

Staff Report 61

Consider adopting a resolution recognizing October 7, 2020, as California Clean Air Day, a Coalition for Clean Air project.

SUMMARY:

Clean air is imperative for public health. Clean Air Day is an initiative developed by the Coalition for Clean Air to draw attention to the importance of clean air and share ways that everyone can be part of the solution. California Clean Air Day is on October 7, 2020. The goal of this day is to raise awareness about sources of air pollution, educate people how to reduce their contributions to air pollution, and start conversations about improving air quality across California. One of the ways that governmental entities can support Clean Air Day is by adopting a resolution to proclaim October 7, 2020, as Clean Air Day and encourage residents, businesses, employees, community members, and other governmental entities to take the Clean Air Pledge as participation in this year's Clean Air Day. The idea is that by working together and taking the pledge to reduce air pollution, we can clear the air leading up to and on this year's California Clean Air Day.

DISCUSSION:

Founded in 1971, the Coalition for Clean Air is a statewide organization that advocates for healthy air. Clean Air Day, created and led by the Coalition for Clean Air, was launched to address misconceptions that California has addressed its air quality issues and reinforce the message that individuals, organizations, businesses, governments, and communities across the state can take simple and immediate steps to improve air quality. The idea with Clean Air Day is that everyone can take steps to achieve cleaner air. As Dr. Joseph K. Lyou, President and CEO of the Coalition for Clean Air, said: "Everyone has a right to breathe clean air. By raising awareness and actively working to reduce air pollution, every Californian can help ensure that every breath you take is a breath of clean air."

Many cities in California rank among those as having the worst air quality in America. Seven of the 10 most polluted cities in the United States are in California. Southern Californians went 85 straight days in 2019 without a single day of good air quality. Los Angeles remains the city with the worst ozone pollution in the nation, Bakersfield is the most polluted city in the nation for year-round particle pollution, and the Fresno-Madera-Hanford area ranks as the metropolitan area with the worst short-term particle

pollution, according to data from the American Lung Association. Climate change is manifesting in the hottest years in history, increasing high ozone days and contributing to devastating wildfires. And then there is the larger reversal and rollbacks of clean air efforts under the Trump administration. In May and June, the Trump administration issued Executive Orders directing national agencies to ignore federal regulations and environmental laws if they burdened the economy.

Despite these challenges, we can all do our part to improve air quality. Scientists, government agencies, businesses, ports, and many others have all committed to participate in this year's Clean Air Day and do their part on behalf of air quality, including the California Energy Commission, the California State Controller, the Office of Senator Dianne Feinstein, and the Port of Long Beach. To date, 233 organizations have pledged to participate in Clean Air Day. The California State Lands Commission can do its part by joining this effort. Partnerships, a cornerstone of Clean Air Day, are among the most potent tools to affect change.

Clean Air Day is a tool to generate enthusiasm and motivate people to help improve air quality. If everyone pitches in, California will have cleaner air. The Commission's vision is to be a recognized leader that champions environmentally sustainable public land management and balanced resource protection for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. Through its Environmental Justice Policy, the Commission is also committed to addressing disproportionate impacts on low-income communities and communities of color—recognizing that harmful air quality significantly impacts and burdens marginalized and disadvantaged communities. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nationwide, 7.4 percent of adults and 8.6 percent of children have been diagnosed with asthma. In California, the numbers are significantly higher: 13.1 percent of adults and 12.5 percent of children have been diagnosed with asthma. Lower income and minority groups are disproportionately affected by asthma due to their increased exposure to air pollution. Right now, the public health disparities due to poor air quality in low-income communities are further exacerbated by COVID-19. For these reasons, it is important that the Commission recognize Clean Air Day, engage in conversations addressing poor air quality, and encourage its staff and others to take the pledge and be part of the solution.

Given the pandemic, the activities to facilitate clean air are different this year. The Commission can encourage employee engagement by announcing its participation in Clean Air Day through its newsletter and intranet site, by adopting the attached resolution, and by promoting California Clean Air Day on social media and among its sister state agencies.

EXHIBIT:

A. Resolution

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the attached resolution, Exhibit A, recognizing October 7, 2020, as California Clean Air Day.

Exhibit A

Whereas, air pollution contributes to higher rates of cancer and heart and lung diseases, which adversely affect health; and

Whereas, California has some of the most polluted regions in the United States; and

Whereas, it is vital that to protect the health and well-being of California residents, visitors, and workforce; and

Whereas, emissions from vehicles, industry, and even household sources significantly affect the natural environment, air quality and well-being of residents, employees, and visitors of State of California; and

Whereas, individual actions such as not idling vehicles; walking or biking to work, school, and errands; carpooling; and conserving energy can directly improve air quality in California; and

Whereas, everyone can play a role in improving air quality; and

Whereas, education about air quality can raise community awareness, encourage habits that lead to cleaner air, and improve community health; and

Whereas, Californians will be joining together across the state to clear the air on October 7, 2020; and

Whereas, the California State Lands Commission is committed to the health of California residents, its workforce, visitors, and the community at large; and

Now, therefore be it resolved, by the California State Lands Commission that October 7, 2020, be declared "Clean Air Day," and

Be it further resolved that the California State Lands Commission encourages its Executive Officer to identify ways that Commission employees can participate in Clean Air Day, as appropriate.

Be it further resolved that the California State Lands Commission encourages all residents, businesses, employees, government entities, and community members to participate in Clean Air Day and help clear the air for all Californians.