



South Coast Air Quality Management District

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NEWS

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SCAQMD Hosts 4th Annual Environmental Justice Conference

More than 300 residents and community activists participated today in SCAQMD's 4th annual environmental justice conference, titled "Technology's Role in the Future of Environmental Justice."

"For the first time, our annual conference is focusing on the nexus of clean technology and environmental justice," said Clark E. Parker Sr., Ph.D, vice chairman of SCAQMD's Governing Board. "We are working to harness clean technologies to help clean up the disadvantaged communities that continue to be the hardest hit by air pollution."

Today's event was hosted by the agency's Environmental Justice Community Partnership at The Huffington Center at Saint Sophia Cathedral in Los Angeles. Angela Johnson Meszaros, a staff attorney for Earthjustice's California office was the keynote speaker. Estelle Reyes, a senior vice president at Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator, was the mistress of ceremonies.

Conference breakout sessions included:

- "Closing the Digital Divide: An Inclusive Workforce for Green Technology," which explored how workers in underprivileged communities can learn the skills needed to succeed in a growing green economy;
- "Air Pollution and Health Effects" examined the latest information about health impacts of air pollution, particularly in disadvantaged communities, and technologies available to reduce emissions; and
- "Making Data and Resources Available for All" focused on how to make environmental and air quality data more accessible to environmental justice communities.

The conference concluded with a plenary session moderated by SCAQMD Executive Officer Wayne Nastri and titled, "Green Transportation and Beyond." The panel included representatives from USC's Center for Sustainable Solutions, SoCalGas, BYD, LA Department of Transportation and LA Metro, and focused on the latest developments in clean transportation technologies.

SCAQMD's EJ program started in 1997 with the Ethnic Advisory group, later renamed the Environmental Justice Advisory Group. The EJAG advises the SCAQMD Governing Board and assists the agency in protecting and improving public health in SCAQMD's most impacted communities.

To build on the work of the EJAG, the Environmental Justice Community Partnership was established in February 2015. SCAQMD hosted its first environmental justice conference later that year.

Through the EJCP's grassroots partnership, SCAQMD hosts a series of forums, training sessions and other outreach activities to help broaden awareness of environmental justice topics and keep SCAQMD connected to the residents it serves.

The SCAQMD is the air pollution control agency for Orange County and major portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

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