

CVAG

**ENERGY & SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2024
12:00 p.m.**

**CVAG Conference Room
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 104
Palm Desert, CA 92260**

**Members of the Committee and the public may attend and participate by
video at the following remote location:**

**Blythe City Hall
235 N Broadway, Room A
Blythe, CA 92225**

**Imperial Irrigation District
1284 Main Street
El Centro, CA 92243**

Members of the public may use the following link for listening access and ability to address the
Energy & Sustainability Committee when called upon:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85789470901?pwd=HxyP9hbrH2AaILBNlcegNQkREZbXHv.1>

**Dial In: +1 669 900 9128
Webinar ID: 857 8947 0901
Password: 858222**

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO CONNECT VIA DIAL IN OPTION, PLEASE CALL 760-346-1127

Public Comment is encouraged to be emailed to the Energy & Sustainability Committee prior to the meeting at cvag@cvag.org by 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the committee meeting. Comments intended to be read aloud should be no more than 300 characters. Members of the public joining the meeting by Zoom can also provide comment by using the “raise hand” feature or hitting *9 on the phone keypad.

**THIS MEETING IS HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE.
ACTION MAY RESULT ON ANY ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**

**UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED, ALL ACTION ITEMS WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR FINAL APPROVAL.**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Councilmember Oscar Ortiz, City of Indio, Chair

2. **ROLL CALL**

A. Member Roster

P4

3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**

Anyone wishing to address the Energy & Sustainability Committee on items appearing on this agenda may do so at this time. Please limit comments to 3 minutes. At the discretion of the Chair, additional public comment time and/or opportunities during the meeting may be granted.

5. **COMMITTEE MEMBER / DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

6. **CONSENT CALENDAR**

A. Approve the minutes from the June 13, 2024 meeting

P5

6.1 **ITEMS HELD OVER FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR**

7. **DISCUSSION / ACTION**

A. Imperial Irrigation District’s Coachella Valley Resiliency Initiative – IID Deputy Energy Manager Paul Rodriguez

P9

Recommendation: Information

B. Update from South Coast Air Quality Management District on continued concerns related to poor air quality – Sarah Rees, Deputy Executive Officer for Rule Development and Implementation; and Scott Epstein, Planning and Rules Manager

P11

Recommendation: Information

- C. **Update on Coachella Valley Energy Commission and Ongoing Analysis of Regional Alternative Governance – Emmanuel Martinez** **P31**

Recommendation: Authorize the Executive Director to continue support of the Coachella Valley Energy Commission’s process for investments and planning of electrical service in Coachella Valley, including but not limited to developing a new joint powers authority and creating a potential staffing agreement with CVAG

- D. **Election of Energy & Sustainability Committee Officers – Tom Kirk** **P34**

Recommendation: Elect a Chair and Vice Chair for the Energy & Sustainability Committee for Fiscal Year 2024/2025

8. **INFORMATION**

- A. Attendance Record **P36**
- B. Virtual participation in CVAG’s meetings **P37**
- C. Update on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Application and the Region’s Comprehensive Climate Action Plan **P39**
- D. Used Oil Recycling Annual Report **P41**
- E. Potential tour of Lithium Valley **P46**

9. **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Any member of the public wishing to address the Committee on items not appearing on this agenda may do so at this time. Please limit comments to 2 minutes. At the discretion of the Chair, additional public comment time and/or opportunities during the meeting may be granted.

10. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The next meeting of the **Energy & Sustainability Committee** will be held on Thursday, November 14, 2024, at noon at the CVAG conference room, 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 104, Palm Desert, 92260.

The next meeting of the **Executive Committee** will be held on Monday, September 30, at 4:30 p.m. at the CVAG conference room, 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 104, Palm Desert, 92260.

11. **ADJOURN**

ITEM 2A

**Energy & Sustainability Committee
Member Roster
2024 – 2025**



VOTING MEMBERS	
Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians	Tribal Vice Chair Candace Patencio Anderson
City of Blythe	Mayor Joseph DeConinck
City of Cathedral City	Mayor Pro Tem Nancy Ross
City of Coachella	Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Virgen
Coachella Valley Water District	Board Member Anthony Bianco
City of Desert Hot Springs	Councilmember Russell Betts
Imperial Irrigation District	Director JB Hamby
City of Indian Wells	Councilmember Donna Griffith
City of Indio	Councilmember Oscar Ortiz, <i>Chair</i>
City of La Quinta	Mayor Linda Evans, <i>Vice Chair</i>
Mission Springs Water District	Director Amber Duff
City of Palm Desert	Councilmember Gina Nestande
City of Palm Springs	Mayor Pro Tem Ron deHarte
City of Rancho Mirage	Mayor Pro Tem Ted Weill
Riverside County – District 4	Supervisor V. Manuel Perez
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians	Secretary Altrena Santillanes
Ex-Officio / Non-Voting Members	
Riverside County – District 5	Supervisor Yxstian Gutierrez

ITEM 6A

Energy & Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes June 13, 2024



The audio file for this meeting can be found at: <http://www.cvag.org/audio.htm>

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting was called to order by Chair Oscar Ortiz, City of Indio, at 12:13 p.m. at the CVAG Conference Room, 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 104, in the City of Palm Desert. Zoom videoconferencing was available from the City of Blythe.
2. **ROLL CALL** – Roll call was taken and it was determined that a quorum was present.

Members Present

Vice Chair Candace Patencio Anderson
Mayor Joseph DeConinck
Mayor Pro Tem Nancy Ross
Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Virgen
Councilmember Russell Betts
Director JB Hamby*
Councilmember Dana Reed (*alternate*)
Councilmember Oscar Ortiz, *Chair*
Mayor Linda Evans, *Vice Chair*
Director Amber Duff
Councilmember Gina Nestande
Mayor Pro Tem Ron deHarte
Mayor Pro Tem Ted Weill
Supervisor V Manuel Perez **
Vice Chair Joseph Mirelez

Agency

Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
City of Blythe (*via Zoom*)
City of Cathedral City
City of Coachella
City of Desert Hot Springs
Imperial Irrigation District
City of Indian Wells
City of Indio
City of La Quinta
Mission Springs Water District
City of Palm Desert
City of Palm Springs
City of Rancho Mirage
Riverside County – District 4
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians

* *Jointed the meeting using AB 2449 for Just Cause*

***Deputy Chief of Staff Pat Cooper became Supervisor Perez's alternate after Item 7B*

Members/ Ex-Officios Not Present

Director Anthony Bianco
Supervisor Yxstian Gutierrez

Coachella Valley Water District
Riverside County – District 5

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilmember Russell Betts led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

It was announced that public comment for Items 7B and 7C would be taken during the item presentation.

5. COMMITTEE MEMBER / DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Executive Director Kirk requested that items in the agenda be rearranged to be heard in 7B/7C/7A order as Supervisor Perez had to leave the meeting early. Mr. Kirk announced that there would not be an actual presentation for Item 7C as both members from the South

Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) were unable to make it to the meeting due to Jury Duty obligations.

Mr. Kirk also provided an update on CVAG's efforts to secure additional grant funding, including the recently completed application for an extreme heat grant.

Chair Ortiz announced that there will be a public meeting tomorrow for the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument, starting at 10 a.m. at the Riverside County Fairgrounds in Indio.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Approve May 9, 2024 Committee Meeting Minutes**
- B. Approve Amendment No. Five to the professional services agreement with the Southern California Mountains Foundation, authorizing the next cycle of Waste Tire Amnesty Grant Program at a not-to-exceed amount of \$50,000 and extending the contract term through October 2025**
- C. Authorize the Executive Director to take the necessary actions, including the related agreements with the County of Riverside and College of the Desert, to receive available funding from the Coachella Valley Air Quality Enhancement Grant Program for the region's Smart Scalping and Landscape Certification Program**

IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILMEMBER BETTS AND SECONDED BY MAYOR EVANS TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR.

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 14 AYES, 2 AND 2 MEMBERS ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.

Vice Chair Patencio Anderson	Aye
Mayor DeConinck	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Ross	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Virgen	Aye
Director Bianco	Absent
Councilmember Betts	Aye
Director Hamby	Absent
Councilmember Reed	Aye
Councilmember Ortiz	Aye
Mayor Evans	Aye
Director Duff	Aye/Abstained- only from 6A
Councilmember Nestande	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem deHarte	Aye/Abstained- only from 6A
Mayor Pro Tem Weill	Aye
Deputy Chief Cooper	Aye
Vice Chair Mirelez	Aye

7. DISCUSSION / ACTION

B. Increasing air quality concerns from the desert’s tourism industry, realtors, healthcare professionals and residents

Mr. Kirk presented the staff report and background information on the issue. Mr. Kirk introduce Emily Nelson, CVAG’s longtime consultant on air quality, and Supervisor Perez, who is a SCAQMD board member, to address the Committee before opening the floor for public comment on the item.

Dr. Nelson addressed the Committee and presented an update on the interactions she has been having on air quality issues with the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

Supervisor Perez expressed the need to sit down with SCAQMD and voice our concerns and put together a pathway moving forward to address the issues, provide potential solutions and discuss how to pay for those solutions.

Ron Holmes, resident of PGA West in La Quinta, expressed his concern over the air quality issues and the lack of action and ownership of the issue.

Audio caller, resident of Palm Desert, joined the meeting via Zoom and did not present his name, expressed his concern for the air quality since Tropical Storm Hilary and echoed Mr. Holmes’ position.

Palm Springs Mayor Jeffery Bernstein joined the meeting via Zoom and expressed his concerns over air quality issues, noting how the issue has become a predominate topic of conversation amongst the residents and businesses in the city of Palm Springs. Mayor Bernstein urges the issue to be addressed.

Palm Springs Councilmember Christy Holstege joined the meeting via Zoom and expressed her concern over the lingering air quality issues, the impacts to children’s health and the financial impact to the City of Palm Springs, who just funded \$500,000 for equipment to clear roadways from blowsand during these windstorms.

Dena Fisher, Manager of Respiratory Services with Tenet Health, joined via Zoom and shared hospital data of respiratory patients seeking treatment, including those with no history of asthma nor allergies. Ms. Fisher noted many patients are pediatric patients under the age of 3 and they believe air quality is a major role.

Scott White, President and CEO of Greater Palm Springs, and Davis Myers, Director of Partnership for Greater Palm Springs, addressed the negative impact on tourism due to the ever-growing air quality issue since Tropical Storm Hilary.

Brandon Marley, CEO of Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce, spoke on the air quality issues affecting business, residents, and life in general or all members of the Coachella Valley and the importance of addressing the issues.

Chris Christensen, CEO of the Desert Healthcare District/ Foundation, spoke about the strategic plan and the District’s efforts to address environmental health issues, including air quality.

Robust member discussion ensued after public comment. Staff was encouraged to continue to lead regional engagement on this issue.

No action was taken as this was an informational item.

C. Coordination with South Coast Air Quality Management District

This item was postponed to a future meeting date due to SCAQMD being unable to attend due to unforeseen conflicts in scheduling.

A. Imperial Irrigation District's Coachella Valley Resiliency Initiative

In the interest of time, it was requested that this item be moved to September 2024's meeting agenda.

8. INFORMATION – The following items were provided in the agenda for information only:

A. Attendance Record

B. CVAG Meeting Calendar for Fiscal Year 2024/25

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Jeremy Wittie, General Manager with Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District, expressed interest in partnerships with CVAG for the waste tire recycling program and interest in being part of the discussion for landscape certification currently being addressed as all are important in addressing mosquito sourcing. Mr. Wittie also gave an update on the West Nile virus.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next meeting of the **Energy & Sustainability Committee** will be held on Thursday, September 12, 2024, at noon at the CVAG conference room, 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 104, Palm Desert, 92260.

The next meeting of the **Executive Committee** will be held on Monday, June 24, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. at the Desert Hot Springs Recreation Center, 11-750 Cholla Dr, Desert Hot Springs, 92240.

The next meeting of the **General Assembly** will be held on Monday, June 24, 2024, at 6 p.m. at the Desert Hot Springs Recreation Center, 11-750 Cholla Dr, Desert Hot Springs, 92240.

11. ADJOURN – Chair Ortiz adjourned the meeting at 1:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Elysia Regalado, Management Analyst

ITEM 7A

**Coachella Valley Association of Governments
Energy & Sustainability Committee
September 12, 2024**



STAFF REPORT

Subject: Imperial Irrigation District's Coachella Valley Resiliency Initiative

Contact: Emmanuel Martinez, Program Manager - External Affairs (emartinez@cvag.org)

Recommendation: Information

Background: This item was included in the June agenda packet, but the presentation was postponed to the September meeting due to time constraints.

The eastern Coachella Valley has repeatedly been impacted by microburst storms that caused considerable damage to Imperial Irrigation District's (IID) electrical infrastructure. These events have significant negative impacts on the public's health and safety as they have occurred during the hot summers months when energy reliability is most needed to run air conditioners and keep people cool. To address this issue and increase the resiliency of the electrical infrastructure, IID has sought outside funding to enhance the reliability, public safety and resiliency for impacted areas in the Coachella Valley.

A microburst storm is defined by the National Weather Service as a downdraft (sinking air) in a thunderstorm that is less than 2.5 miles in scale which can cause significant damage to life and property and can reach windspeeds as high as 150 miles per hour in extreme cases.

On June 5, 2020, microburst wind gusts of 41 miles per hours damaged and fell 53 transmission and distribution poles along a 2.5 mile stretch near Avenue 68 in the unincorporated community of Mecca. This affected 1,839 customers, although 1,765 had power restored within 90 minutes of the outage. In September 2021, a similar event destroyed more than 30 electrical poles, causing approximately 1,400 customers to lose power in the North Shore area. Given the severity of these events to customers as well as the cost to repair, the IID Board of Directors and the County of Riverside have declared them a Local Emergency, which also increases opportunities for funding from state and federal sources. Specifically, IID has coordinated with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and California Office of Emergency Services for funding.

As noted in the Energy & Sustainability Committee's May agenda, IID secured \$38 million for energy infrastructure and resilience improvements to electrical infrastructure in the eastern Coachella Valley. The K-Line Transmission Hardening Project, which includes a redesign and strengthening of the line, will receive \$31.8 million and will directly benefit the communities of Mecca, North Shore and Bombay Beach. Another \$2.4 million will be allocated to Mecca/North Shore area to enhance service reliability in that area, and \$3.9 for portable generators, to assist in ensuring service during extreme weather events.

IID's Deputy Energy Manager Paul Rodriguez will provide additional details during a presentation at the September meeting of the Energy & Sustainability Committee.

Fiscal Analysis: There is no cost to CVAG for this update.

ITEM 7B

Coachella Valley Association of Governments
Energy & Sustainability Committee
September 12, 2024



STAFF REPORT

Subject: Update from South Coast Air Quality Management District on continued concerns related to poor air quality

Contact: Tom Kirk, Executive Director (tkirk@cvaq.org)

Recommendation: Information

Background: Both the Executive Committee and the Energy & Sustainability Committee have had robust discussions about the region's air quality following Tropical Storm Hilary. The June meeting of the Energy & Sustainability Committee served as a forum for key stakeholders and members of the public to vocalize their opinions. The concerns heard were related to the impact on public health due and economic impacts to the regional economy, particularly tourism.

The June meeting of the Energy & Sustainability Committee was scheduled to include a presentation by South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). However, following the publication of the meeting agenda, CVAG staff was notified that the speakers from SCAQMD could not attend due to the two presenters having conflicts with jury duty. The presentation has been re-scheduled for the September meeting of the Energy & Sustainability Committee, when Sarah Rees, Deputy Executive Officer for Rule Development and Implementation, and Scott Epstein, Planning and Rules Manager, will update members on data collection on behalf of SCAQMD.

Over the summer, CVAG's advocacy on the issue continued. A letter signed by nearly 60 locally elected officials and community leaders was sent to SCAQMD in June, echoing the frustration they've heard from local residents and pressing for more action. CVAG staff has also continued meetings with SCAQMD staff and Riverside County Supervisor V. Manuel Perez has elevated the issue to staff at the California Air Resources Board (CARB). CVAG's advocacy has been quoted by multiple news organizations, including CalMatters (see attachment). CVAG staff will also be participating in the Desert Healthcare District/ Foundation's (DHCD) upcoming "Healthy Desert, Healthy You" environmental health summit. As DHCD Chief Executive Officer Chris Christensen noted at the June meeting of the Energy & Sustainability Committee, the DHCD has incorporated an environmental focus into its vision for grants and investments and it is looking for a project aimed at mitigating air quality-related health conditions.

SCAQMD staff maintains that the storm deposits were responsible for elevated levels of PM10 in the weeks following last year's storm but generally believe that PM10 levels are within expected parameters this spring/summer. While it is a widely held belief in the Coachella Valley that air quality conditions this spring are not normal, it should be recognized that SCAQMD has invested substantial time and resources to better understand the concerns coming from the Coachella Valley. They are the most sophisticated and capable air district in the country and have put some of their brightest modelers and other experts on the matter.

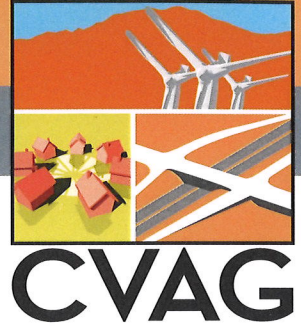
Fiscal Analysis: There are no additional costs to CVAG for providing this update.

Attachments:

1. CVAG letter to SCAQMD, June 28, 2024
2. "Danger in the dust: Coachella Valley residents struggle to breathe," story by CalMatters on August 1, 2024

COACHELLA VALLEY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

73-710 Fred Waring Dr., Suite 200, Palm Desert, CA 92260 · (760) 346-1127 · www.cvag.org



June 28, 2024

Wayne Nastri
Executive Officer
South Coast Air Quality Management District
21865 Copley Dr.
Diamond Bar, CA 91765

Re: Addressing Air Quality Concerns in the Coachella Valley

Dear Mr. Nastri,

We, the undersigned elected officials and community leaders of the Coachella Valley, urgently request the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) take immediate steps to address the air quality conditions that are increasingly causing concern among residents, visitors and stakeholders. There is broad consensus among leadership and residents that the current conditions could pose a threat to the future of our public health, as well as our economy.

We would first like to thank you for your recent help in addressing the gap in our local air monitoring system by re-installing a monitor in Indio and placing temporary monitor(s). We recently learned that some of our colleagues at South Coast AQMD believe that our current air quality conditions fall within normal, expected, parameters. Not only do we believe that this does not correlate with our local experience, but it also poses a barrier to future opportunities for mitigation funding and collaboration. We would like to urgently request a meeting with you and your colleagues to discuss the local data and evaluate why our opinions on current conditions are unaligned. Immediate action is needed, and we pledge our collaboration through the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) to work with you.

Our air quality has been noticeably worse since Tropical Storm Hilary plummeted the Coachella Valley with a once in a 1,000-year storm event that deposited new mud and fine sediment in the area. On May 31, CVAG's Executive Director sent you a letter detailing our region's concerns. The call for action by community members and stakeholders has grown even louder over time, and we encourage you to review the video from CVAG's June 13 meeting of the CVAG's Energy and Sustainability Committee where local elected leaders, community organizations and residents expressed their concerns.

South Coast AQMD's leadership and expertise is needed to identify sources of emissive dust and opportunities for soil stabilization, as well as to deploy monitors with enhanced capabilities that can better profile total suspended particulates. With your collaboration, we can create a plan for action that fits the needs of our region's concerns by safeguarding the region's economy and protecting the health and well-being of residents and visitors of the Coachella Valley. We stand ready to work with you.

Sincerely,

Scott Matas
CVAG Chair
Fiscal Year 2023/24

Oscar Ortiz
Chair, CVAG's Energy
and Sustainability Committee

Ted Weill
CVAG Chair
Fiscal Year 2024/25

City of Blythe

Joey Recond *Mary Conley*
Jim Dig

City of Cathedral City

Frank Williams
Mark Carter *Mark Ross*
Raymond Rogers
Dale Lane

City of Coachella

Shelley Phillips
Stephanie Vizer

City of Desert Hot Springs

Paul R. ...
John ...

City of Indian Wells

Dr. W. Reed

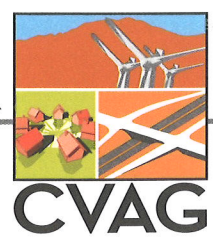
City of Indio

W. J. ... *Elan Adams*

City of La Quinta

Linda Evans *John ...* *McGary*
Doree Fitzpatrick

Steve Sanchez



City of Palm Desert

Yvonne Nestande *Margie K. Golder*
Jan Harick
Eva Dee Kathleen Kelly

City of Palm Springs

J.P.A. B. *Ron Schante* *Grace Garner*
Lucy Mjaduta *Christy Holtz*

City of Rancho Mirage

Michael Skopf *Ted Weese*
Ann Macleath *Weg Mann*

County of Riverside

V. A. S.

Tribal Nations

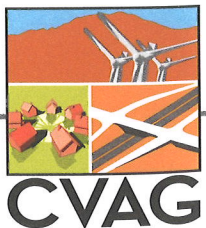
Carol... *W.D. Hill (ALBLI)*

Desert Healthcare District

Chris... *Lee Zandle*
Carmin Zaval, PsyD. *Arthur Shorr*
Carole Rogers

Community Stakeholders

Ron... *...*



CITY OF BLYTHE

Mayor Joseph DeConinck
Vice Mayor Johnny Rodriguez
Mallory Crecelius, City Manager

CITY OF CATHEDRAL CITY

Mayor Mark Carnevale
Mayor Pro Tem Nancy Ross
Councilmember Ernesto Gutierrez
Councilmember Raymond Gregory
Councilmember Rita Lamb

CITY OF COACHELLA

Mayor Steven Hernandez
Mayor Pro Tem Stephanie Virgen
Councilmember Frank Figueroa
Councilmember Neftali Galarza*

CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS

Mayor Scott Matas
Mayor Pro Tem Jan Pye
Councilmember Russell Betts
Councilmember Roger Nuñez
Councilmember Gary Gardner

CITY OF INDIAN WELLS

Mayor Greg Sanders*
Councilmember Dana Reed
Councilmember Donna Griffith*

CITY OF INDIO

Mayor Pro Tem Glenn Miller
Councilmember Elaine Holmes
Councilmember Waymond Fermon
Councilmember Oscar Ortiz

CITY OF LA QUINTA

Mayor Linda Evans
Mayor Pro Tem John Peña
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick
Councilmember Deborah McGarrey
Councilmember Steve Sanchez

CITY OF PALM DESERT

Mayor Karina Quintanilla
Mayor Pro Tem Jan Harnik
Councilmember Evan Trubee
Councilmember Gina Nestande
Councilmember Kathleen Kelly*

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

Mayor Jeffrey Bernstein
Mayor Pro Tem Ron deHarte
Councilmember Christy Holstege
Councilmember Lisa Middleton
Councilmember Grace Garner

CITY OF RANCHO MIRAGE

Mayor Steve Downs*
Mayor Pro Tem Ted Weill
Councilmember Meg Marker
Councilmember Lynn Mallotto
Councilmember Michael O'Keefe

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

Supervisor V. Manuel Perez – District 4

AGUA CALIENTE BAND OF CAHUILLA INDIANS

Tribal Chair Reid D. Milanovich
Tribal Vice Chair Candace Patencio Anderson

TORRES MARTINEZ DESERT CAHUILLA INDIANS

Tribal Vice Chair Joseph Mirelez

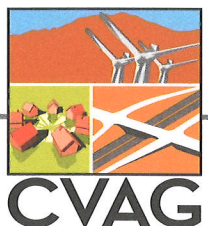
DESERT HEALTHCARE DISTRICT

Chris Christensen, CEO
Carmina Zavala, Vice President
Lee Zendle, Director
Carole Rogers, Director
Arthur Shorr, Treasurer

COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

Russ Martin, Mission Springs Water District Director
Amber Duff, Mission Springs Water District Board of Directors – Division 1
Scott White, President & CEO, Visit Greater Palm Springs
Brandon Marley, President & CEO, Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce

* Added after June 28, 2024





Donate

Environment | Danger in the dust: Coach

ENVIRONMENT

Danger in the dust: Coachella Valley residents struggle to breathe



BY ALEJANDRA REYES-VELARDE

AUGUST 1, 2024



Dust from the exposed lakebed of the Salton Sea, farm fields and the open desert all contribute to particulate pollution in the community of North Shore, on July 17, 2024. Photo by Zoë Meyers for CalMatters

Listen to this article



IN SUMMARY

A hazardous haze, made up of small, inhalable particles, casts a pall over the desert. This year has been severe, triggering asthma attacks — so what is being done to clean it up?

Outside her home in Riverside County, near the north shore of the Salton Sea, Sara Renteria is struggling to breathe. She has to speak in short sentences, and pauses often to take a breath.

When she was diagnosed with asthma as an adult about five years ago, Renteria said her doctor gave her a choice: Leave her home in the Coachella Valley or take an array of medications to treat her condition. It was the air, he told her, that worsened her asthma.

Although by now Renteria is no stranger to this desert region's poor air quality, she has noticed this year that dust storms kicking up clouds of particles have been increasing. She points to the horizon — it's often so hazy that she can't clearly see the desert mountains nearby.

People in the Coachella Valley, especially in Renteria's low-income, Mexican American [community](#), breathe [some of the nation's unhealthiest](#) concentrations of a pollutant known as [PM10](#) — particles of dust small enough to inhale. The particles exceed federal health limits, mostly when they are stirred up on windy days, and come from a variety of sources, including unpaved roads, construction sites, fallow farm fields and the dried-up Salton Sea.

Renteria's impression that the pollution has been severe in her community recently is backed up by the data: So far this year, 24 health warnings for windblown dust pollution have been issued in the region, each lasting several days. The latest was this week, along with odor and [wildfire smoke warnings](#) that added to the Coachella Valley's pollution woes.

Unhealthy peak levels of PM10 around Renteria's community have been recorded on five days so far this year, based on preliminary South Coast Air Quality Management District data. Last year, five days exceeded the health standard and 10 days in 2022; in the decade before that, violations were rare.



Sara Renteria, who suffers from asthma, stands on the porch of her home in North Shore, on July 17, 2024. Photo by Zoë Meyers for CalMatters

During the past two years, some Coachella Valley residents breathed maximum concentrations — usually recorded on high-wind days — two to three times higher than [the amount deemed safe](#). Those are often the days when people, especially those with asthma or allergies, feel sick.

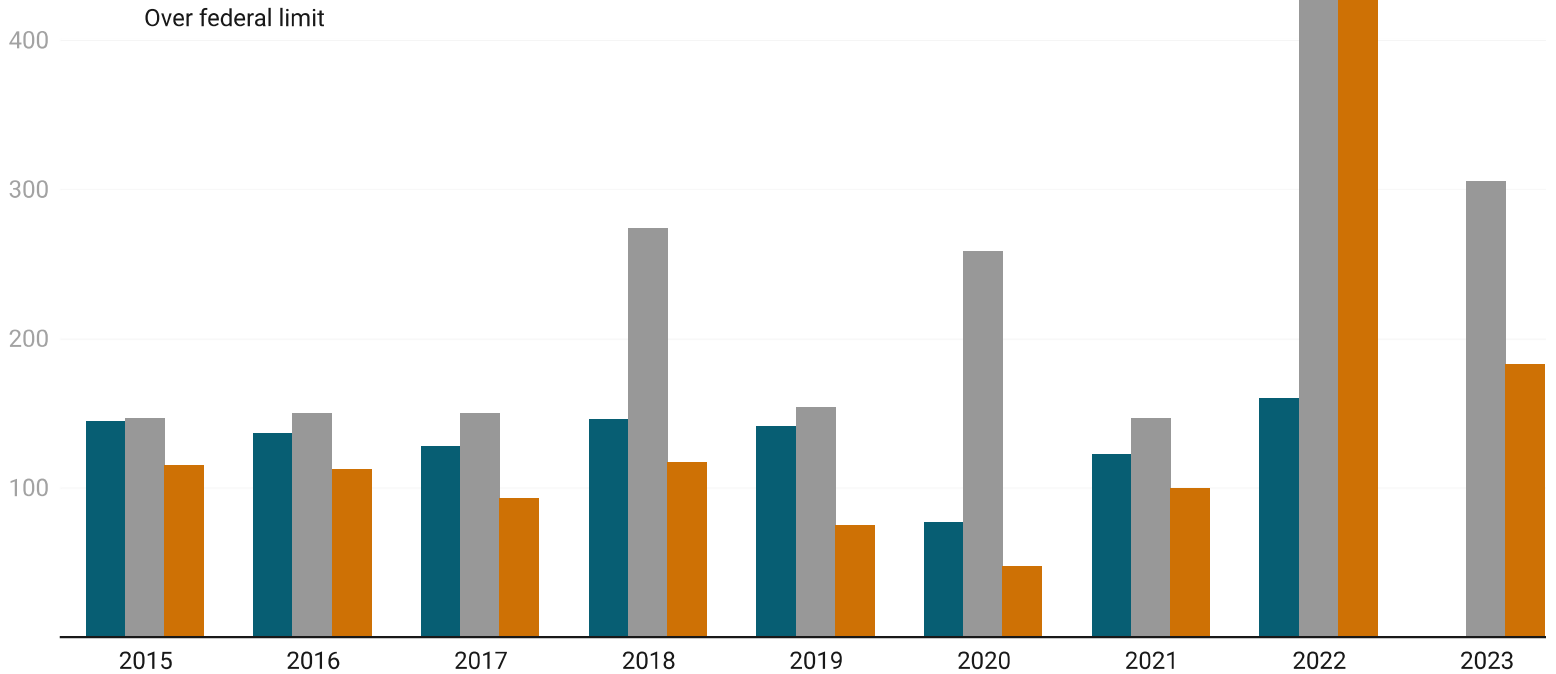
Famous for two music festivals — Coachella and Stagecoach — the region draws hundreds of thousands of people each spring, when winds often stir up dust. Festival-goers and workers breathed high levels of particle pollution for several hours on the two days before the Stagecoach festival, and on its first day, April 26.

Local leaders and residents say more dust is covering cars and driveways, and even surfaces inside their homes. A brown-gray haze lingers after high winds — so bad that it can cause car accidents. Hotels, restaurants and other businesses have expressed concerns that the dust is driving away tourists and raised their cleanup costs.

“There’s no doubt in my mind that the air quality has been worse than I’ve certainly ever experienced it in my 28 yrs in the Coachella Valley,” said Tom Kirk, executive director of the Coachella Valley Association of Governments, which represents the area’s [cities and tribes](#).

Particle pollution in the Coachella Valley

The maximum amounts of suspended particulates, or PM10, detected over a 24-hour period in the Coachella Valley have been high in recent years. The federal health standard is 150 micrograms of PM10 per cubic meter of air. Strong winds are the main cause driving up these peak PM10 levels.



There is no data from the Indio air quality monitoring station for 2023

Chart: John Osborn D'Agostino, CalMatters • Source: [South Coast AQMD](#) • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

But South Coast air district officials say the data doesn't indicate there's anything "out of the ordinary" this year.

"We think dust levels are within the typical year-to-year variation we'd expect to see," said Scott Epstein, the agency's planning and rules manager who oversees air quality assessment. "It's very unsatisfying for us because we want to confirm what the community is saying. But the science says things are within the realm of what we've seen in the past."

Desert dust is usually coarse and packed into the ground. But when [storm Hilary hit the area](#) last August, the torrent of rain disturbed the dust and brought mud from mountains that turned into a fine, loose silt that raised PM10 levels.

But Epstein said much of the dust that people are now seeing isn't actually PM10 — it's larger particles that do not pose a major health threat because they cannot be inhaled.

Some local leaders and residents disagree, based on the physical symptoms they feel and the fine dust they see.

“Despite assertions to the contrary, air quality has not shown significant improvement,” state Assembly members Greg Wallis and Eduardo Garcia wrote in a letter to the air district. “The spring season, characterized by windy conditions, has exacerbated the issue by stirring up dust and clay deposits left behind in the wake of Tropical Storm Hilary.”

Air pollution, particularly from dust-blown particles, has been a problem in the Coachella Valley for decades. The region was declared a federal PM10 “[serious nonattainment](#)” area back in 1993 — making it one of the nation’s worst areas for the pollutant.

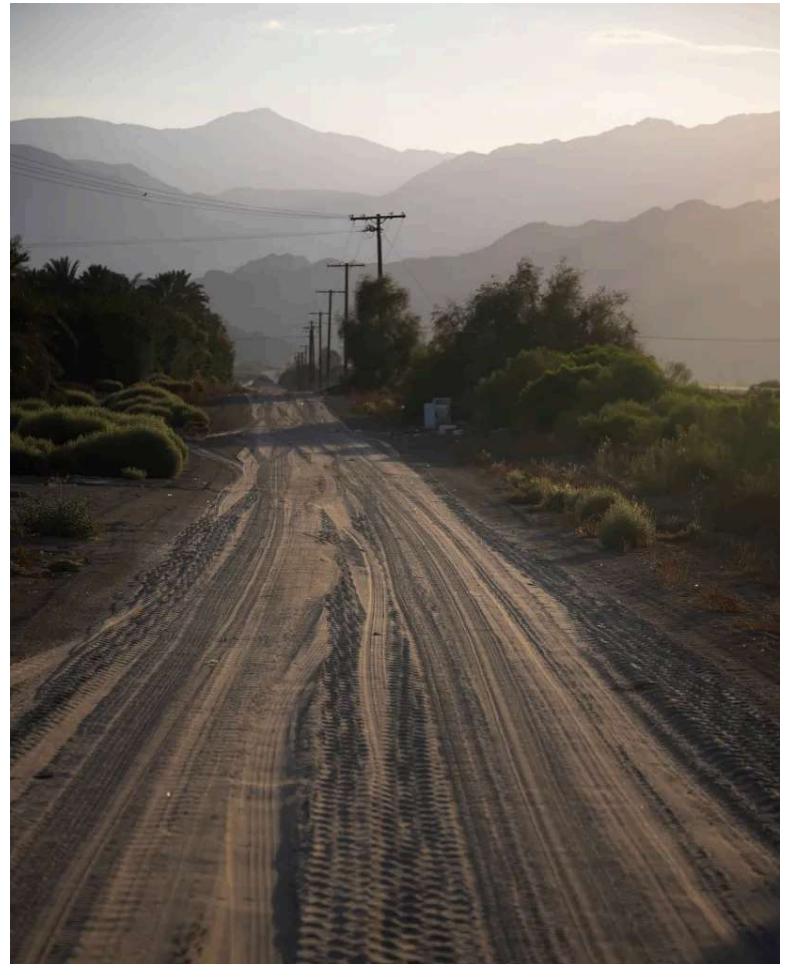
Since then, air quality and local officials have been struggling to figure out how to reduce the pollution, and [residents have long pushed for more action](#).

A state plan, mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, outlines state and local efforts to require certain sources, including farms and construction businesses, to control dust. Local leaders already have a decades-old street-sweeping program to collect dust before it’s ground into finer particles, and other local rules have required dust control at construction sites and farm fields.

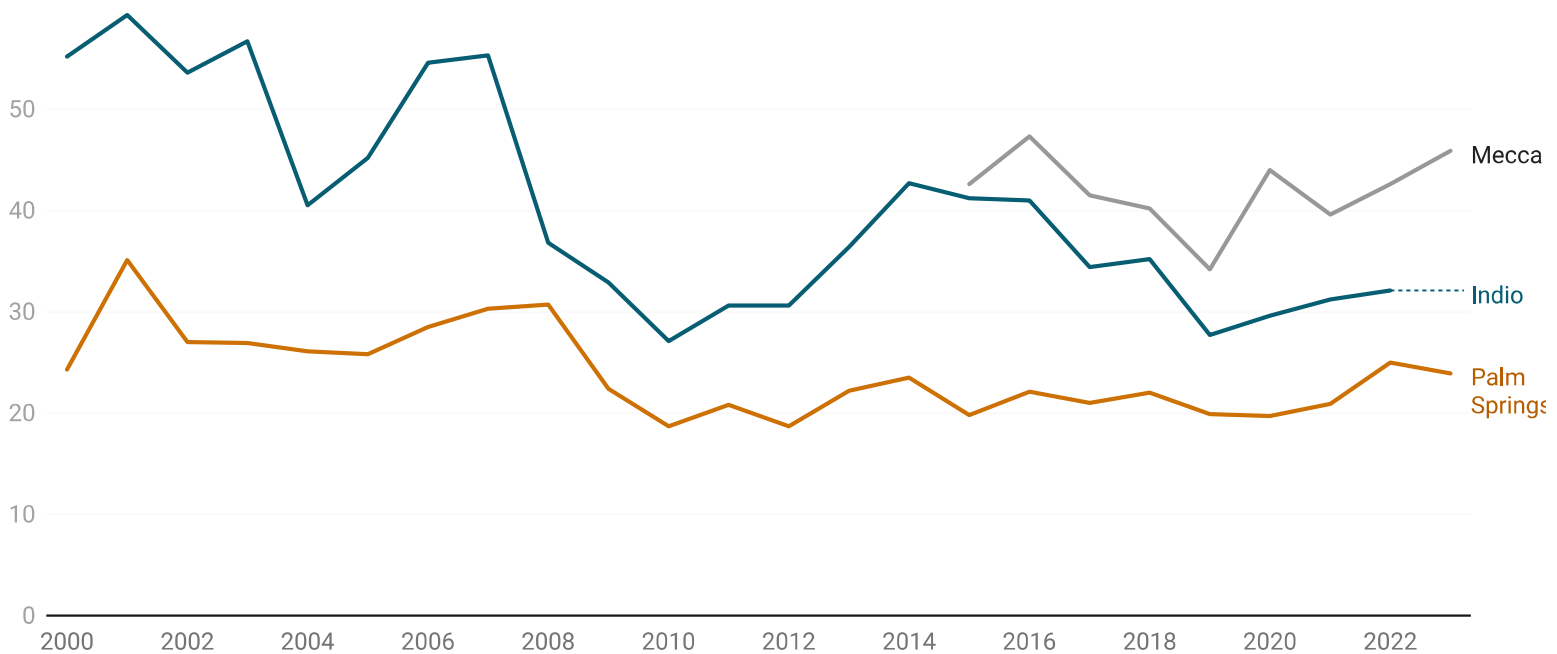
Despite these efforts, over the past 20 years, PM10 remains a “serious” health problem in the region, according to the EPA. Average annual concentrations have improved in some areas, particularly in Indio, but not enough to meet health standards, air district data shows. The town of Mecca, on the north shore of the Salton Sea, has the worst problem.

Despite improvements, air pollution in the Coachella Valley remains "serious"

Average annual concentrations of small particles known as PM10 have declined over the past two decades in parts of the Coachella Valley. But the area still exceeds health standards that are designed to protect people's health. Annual PM10 has dropped 41% in Indio and 21% in Palm Springs



Dust from unpaved roads in Thermal contributes to unhealthy particulate pollution in the Coachella Valley. July 16, 2024. Photo by Zoë Meyers for CalMatters



There is no data from the Indio air quality monitoring station for 2023

Chart: John Osborn D'Agostino, CalMatters • Source: South Coast AQMD • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

“The biggest driver of changes in PM10 is the wind,” said William Porter, an atmospheric physicist at UC Riverside who studies the air pollutant. “We get these big winds that blow very strong from the east. Whenever we have those conditions we see big increases in blow dust.” He added that the pollution also can worsen with “changes in the surface properties of the land.”

The desert, of course, is dusty, with little rainfall and not much vegetation to hold soil in place. But there are human sources, too, that officials are struggling to control. The region is a transportation corridor, with exhaust spewed by trucks, trains and cars driving from Los Angeles. Dust on roadways is ground up into finer pieces that can be picked up and distributed throughout the air. Particles also flies off farm fields and construction sites.

And the [receding playa](#) of the Salton Sea generates small particles that are picked up by winds. Created by Colorado River flooding, the shallow, salty lake now is made up [mostly of contaminated runoff](#) from [Imperial Valley farms](#) that have been [draining the river’s water supply](#).

Learn more about legislators mentioned in this story.

Eduardo Garcia
Democrat, State Assembly, District 36 (Coachella)

Greg Wallis

Republican, State Assembly, District 47 (Rancho Mirage).

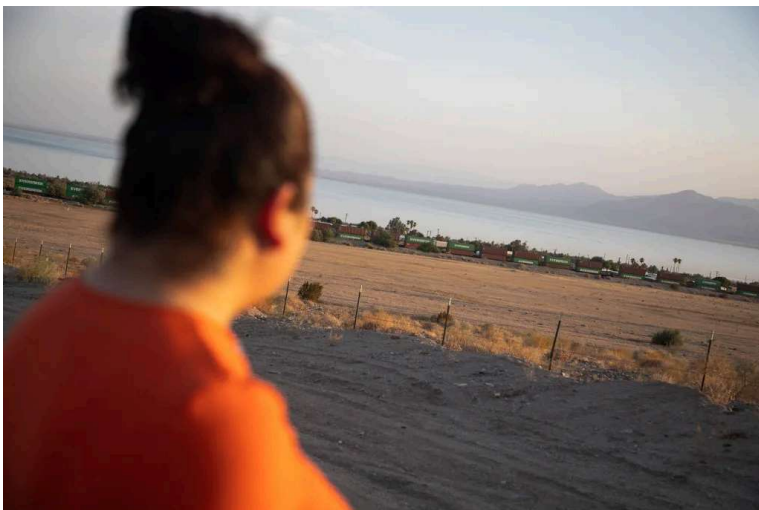
At risk: elderly, children and those with lung disease

PM10 — particles that are 10 microns or smaller, a fraction of the diameter of a human hair — is considered a health threat because the particles are small enough to be inhaled. They are larger than another pollutant, [PM2.5 or fine particles of soot](#), which can travel farther into the respiratory system and enter the bloodstream, triggering heart attacks. PM10 is more likely to be trapped in the upper respiratory system — the nose and throat.

Geoffrey Leung, Riverside County’s public health officer, said when PM10 is inhaled, it can worsen symptoms for people with asthma and lung diseases, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Symptoms can range from moderate to severe, from coughing, wheezing and eye irritation to asthma attacks.

People with lung and heart diseases, the elderly, pregnant people and children are most vulnerable, Leung said. Leung advises people with those conditions to stay indoors and limit physical activity on days with poor air quality.

In the Riverside County portion of the Coachella Valley, about 41,422 adults and 10,675 children have been diagnosed with asthma, according to [county data](#). That’s about 12% of the population, compared with the national average of [about 7%](#).



First: Sara Renteria, who has asthma, watches a passing freight train in her neighborhood in North Shore. **Last:** Eye drops and other medications fill a shelf in the living room of Conchita Pozar’s family home in North Shore, on July 17, 2024. Her daughter suffers eye problems caused by the air pollution. Photos by Zoë Meyers for CalMatters



The Salton Sea on Feb. 4, 2023. With its water supply depleted by Imperial Valley farms, the salty lake is a major source of PM10 in the region. Photo by Ariana Drehsler for CalMatters

The Salton Sea is part of the reason that pollutant levels are so dangerous in the region. Porter’s unpublished research indicates that particles blown from the direction of the Salton Sea is linked to a larger increase in hospitalizations for respiratory or cardiovascular problems compared to when wind blows from other directions. The explanation could be the content of its dust, since it picks up metals, pesticides and other hazardous substances.

Many residents living near the Salton Sea know to stay indoors to avoid the dust if winds are blowing from that direction. On two days earlier this week, [odor advisories](#) were issued when noxious sulfur fumes, which can cause headaches and nausea, blew in from the inland lake.

“When it’s coming from the sea, we definitely don’t go outside. When it’s coming from L.A. it’s less worrisome,” said Conchita Pozar, who lives just about a mile from the shore of the Salton Sea.

Asthma attacks, allergies and headaches

On a recent evening at her home in North Shore — a tiny desert community of about 2,600 people, 97% of them Hispanic, next to the Salton Sea — Renteria recalled a scary asthma attack she had just a few weeks earlier. On the drive home from visiting her siblings, she started hyperventilating, seemingly out of the blue.

“I felt like there was a rock on my chest,” Renteria said, mimicking the short, quick breaths she felt that day. “And like needle pricks all over my skin.”

She spent a night in the hospital before her breathing stabilized.

Renteria, a farmworker, has to carry her inhaler with her at all times, especially when she’s active and working in date fields part of the year. At home, she has a nebulizer, which is a machine with a mask that delivers medicine to her airways, and vials of medications.

Pozar, recruited by UC Riverside researchers, is one of a handful of “promotoras” or community workers who interview their neighbors about their symptoms. [Many report bloody noses, allergies and eye irritation.](#) Some children don’t have an asthma diagnosis but struggle with similar symptoms and are instructed to use inhalers.



Conchita Pozar is a community investigator for a UC Riverside health study in towns near the Salton Sea. Her neighbors have reported asthma attacks, bloody noses, headaches and other health problems associated with the particle pollution. Photo by Zoë Meyers for CalMatters

Pozar’s teenage daughter suffers from allergies that give her eye irritation so severe that she often keeps her home from school. On windy days with poor air quality, Pozar keeps her daughters home and they wear masks when they go outside.

“Her allergies are so bad that we sometimes can’t turn on the lights or go outside because it irritates her eyes,” Pozar said. “A specialist told me that it was because of the dust that surrounds her.”

Many people have already moved out — North Shore’s [population has dropped](#) almost 13% in just one year. But moving isn’t an option for Pozar. She’s lived in the Coachella Valley half of her life after immigrating from Michoacan, Mexico. She wants to stay connected to her indigenous Purepecha friends, neighbors and family members who live there, and she and her husband have made their livelihoods here.

“We’ve adapted, and with housing prices so high, I don’t think we’d be able to find a home that we’d be comfortable in somewhere else,” she said. “The government should make an effort to resolve the problems

here.”

Alianza Coachella Valley, a nonprofit that focuses on improving the health of the valley’s vulnerable communities, has trained Renteria and other community members to use air monitors in their homes to provide localized data and help protect themselves from the pollution, said Silvia Paz, the organization’s executive director.

The group has educated residents about air quality, especially in the eastern Coachella Valley where the towns of Mecca, Thermal and North Shore are separated by miles of open desert and farm fields.

“These communities are mostly rural and they’re lacking in infrastructure,” said Silvia Paz, the organization’s executive director. “We have less parks, we have less trees, we have less roads. We can experience the difference in exposure because we have less elements to keep dust down or protect us from the dust blowing.”

In 2017, Alianza deployed air monitors throughout the eastern Coachella Valley that tracked real-time data. This provided evidence that the region should be included in a state program to reduce pollution in communities with the poorest air quality, Paz said.

[The program](#), mandated by [a 2017 law](#), holds meetings with community members and has recently set aside \$4.6 million to pave public and private roads in the eastern Coachella Valley, as well as \$2.8 million to provide household air filters in communities statewide.

Sweeping streets: Local efforts to fix the problem

The South Coast air district monitors 24-hour average PM10 levels at three stations in Indio, Mecca and Palm Springs, and tracks when levels exceed the federal health standard, which is 150 micrograms of particles per cubic meter of air, as well as a state standard of 50.

Emily Nelson, an environmental consultant for Coachella Valley Association of Governments, was part of a district working group that studied PM10 in the 1990s to develop ways to solve the problem.

In 2003, the agency approved its plan to reach PM10 standards. Under the plan, cities implemented ordinances that directed certain industries, such as construction and agricultural businesses, to reduce dust. That includes such practices as spraying soil stabilizers and nonpotable water on construction sites and implementing certain methods when mowing golf courses.



First: Dirt from farm fields in Thermal can be stirred up by winds. **Last:** Fields can generate small, inhalable particles. July 16, 2024. Photos by Zoë Meyers for CalMatters

“There were a lot of implemented appropriate meaningful strategies that in the end saved many of these industries money and made them better neighbors,” Nelson said.

In 2010, the state Air Resources Board and South Coast district [asked the U.S. EPA](#) to redesignate the area as in attainment with the health standard based on 2005-2007 data. The request was denied “and we started exceeding it again,” Nelson said.

The Coachella Valley Association of Government spends more than \$760,000 a year on street sweeping as part of the state’s plan for cleaning up PM10, according to a 2022 contract effective through 2025. Street sweepers clean 896 miles of roads at least on a biweekly basis.

Kirk, executive director of the association, said street sweepers have recently picked up more dust than they have in the past.

He said the cities need more funding from the South Coast air district and that agency officials should spend time in the Coachella Valley to see the problem themselves.

“We rely on the district’s expertise to not just understand the air quality problem but solve it,” Kirk said. “The air district isn’t in the problem-solving mode because they don’t see there’s a problem.”

In response to community concerns, South Coast air district officials say they are trying to get a better picture of the pollution by deploying a temporary monitor in Indio that can measure total suspended particulates and

one in Whitewater Wash. The agency is also analyzing satellite data in collaboration with Colorado State University researchers.

Even if the recent pollution concentrations are mostly larger particles, not smaller, inhalable ones, Nelson said she worries about how it affects the region’s welfare. More research is needed to see how they affect visibility, crops and other industries, like tourism.

“The wind will stop and the valley still looks like we’re in a soup of dust,” Nelson said. “Everything is coated with this very fine dust. I mean the car washes have been doing the best business ever.”

John Osborn D’Agostino, CalMatters’ data and interactives editor, contributed to the reporting on this article.

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ITEM 7C

**Coachella Valley Association of Governments
Energy & Sustainability Committee
September 12, 2024**



STAFF REPORT

Subject: Update on Coachella Valley Energy Commission and Ongoing Analysis of Regional Alternative Governance

Contact: Emmanuel Martinez, Program Manager – External Affairs (emartinez@cvaq.org)

Recommendation: Authorize the Executive Director to continue support of the Coachella Valley Energy Commission’s process for investments and planning of electrical service in Coachella Valley, including but not limited to developing a new joint powers authority and creating a potential staffing agreement with CVAG

Background: Addressing representation concerns on energy related matters for the Coachella Valley jurisdictions served by Imperial Irrigation District (IID) and ensuring electricity infrastructure is adequate to meet growing demand is a top priority. Over the last three years, IID’s Coachella Valley Energy Commission has served to convene key stakeholders to address these issues. CVAG has been contracted to provide staffing support to these efforts. In January, CVAG entered into an agreement with Leading Resources Incorporated (LRI) in order to assist in facilitating the process to arrive at a regional solution. This agreement was entered into at the request of CVEC and was vetted through the CVEC Governance Committee. Since that time, LRI has conducted three strategic planning sessions to help analyze governance options and develop a strategic plan with actionable steps.

Through the CVEC strategic planning sessions, it has been acknowledged that service by IID has many benefits, including low rates and reliable powers. However, members continue to express concerns about IID’s ability to get new electric capacity installed in a timely manner and the lack of local representation on key electrical infrastructure and program decisions. Through these discussions at the strategic planning sessions, three alternative approaches have been identified as potential solutions to the concerns:

- *Maintaining a “plus” version of the status quo:* IID would continue to provide electrical service to Coachella Valley, but each jurisdiction would have the flexibility to make separate arrangements with IID to accommodate growth or other needs.
- *Creation of a new Coachella Valley-based Joint Powers Authority (JPA):* Riverside County, the cities and Tribal Nations served by IID and Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) would form a JPA focused on investing in and planning for electrical service in Coachella Valley.
- *Creation of a new Coachella Valley public utility district:* A new public agency, separate from IID, would be formed to provide electrical service to Coachella Valley, with a publicly elected Board.

Through further discussion regarding the above options, CVEC members acknowledged that there were tradeoffs: For example, a new public utility district would provide the highest level of local control, but it would also be the costliest.

LRI has facilitated a series of meetings and interviewed individual CVEC members. The following themes emerged:

- Every member of CVEC wants local representation on energy issues.
- IID wants Coachella Valley to have the independence it wants.
- While some members ultimately want to have a standalone public agency, no one saw that as the next stage.
- As solution for the at least the immediate future, most CVEC members favored a JPA, with a small team of engineers and executives working with IID to address Coachella Valley's energy needs.

Over the summer, LRI facilitated discussions with an ad hoc committee formed by CVEC representatives, largely to discuss and provide technical analysis on formation of the JPA. The ad hoc committee is composed of the city managers of the City of La Quinta, City of Indio, and City of Coachella; a representative of Riverside County's executive office; a representative of the Tribal Nations; and the general manager of the Coachella Valley Water District. At the direction of the CVEC, the ad hoc committee has specifically been tasked with working on a draft JPA agreement, which would create the JPA's governance structure, define its authority and scope.

To help facilitate this process, CVAG's Executive Director this summer took the lead to draft the initial JPA agreement in coordination and collaboration with members of the ad hoc committee. One unique component of how the JPA is being proposed to be governed is its weighted voting mechanism, which addresses the inequity of one-agency one-vote. Although the voting mechanism does include a one-agency one-vote structure, the weighted voting mechanism provides a weighted vote that is proportional to the energy consumption for each respective member agency. The weighted vote can be called for by any one agency, should they feel it is necessary. Although weighted voting is rarely used in other agencies that have incorporated it into their governance structure, it is an option that can be employed.

The draft JPA and weighted voting structure has been discussed by the ad hoc committee and staff continues to finalize the JPA based on input from the committee. Once completed, CVEC and its ad hoc committee will shift focus on a draft agreement between IID and the JPA, defining the responsibilities of each entity.

CVAG staff will continue to work with the LRI, CVEC and the ad hoc committee to finalize the JPA agreement. In addition to this agreement, the ad hoc committee is ongoing discussions regarding creating a uniform funding mechanism for the JPA to assist with funding future electrical infrastructure to meet the electricity demands of the eastern Coachella Valley. In addition to funding infrastructure, the JPA would also be empowered to guide or even operate programs related to a public benefits charge, which include low-income subsidies, energy efficiency and demand response programs.

There is also interest among CVEC members in having CVAG staff be the administrator of the JPA. This is a staffing arrangement that CVAG already has for two other JPAs: the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission (CVCC) and Desert Community Energy (DCE). Those staffing agreements allow CVAG to be reimbursed for staff time, administrative costs and overhead related to the specific agency. It has proven to be a successful model, as it also eliminates the need for each JPA to have its own administrative staff.

CVEC is expected to make some decisions on the JPA creation this month. It is anticipated that all necessary agreements could be finalized by the end of this year and operations would commence in 2025. Based on this timing, and contingent on action by CVEC, staff is recommending the CVAG Executive Director be authorized to negotiate a staffing arrangement for any new joint powers authority formed to invest in and plan for electrical service in Coachella Valley. The agreement itself would return to CVAG's committees for approval at a later date.

Fiscal Analysis: CVAG staff time related to this work is covered under the existing MOU with IID, which is billed on a time and materials basis. The strategic planning costs related to LRI's work is covered by an agreement between CVWD and IID.

The costs associated with a staffing agreement would be further analyzed and presented when the agreement comes back to CVAG's committees for approval.

ITEM 7D

Coachella Valley Association of Governments
Energy & Sustainability Committee
September 12, 2024



STAFF REPORT

Subject: Election of Energy & Sustainability Committee Officers

Contact: Tom Kirk, Executive Director (tkirk@cvaq.org)

Recommendation: Elect a Chair and Vice Chair for the Energy & Sustainability Committee for Fiscal Year 2024/2025

Background: Each fiscal year, the Energy & Sustainability Committee considers the election of a Chair and Vice Chair. The Committee, which was renamed as of July 1, 2023, does not have a formal officer rotation, or a set policy for how to select the Chair and Vice Chair.

Attached for members' information is a list of the officers dating back to 2004, when the Committee was the Energy & Environmental Resources Committee. The current Chair is Indio Councilmember Oscar Ortiz and the Vice Chair is La Quinta Mayor Linda Evans.

Staff recommends that the Energy & Sustainability Committee provide nominations and elect its officers for this fiscal year. These officers would also represent CVAG's three votes on the Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN) Executive Committee, where Councilmember Ortiz served as Vice Chair during Fiscal Year 2022/2023 and has been elected as Chair for Fiscal Year 2023/24.

Fiscal Analysis: There is no additional cost to the budget as Energy & Sustainability Committee officers receive the same per diem as other committee members.

Attachment: History of Chair and Vice Chair

**ENERGY & SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
(FORMERLY ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES)
CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR HISTORY**



	<u>Chair</u>	<u>Vice Chair</u>
2023/2024	Oscar Ortiz	Linda Evans
2022/2023	Oscar Ortiz	Linda Evans
2021/2022	Linda Evans	Oscar Ortiz
2020/2021	Linda Evans	Oscar Ortiz
2019/2020	Linda Evans	Vacant
2018/2019	Linda Evans	Richard Balocco
2017/2018	Linda Evans	Yvonne Parks
2016/2017	Linda Evans	Yvonne Parks
2015/2016	Linda Evans	Yvonne Parks/Paul Lewin
2014/2015	Michael Wilson	Linda Evans
2013/2014	Michael Wilson	Linda Evans
2012/2013	Michael Wilson	Linda Evans
2011/2012	Stephen Pougnet	Yvonne Parks/Michael Wilson
2010/2011	Ben Godfrey	Stephen Pougnet
2009/2010	Ben Godfrey	Stephen Pougnet
2008/2009	Ben Godfrey	Stephen Pougnet
2007/2008	Ben Godfrey	Stephen Pougnet
2006/2007	Hank Hohenstein	Ben Godfrey
2005/2006	Buford Crites	Stanley Sniff
2004/2005	Buford Crites	Stanley Sniff

ITEM 8B

Coachella Valley Association of Governments
Energy & Sustainability Committee
September 12, 2024



STAFF REPORT

Subject: Virtual participation in CVAG’s meetings

Contact: Elysia Regalado, Management Analyst (eregalado@cvag.org) and Erica Felci, Chief Operating Officer (efelci@cvag.org)

Recommendation: Information

Background: All meetings of CVAG’s standing committees are subject to the Ralph M. Brown Act (Gov. Code §§ 54950 *et seq.*) and must be open and public so that any member of the public may attend and participate in the meetings.

Starting in March 2020, CVAG, along with many of its member jurisdictions, began having committee meetings via video/ teleconferencing in place of in-person meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This proved to be an efficient way to conduct business for CVAG and its sister agencies – the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission (CVCC) and Desert Community Energy (DCE) – which collectively cover an expansive geographic area across eastern Riverside County. Meetings were well attended, leading to thoughtful and robust conversations on policies, projects and programs. The use of both videoconference and telephone access has also fostered public engagement, as people can join the meetings from a convenient location instead of driving to CVAG’s Palm Desert conference room. In September 2021, the CVAG Executive Committee authorized the Chair and/or the Executive Director to advocate for Brown Act changes that would allow regional agencies such as CVAG to continue utilizing virtual meetings that became so commonplace during the pandemic.

Around April 2023, with the easing of pandemic-era restrictions, CVAG’s committees returned to being held in CVAG’s Palm Desert conference room. State laws have changed, but CVAG continues to use videoconferencing to encourage additional participation by the public and, when needed, by elected officials.

Nearly all CVAG meetings include videoconferencing information through Zoom. Members of the public are provided a link and webinar information for easy accessibility. If an individual has difficulty connecting, they can contact CVAG at 760-346-1127 and staff will connect them to the meeting. Public comment is encouraged to be emailed prior to the meeting at cvag@cvag.org by 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the committee meeting. Comments intended to be read aloud should be no more than 300 characters. During the public comment periods, CVAG staff watch for raised hands to get feedback from virtual members. As noted on the agenda, members of the public joining the meeting by Zoom can also provide comment by using the “raise hand” feature or hitting *9 on the phone keypad.

Beginning January 1, 2023, Assembly Bill (AB) 2449 amended the Brown Act regarding remote attendance at local agency public meetings and allowed legislative bodies of a local agency to use teleconferencing without noticing each teleconference location or making it public, provided at least a quorum of the body participates in person at a single physical location that is identified on the agenda, is

open to the public, held within the boundaries of the agency and provided that other requirements regarding accessibility are met. This provision is not permanent and sunsets on January 1, 2026.

As long as quorum of the legislative body is present in a singular location listed on the agenda, members can join under an emergency circumstance or under “just cause,” such as the need to serve as a caregiver or the need to travel for business of another legislative body. CVAG staff asks members to contact them as early as possible to discuss the process of joining the meetings and the requirements of such participation, including the requirement to use both audio and video.

CVAG’s legislative platform continues to advocate for changes to allow for virtual meetings.

Fiscal Analysis: There are no additional costs to CVAG hosting virtual meetings. Logistics are covered under existing staff time, and committee members are paid the same stipends as they would in person.

ITEM 8C

**Coachella Valley Association of Governments
Energy & Sustainability Committee
September 12, 2024**



STAFF REPORT

Subject: Update on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Application and the Region's Comprehensive Climate Action Plan

Contact: Jacob Alvarez, Program Manager (jalvarez@cvag.org)

Recommendation: Information

Background: The Energy & Sustainability Committee has been regularly updated on the efforts to secure funding through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). In January, CVAG's Executive Director was authorized to take any necessary steps for CVAG to participate in the submission of an application for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG). The required Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) was completed, and submitted to the EPA by the March 1 deadline and a joint application for implementation funding was submitted on May 29 jointly with Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) and San Bernardino Council of Governments, which are CVAG's partners on the Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN). The Inland Empire (DECARB IE) application sought funding for three programs: light-duty electric vehicle infrastructure (\$58.2 million), public building decarbonization (\$106.7 million), and residential building decarbonization (\$29.1 million).

On July 22, the EPA released 25 selected awardees nationwide. While the regional application was not among the funded, South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) did secure funding that should benefit the Coachella Valley. Its CPRG grant proposal, titled "Infrastructure, Vehicles, and Equipment Strategy for Climate Equity, Air Quality, and National Competitiveness (INVEST CLEAN)" is the largest recipient of the grant program in the amount of \$500 million. The SCAQMD INVEST CLEAN proposal was the only application awarded in California. The INVEST CLEAN focuses on incentives to deploy zero-emission, battery electric goods movement technologies in four measures: Class 8 trucks and infrastructure, cargo handling equipment and infrastructure, last mile freight delivery for medium-duty and infrastructure, switcher locomotives and infrastructure.

CVAG staff had coordinated with SCAQMD staff during the application process and is tracking the deployment of funds closely. AQMD's application utilized projects in both the Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario PCAP and the Los Angeles- and Long Beach-Anaheim PCAP for its submission. The Executive Directors from the I-REN councils of governments issued a letter of support for the application. It could take months for the EPA and SCAQMD to finalize the grant agreement. CVAG, WRCOG and SBCOG are working together to ensure the collective regions benefit from this award.

The 25 CPRG-selected projects will fund projects in 30 states. Eight of these applications were submitted by partnerships of multiple entities that will implement their proposed projects. The CPRG implementation investments are as follows: transportation (\$1.18 billion), electric power (\$372 million), buildings (\$1.06 billion), industry (\$636 million), agriculture and natural and working lands (\$931 million), as well as waste and materials management (\$121 million).

In total, the IRA provides an investment of \$5 billion to the EPA to support efforts by states and municipalities thereof to develop and implement local greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction strategies. While the 25 projects are the biggest winners, another \$250 million was previously provided to states, local governments, tribes, and territories to develop and implement Priority Climate Action Plans (PCAP) for reducing GHG emissions and other harmful air pollution. The planning efforts continue in the Coachella Valley, as the grant secured locally also is funding a regional Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) for CVAG and its member jurisdictions. As a result, SBCOG's CPRG consultants (ICF) and CVAG staff this summer has been working with individual jurisdictions, reviewing and providing feedback on a draft list of GHG mitigation measures, requesting agency-wide utility usage data to inform GHG inventories, and currently disseminating GHG emissions community survey in English and Spanish via community partners, agency website and social media.

Fiscal Analysis: There is no additional cost to CVAG for these items. Staff time dedicated to I-REN and the costs of the services of consultants are covered through the I-REN budget and SBCOG's CPRG Planning Grant budget.

Attachment: Regional PCAP: https://cvag.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Riverside_San-Bernardino_Ontario_PCAP.pdf

ITEM 8D

Coachella Valley Association of Governments
Energy & Sustainability Committee
September 12, 2024



STAFF REPORT

Subject: Used Oil Recycling Annual Report

Contact: Emily Langenbahn, Management Analyst (elangenbahn@cvag.org)

Recommendation: Information

Background: CVAG, in partnership with its member jurisdictions, has long maintained successful recycling programs for waste tires and for used oil. Funded through the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle), the Used Oil Recycling Program is a state-funded initiative aimed at promoting the proper collection and recycling of used oil. The grant supports event coordination and staff services to host events that reduce environmental contamination from improper disposal and increase public awareness.

In Fiscal Year 2023/24, CVAG hosted eight used oil filter exchange events. Participants who brought used oil filters to events received new filters, while participants that brought in used oil received funnels, towels, and oil change reminder clings. To increase oil filter collection at these filter exchange events, CVAG continued its poster contest and coordinated advertisements through a broad range of media outlets to encourage a diverse event attendance. The City of Coachella included an event flyer in the residents' utility bills. The Cities of Palm Desert, La Quinta, and Cathedral City promoted the event details in city newsletters. Flyers showing all event dates were also distributed at the counters of AutoZones and at City offices in each member jurisdiction. A television ad aired across a local broadcasting station's programming, although radio ads had the most significant success spreading information about used oil filter events collection and events. These ads were produced in English and Spanish versions to air across a variety of the area's stations.

There was an uptick in the number of filters collected as compared to the number of filters collected in Fiscal Year 2022/23. CVAG collected a total of 798 oil filters at the eight Used Oil Filter Exchange Events, compared to 682 oil filters collected at seven events in Fiscal Year 22-23. The number of gallons of used oil slightly decreased, with 1,045 gallons of oil collected in Fiscal Year 2023/24 versus 1,353 gallons of oil collected in Fiscal Year 2022/23. Similar to previous years, nearly half of the attendees reported this was their first used oil and filter collection event, giving CVAG the opportunity to educate 148 additional residents on proper used oil and filter recycling.

Each August, the Annual Report for the Used Oil Recycling Program is due. The Annual Report for 2024 was submitted on August 13, 2024. The report includes detailed accounts of program activities, financial expenditures, and achievements over the past year.

Fiscal Analysis: There is no cost to CVAG for this informational update.

Attachments: Used Oil Recycling Program Annual Report for FY 2023/24



Annual Report Summary

Recipient/Jurisdiction: Coachella Valley Association of Governments

Status: Open

Fiscal Year: 2023-24

Program Advisor: Farrall, Annabel

Oil Collection Type	Oil (Gallons)	Oil Filters
Certified Collection Centers	71,323	9,452
PHHW and ABOPS	2,708	1,293
Temporary Or Mobile Collection	1,045	798
Residential Collection	546	39
Oil Collection Total:	75,622	11,582

Expenditures

PAYMENT NUMBER : OPP13-23-0217

	AVAILABLE BALANCE	38,351.53
Administration	Indirect / Overhead Cost	272.23
	Personnel	2,812.50
Collection	Certified Collection Cen	1,575.00
	Temporary / Mobile (oper	23,775.00
Education	Flyers	916.06
	Posters	332.32
	Radio Ads	6,223.19
	Television Ads	1,400.00
	Utility Inserts	1,045.23
	REMAINING BALANCE	0.00

PAYMENT NUMBER : OPP14-23-0217

	AVAILABLE BALANCE	53,537.00
Administration	Indirect / Overhead Cost	36.15
	Personnel	22,074.98
Collection	Temporary / Mobile (oper	24,353.89
Education	Educational Materials	7,071.98
	REMAINING BALANCE	0.00

Program Highlights

Theme: One of the main activities of the Used Oil Program is to promote/increase used oil filter collection. What activities did you conduct to increase used oil filter collection?

The Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) hosted eight used oil filter exchange events for the nine member cities participating in the Oil Payment Program managed by CVAG. Participants who brought used oil filters to the events received new filters. Participants that brought in used oil received funnels, towels, and oil change reminder clings. To increase oil filter collection at the FY 2023/24 filter exchange events, CVAG continued the poster drawing contest and coordinated advertisements through a broad range of media outlets to encourage a diverse event attendance. The City of Coachella included an event flyer in the residents' utility bills. Palm Desert, La Quinta, and Cathedral City all included event information in their City's newsletter. Flyers showing all event dates were distributed at the counter of AutoZones and City offices in each member City. A television ad was developed and aired across a local broadcasting station's programming. Radio ads however had the largest marked success spreading information about used oil filter events collection and events. These ads were produced in English and Spanish versions to air across a variety of the area's stations.

Did you increase or decrease used oil and filter collection compared to last year? How much and why?

In FY 2023/2024 the number of filters collected increased as compared to the number of filters collected in FY 2022/23. CVAG collected a total of 798 oil filters at the eight CVAG Used Oil Filter Exchange Events, compared to 682 oil filters at seven events in FY 2022/2023. The number of gallons of used oil slightly decreased with 1,045 gallons of oil collected in FY 2023/2024 versus 1,353 gallons of oil collected in FY 2022/23. Coachella Valley residents continue to properly recycle their used oil and oil filters not only at the exchange events, but throughout the entire year. This year-round utilization and enhanced education of recycling resources through continued events explains the decrease in gallons of oil collected. Based on our event survey at the eight events, the events continue to educate more participants that oil filters are recyclable. Similar to previous years, nearly half of the attendees reported that this was their first used oil and filter collection event, giving CVAG the opportunity to educate 148 new residents on proper used oil and filter recycling.

Were there any program changes from this year to last year?

Before the pandemic CVAG was able to host 9 events each year. Post pandemic, CVAG has established a rotating schedule for the number of events to manage a decreased budget. CVAG was able to host eight events in FY 2023/24 as events will be paused during FY 2024/25 due to the reduction in OPP funding provided.

If you dropped a program or method, why do you think it didn't work?

To be able to continue to host the events with a reduced budget, CVAG has paused procuring additional giveaway items as part of the oil change kit. Participants continue to demonstrate interest and use of the funnels, towels, and drainer containers at events. If the budget returns to pre-covid levels, CVAG will first resume events on an annual schedule, and then return to offering the additional giveaways.

What program or method has worked best for you?

- Used Oil Filter Exchange Events and education and outreach by event personnel to event participants continues to expand education and outreach on the recyclability of oil filters.
- CVAG was able to continue the drawing contest in FY 2023/24. This outreach method has been historically significant to CVAG as it ties in educating Coachella Valley's youth.
- Email is a great way to contact the customers who regularly attend the events. Regular attendees bring in family and friends, expanding outreach through word of mouth.
- Radio advertising remains the number one driver in attendance.
- Demographic research has allowed CVAG to adapt the outreach efforts to best fit the community.

Did you develop any best practices or techniques to share with other grantees?

Used Oil and oil filter collection events in the Coachella Valley have often been attended predominantly by people aged 50 and above. CVAG focused on three initiatives to engage youth and young adults to increase their understanding of used oil and oil filter recycling.

- Sent advertisements to the local community college for distribution.
- Disseminated radio advertisements across a variety of station genres and included both English and Spanish versions.
- Utilized an email list developed from previous years' attendance to notify past attendees of upcoming events. This email list had the ripple effect of creating a portion of new and younger attendees from word of mouth. Observations at events noted this was a generational shift between those family members attending.
- Data tracking of events year over year allows us to identify which outreach methods are most effective and which need to be updated to improve future success.

What can CalRecycle do to help you? Or what would you like to see modified to better assist you?

Nothing at this time. We appreciate that the CalRecycle team overseeing the OPP grant is available to assist CVAG with any used oil program-related questions in a timely manner.

Annual Report Certification

"I certify under penalty of perjury, under the laws of the State of California, that I have read the Oil Payment Program (OPP) Guidelines (Guidelines), that the submitted Annual Report and Expenditure information is correct, and that all funds received under the OPP have been expended in accordance with the Guidelines."

X Tom Kirk

8/13/24

Signature of Signature Authority (as authorized in Resolution) or Authorized Designee (as authorized in Letter of Designation)
Tom Kirk

Date

Print Name

IMPORTANT! Recipient must print out this page, obtain Signature of Signature Authority, upload signed document to the LoGOPP system, and retain the original document in Recipient's cycle file.

Signature: 
Tom Kirk (Aug 12, 2024 15:52 PDT)

Email: tkirk@cvag.org






Annual Report 2024-Revised

Final Audit Report

2024-08-12

Created:	2024-08-12
By:	Emily Langenbahn (elangenbahn@cvag.org)
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ITEM 8E

**Coachella Valley Association of Governments
Energy & Sustainability Committee
September 12, 2024**



STAFF REPORT

Subject: Potential tour of Lithium Valley

Contact: Savannah Gil, Program Specialist (sgil@cvag.org)

Recommendation: Information

Background: At the April 2024 meeting, the Energy & Sustainability Committee received a presentation from Bari Bean, the Imperial County Deputy Chief Executive Officer for Natural Resources. Committee members expressed an interest in planning a bus tour of the direct lithium extraction (DLE) facilities or geothermal plants in the Salton Sea Known Geothermal Resource Area in October or November of this year.

Since then, CVAG staff has reached out to the three geothermal energy companies in Imperial County: Berkshire Hathaway Energy (BHE) Renewables, Control Thermal Resources (CTR), and Energy Source Minerals (ES Minerals). Unfortunately, none of the companies are offering group tours of their sites due to proprietary reasons. However, CTR has mailed informational booklets that will be shared with Committee members, and ES Minerals offered to join the Committee on a bus tour to provide an overview from the bus.

CVAG staff has also reached out to Ms. Bean to discuss additional options. If there remains interest in a tour, staff could coordinate a bus ride around the geothermal resource areas, specifically an exterior look at the BHE Renewables and ES Minerals facilities. The access would be limited. Based on the distance and potential tour schedule, staff anticipates it would require a nearly daylong commitment from members.

Staff will be seeking feedback from the Committee on their continued interest in the tour.

Fiscal Analysis: If the Committee chooses to proceed with the bus tour, there would be nominal costs related to bus rentals.