

To: John Vazquez, Chair
and Members of the Board of Directors

From: Mat Ehrhardt, P.E., Executive Director/APCO *ME*

Date: December 9, 2020

Subject: Informational Report on the 2020 Ozone Season

Recommended Action

None. This is an informational report.

Background

Ground-level ozone is a pollutant that is created when nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and reactive organic gases (ROG) react in the presence of sunlight. Ozone levels are highest during the summer months, particularly on the hottest days. Peak ozone season is considered to fall between May and October. Mobile sources such as cars and trucks contribute an estimated 70 percent of ground-level ozone. However, the District does not have direct regulatory oversight over mobile sources. Consequently, most mobile source reduction strategies are developed at the state level.

The health impacts from exposure to unhealthy concentrations of ground-level ozone include reduced lung function and aggravated respiratory symptoms (including a higher likelihood of asthma attacks).

Air Quality Index

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is the method by which information about ozone concentrations is communicated to the public. The AQI classifies ozone concentration ranges into five categories:

- Good,
- Moderate,
- Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups,
- Unhealthy, and
- Very Unhealthy

Various health impacts are associated with each of these categories.

Spare The Air

Spare The Air is a long-running public outreach program that aims to educate the public on the impact of driving when ozone levels are high during the summer. Residents are encouraged to reduce their driving in the summer season to help improve air quality. In addition, Spare The Air alerts are called on certain days when ozone concentrations are forecast to be high. On these days, residents are encouraged to make additional efforts to reduce their driving.

2020 Ozone Season

From May through October 2020, the Yolo-Solano AQMD experienced the following number of days in each category:

- 5 days in the "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" category,
- 36 days in the "Moderate" category, and
- 143 days in the "Good" category

In 2020, only 1 Spare The Air alerts was issued.

2019 Ozone Season

For reference, in 2019 the District issued 6 Spare the Air alerts and experienced the following number of days in each category:

- 0 days in the "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" category,
- 43 days in the "Moderate" category, and
- 141 days in the "Good" category

Budget Impacts

None.

Other Agency Involvement

The Yolo-Solano AQMD works closely with the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) to issue Spare The Air alerts.