



South Coast Air Quality Management District

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MEDIA ADVISORY

Media Advisory
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SCAQMD Hosts Cesar Chavez Day of Remembrance

For the fourth consecutive year the South Coast Air Quality Management District honored the memory of civil rights and labor activist Cesar Chavez with an inspirational event focusing on the environment and air quality. More than 350 students, community activists and clean air partners attended the event in Cal State Los Angeles' Golden Eagle Ballroom.

“We honor Cesar Chavez by continuing to show that the vital link between civil rights and environmental justice is strong and that the fight continues,” said SCAQMD Governing Board Chairman William A. Burke, Ed.D. “Cesar Chavez was a living example of how people from all walks of life can work to gather to improve work and living conditions, and their environment.”

Antonio Villaraigosa, former speaker of the state assembly, two-term former mayor of Los Angeles, and author of key environmental protection and environmental justice legislation was presented the Richard Alatorre Environmental Justice for All Award. The award was established to honor individuals who demonstrate the virtues and values of Cesar Chavez's environmental activism.

Villaraigosa remarked that Cesar Chavez' trailblazing provided an example for him and many others to follow. He credited Chavez for inspiring him to take action to fight for his community and provide access to people who were historically prevented from accessing quality jobs and education.

Marc Grossman, friend of the late Cesar Chavez, spokesman for the United Farm Workers, and communications director for the Cesar Chavez Foundation, was the morning keynote speaker.

Grossman noted that Chavez always challenged people to believe in themselves to do more and never settle for less. He helped people fulfill their dreams when they did not think they could achieve them and he inspired millions of people from all walks of life.

Maria Elena Durazo, a long-time labor leader and activist for farm worker and hotel employee unions in Southern California, was the afternoon keynote speaker.

Durazo remembered Chavez' early environmental justice work to protect farm workers from harmful pesticides that were sprayed on the fields they worked in. As a child of farm

workers, she knew personally how effective and groundbreaking Chavez' efforts were for her and her family members.

SCAQMD continues to work with environmental justice communities that bear the brunt of air pollution in the Southland by reducing diesel pollution through incentive programs, conducting special air monitoring and adopting stringent rules to protect public health.

"Cesar Chavez' legacy is strong, therefore, we must to continue to use science, regulations, innovations, and partnerships to clean the air without leaving communities burdened with harmful air pollution in the name of progress," said Burke.

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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