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SOUTH COUNTY PARTICULATE MATTER STUDY UPDATE

San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) staff continue efforts to finalize the South County Particulate Matter Study. The study was conducted to determine the cause of high levels of airborne particulate matter impacting air quality and public health on the Nipomo Mesa, and whether offroad vehicle activity on the Oceano Dunes is a contributing factor. Sophisticated air quality monitoring and sample collection was performed in the study area over a year using three independent analytical approaches; over 2 million data points were generated, requiring detailed statistical analysis and interpretation. Per direction from the APCD Board, the entire report, including all raw data, will be made available for public review prior to conducting workshops and presenting the report findings to the Board. “This is not a matter that can be rushed,” states Larry Allen, Director of the APCD, “Given the magnitude of data collected, the complexity of the analyses performed and the importance of the findings, it is imperative that a comprehensive review of the data and study findings is completed prior to publishing the report.”

Final review and editing of the report is nearly complete. Peer review of the study results was performed in early December by six leading scientists in this field. The reviewers recommended APCD incorporate additional data collected during the study but not available for the draft report due to significant delays in sample analyses at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory; that situation has since been corrected. The additional data has now been incorporated into the report, and the same scientists who conducted the initial peer review will review the updated information over the next few weeks. The final report, peer review comments, and raw data from the study will then be posted for public review on the APCD’s website (www.slocleanair.org).

It is anticipated the final report and associated information will be published in early February, followed by a workshop to present the results to the public; the APCD will issue a press release announcing the workshop as soon as a date and location has been set. The final report is scheduled to be presented to the APCD Board at their March 24 meeting.

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