

Final Remarks to South Coast Air Quality Management District Board

March 1, 2013

Let me first emphasize the honor, and opportunity, to serve on this Board.

Representing the cities of Riverside County, I have served for 17 years, starting February 10, 1995.

Simply summarized, the South Coast District is an extraordinary success story.

By way of comparison, we/you are the “best-in-the world” in terms of regulating air quality.

Let me pass out the highlights of the District’s control activities since 1995--they are indeed extensive, and impressive.

As a doctoral student in political science at Stanford, I interviewed at UCR in December of 1964.

After deciding to come to UCR, I was told that the smog was bad in Riverside, and in most of Southern California.

However, as you would surmise, it was not bad in December.

In August, I submitted my dissertation and immediately left to teach at UCR.

I vividly remember coming down the Cajon Pass and asking, “what is this stuff?”

On my first day on campus, I visited with John Middleton, the Director of UCR’s Statewide Air Pollution Center.

In brief, I asked what is this stuff and how do people take it.

In 1965, there were in Riverside about 200 first stage alerts, and 45 second stage alerts.

You could see it, and feel it in your eyes and chest. It was like a great wave coming every day over the Kellogg Hill and up the Santa Ana Canyon and then crashing in Riverside.

Before my kids could play outside, either Marsha or I would call for the most current measurements.

There was even a smog flag at City Hall that was raised on alert days.

In 1971, the Mayor called on the Governor to declare an emergency in Riverside. He cited the high levels and health impacts of smog.

In Riverside in the late 1960’s and 1970’s, when public opinion polls asked what problems faced the community and/or region, air pollution always ranked first.

Local legislators such as Craig Biddle, Jerry Lewis, and Robert Presley led statewide control efforts for clean air.

For me, there was an obligation to make a difference, as a resident, parent, and university professor.

One emphasis of my research was on questions of policy and political behavior related to air pollution.

In 1972, I remember going to Washington to interview members of the CA congressional delegation about the Dingell Amendment.

I taught environmental politics courses--Jack Broadbent, now head of the Bay Area Control District, was a former student.

I served on varied groups and task forces, including Riverside's Environmental Protection Commission. I was a charter member of the EPC from 1970 to when I was elected to the Council in 1979.

On the Council and as Mayor, I sought for Riverside to be a leader in Southern California on matters of controlling/regulating air pollution.

Two examples--Riverside was honored in 2012 as having the number public green fleet in the country. And at District's 2004 Annual Awards Luncheon, Riverside received a Model Community Achievement Award.

More personally, I was honored in 2012 by CARB's Haagen-Smit Clean Air Award for "Outstanding Contributions to Environmental Policy."

In brief, in one way or another, for nearly 50 years, I have been trying to reduce air pollution and enhance air quality.

Since 1965 and the view from Cajon Pass, we have come a long way.

Take a look at SCAQMD Activity Highlights, p. 2--Ozone, 1976-2012.

Two markers--health advisory days have gone from 184 in 1977 to 0 in 2012 and stage 1 episode days from 121 in 1977 to 0 in 2012.

How have we got there?

Clean air in the South Coast is closely related to actions taken and decisions made by this Board, and this District!

For many years, there has been **significant rule making, significant policy initiatives, and significant technology advancement projects.**

Take time and review the Activity Highlights from 1995 to 2013.

Many kudos are in order. Success is not accidental, or easily achieved.

Kudos to Board members, staff, and advisory groups.

Kudos to those who monitor and hold the District accountable and responsible for clean air in Southern California!

Kudos to a regulatory approach that looks for collaboration rather than confrontation. One major reason for success is bringing/inviting people to the table.

Kudos to a regulatory approach that values good science, that supports the best of university research.

Kudos to the varied committee meetings that involve and inform Board members.

Kudos to Bill Burke for his extraordinary leadership.

Kudos to Barry Wallerstein for his extraordinary expertise and effectiveness.

And final kudos to my excellent Board Assistants: Judy Orttung, Ruthann Taylor-Berger, Maureen Kane, and especially Virginia Field, a great citizen advocate for clean air for over forty years.

But, the work of this District is not done, we still have a long way to go to meet federal air standards, to protect the health of the residents of Southern California.

Every day as I walk Mt. Rubidoux, I can see the District's Rubidoux monitoring station. It records the worst particulate measurements in this Basin and among the worst in this country.

And significant activities/ways to improve air quality in the future will be even more complex, more difficult, more innovative--both in technology and social policy.

As my final will and testament to the Board, I will quickly identify ten challenges, or more accurately, opportunities for the South Coast District.

1) The Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Community Strategies is widely recognized as the most important plan ever adopted by SCAG. On the agenda of Southern California, it is now time for the District to be a mentor and participant in its implementation.

The litmus test--without driving a car, can Cacciotti arrive in a timely manner for a South Coast Board meeting?

2) In 2011, South Coast joined with SCAG and CARB to publish what are iconic policy calls for the future. It is time to revisit "Powering the Future: A Vision for Clean Energy, Clear Skies, and a Growing Economy in Southern California." It is time to frame strategies with SCAG and CARB to make iconic things happen.

3) The District has focused on technology forcing for many of its successes. It is now time to recognize the importance of urban form, the advantages of walkable urban versus drivable suburban. Smart growth and new urbanism are two such approaches; and they increasingly connect with the life style choices of the Millennials and the boomers. To wit, what about advocating for "Complete Streets?" And how about encouraging the bicycling renaissance?

4) AB 2766 needs to be emphasized as a policy tool for innovative strategies to reduce air pollution. It, too often backfills a city's public works budget. I take pride in various ways AB 2766 has funded important policy innovations in Riverside. How about other cities?

5) Many CA cities are becoming green cities. They are adopting important policies to better use energy and to reduce the use of carbon fuels. Riverside is in its third version of a Green Action Plan. Perhaps the District can reward green cities as it has done for example in replacing school busses.

6) Certain land use decisions by local governments deserve greater regulatory attention. Research is clear. To wit, what about land use decisions next to freeways? And, what about the impact of concentrated logistics operations?

7) Electric cars are out of the laboratories. They are in auto dealerships across the Basin. Yet, too few are on the streets. The marketing/support of electric cars deserves continuous monitoring, increased attention, and perhaps cooperative funding.

8) In my view, AB 32 is most important and far reaching policy adopted by the CA legislature during my lifetime. Working together, there are many ways that the South Coast and CARB can further reduce both criteria pollutants and greenhouse gasses. It is time to revisit together the Scoping Plan.

9) The failure of LAX to regionalize effectively air traffic means tens of thousands of cars are driving for longer distances across this Basin. It is time to recognize that loss of millions of passengers at the Ontario Airport has measurable air quality implications.

10) Finally, the District has primarily funded research for health studies and technology innovation. It is now time to look also at public policy research in the social sciences. Future success may increasingly relate to changes in behavior as well as technology improvements.

Final words--in closing, thanks for your friendship and support. Thanks for the great work of the South Coast District, and the opportunity to be a participant in significant rule makings, policy initiatives, and technology advancement projects.

Stay the course. God speed re the next 50 years. Riverside is counting on you!