11	\$2,550.00
Public Benefit	Alt-Fuel	2	2	\$96,363.78	0	\$0.00	10	\$161,942.64
	Public Benefit - Airport Dust Control Project	0	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	2	\$205,514.64
Remove II	Car Crushing	67	80	\$507,050.18	80	\$507,050.18	90	\$349,563.62
	Charge Up	2	7	\$67,000.00	2	\$41,000.00	0	\$0.00
	VVIP - Commuter Subsidy	40	1772	\$53,160.00	1772	\$53,160.00	704	\$21,120.00
	Drive Clean - Light and Medium Duty	161	176	\$477,978.16	176	\$477,978.16	174	\$470,978.16
<b>Totals</b>		<b>751</b>	<b>2496</b>	<b>\$7,554,518.33</b>	<b>2561</b>	<b>\$14,972,295.69</b>	<b>1,381</b>	<b>\$7,661,950.17</b>

Reductions from Executed Contracts (tons)			
Nox	PM	ROG	Total
1,171	216	113	1,500

Smoking Vehicles	15
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## Operations Overview

- Completed 1,377 inspections in December, and 458 NOVs were issued. Mutual settlement case completions totaled 327.
- Received 200 permit applications in December, and 877 permits were issued.
- Received 15 smoking vehicle reports in December.
- Received 197 environmental documents in December.

## Upcoming Meetings

**Gov. Board Meeting\***  
Feb. 15, 2018

**Citizens Advisory Committee\***  
10:00 a.m. March. 6, 2018

**Enviro. Justice Adv. Grp.**  
5:30 p.m. Feb. 22, 2018

Meetings are held in the Fresno office Governing Board Room and via video teleconference to the Modesto and Bakersfield offices. Details: [www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org)

\* Webcast