



Blue Whales & Blue Skies Act Introduced in Congress

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — A coalition of government agencies and non-profit organizations applaud Congressman Alan Lowenthal, with co-sponsors Congressional Representatives Salud Carbajal, Julia Bownley, and Rohit Khanna, for introducing the Blue Wales & Blue Skies Act today. The Act calls on NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries to create a program to recognize shipping companies for voluntarily reducing speeds in the Santa Barbara Channel region to reduce air pollution, the risk of fatal ship strikes on whales and harmful underwater acoustic impacts. The bill notes the recognition program would be modeled after the voluntary Vessel Speed Reduction (VSR) incentive program implemented in 2014 by Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District, Ventura County Air Pollution Control District, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, Environmental Defense Center and National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. The Act would establish an annual recognition of shipping companies for voluntarily slowing speeds in the Channel region, and within the next few years would assess feasibility of extending the program to encompass all shipping channels along the U.S. Pacific Coast between Canada and Mexico.

"Studies show that ship speed is directly correlated to whale mortality in these tragic strike incidents. Along the Atlantic coast, speed reductions have boosted the population counts of endangered right whales. And closer to home a voluntary program at the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles have protected blue and humpback whale feeding areas," Congressman Lowenthal said. **"The Blue Whales, Blue Skies Act would recognize these critical efforts, and pave the way for further cooperation between shipping lines and our local communities to protect endangered whales and improve air quality."**

Congressman Carbajal added, "Ensuring Americans have clean air and water is one of our greatest responsibilities as legislators. While serving in county government, I was proud to pass a resolution to reduce emissions from marine vessels. I am grateful to continue that work with my colleagues to reduce air pollution levels and protect our marine life."

"I am proud to co-author the Blue Whales and Blue Skies Act legislation to acknowledge the important role of the maritime shipping industry in protecting our marine

mammals," Congresswoman Brownley said. "Modeled after a successful Ventura County and Santa Barbara County initiative, the bill would provide national recognition for shipping companies that voluntarily slow ships speeds off our coast. The program not only reduces emissions, improves air quality, and protects blue whales and other marine life, but also demonstrates how local ideas can provide innovative solutions to larger problems."

Aeron Arlin Genet, Director of Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District noted, "We want to thank our Congressional Representatives for taking this effort forward to help build our partnership with the shipping industry. Cleaner air for everyone and safer conditions for whales—that's what all of us are working together to create."



Ships transiting through the region are a major source of air pollution in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. **"The Blue Whales & Blue Skies Act offers and opportunity to create a public-private partnership to reduce emissions without the need for additional regulations," said Mike Villegas, Air Pollution Control Officer, Ventura County Air Pollution Control District.** Successful VSR incentive programs in 2014 and 2016, modeled after programs at the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, significantly reduced air pollutants in the Santa Barbara Channel region.

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Air Pollution Control Board

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Ventura County

Air Pollution Control District

669 County Square Drive, 2nd Floor
Ventura, CA 93003

Air Pollution Control Officer

Michael Villegas

Skylines

Desktop Publishing – Olivia Cortez

Directory

General Information **645-1400**
Fax **645-1444**

Website **vcapcd.org**

Agricultural burning 654-2807

Complaints 645-1445
7 a.m.-5 p.m., Mon-Fri

Complaints (recording) 654-2797
Monitoring Division 662-6959
Permit processing 645-1401
Permit renewal 645-1404
Public information 645-1415

Email address: info@vcapcd.org

On the Calendar

**AIR POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD*

Second Tuesday, 1:30 p.m.

Board Chambers
Administration Building
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura

Upcoming Meetings:

May 8th & June 5th and June 19th
(Special Meetings)

**APCD HEARING BOARD*

Mondays, 5:30 p.m., as needed

Board Chambers
Administration Building
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura

Next meeting:

To Be Announced

**APCD ADVISORY COMMITTEE*

Fourth Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.

Large Conference Room
1st Floor
669 County Square Drive
Ventura

Next Meeting:

To be Announced

**CLEAN AIR ADVISORY COMMITTEE*

Meets As Needed
Santa Cruz Room
669 County Square Drive
Ventura

Next Meeting:

To be Announced

**SOUTH CENTRAL COAST BASINWIDE AIR POLLUTION CONTROL COUNCIL*

Meets as Needed

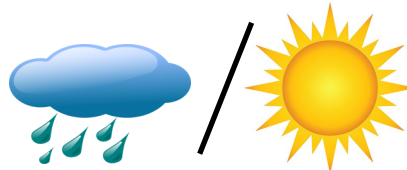
Santa Barbara County APCD
260 N. San Antonio Rd.
Santa Barbara

Next meeting:

Thursday, May 24th, 10:00 am

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC*

AIR QUALITY FORECAST



When it comes to wondering what the weather is going to be like, most people will watch the news or tap into the internet, but did you know that the Air Pollution Control District has meteorologist that also provide information on the temperature and precipitation for the current and the following day? This website includes the Air Quality Index Report for Ozone (O3) and Particulates (PM) Pollutants and the Agricultural Burn Status in the various regions of Ventura County.

Visit <http://www.vcapcd.org/Forecast.aspx>

Ships also threatened blue, humpback, and fin whales. A study published August 21, 2017 in *PLOS One* focused on ship strikes and whale mortality on the West Coast, and noted that death from collisions with ships may be a significant impediment to population growth and recovery of these whales. The study called out the danger to whales close to shore, including in shipping lanes through the Santa Barbara Channel to and from the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. Slowing ship speeds to 12 knots or less reduces air emissions, the risk of fatal ship strikes on whales, and harmful underwater acoustic impacts.

The successful VSR trial incentive program in the Santa Barbara Channel in 2014 gave companies a financial incentive to cut ship speeds to 12 knots or less. The program incentivized 27 slow-speed trips, reducing 12.4 tons of smog-forming nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions, and 500 metric tons of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In 2015, a Marine Shipping Working Group under the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary unanimously supported a second VSR Program. These efforts were recognized with a national Clean Air Excellence award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2016. The second VSR program in 2016 incentivized 50 slow-speed vessel transits, reducing 25.6 tons of NOx and 1,000 metric tons of GHGs.



“We are delighted to see this piece of legislation introduced. The vessel speed reduction program is the result of a decade of partnership between federal and local agencies, non-profits and foundations, and the shipping industry—a unique partnership to be sure,” said Kristen Hislop, Marine Conservation Program Director for the Environmental Defense Center (EDC). “EDC and our partners have been working to reduce the impacts of shipping in the Santa Barbara Channel since 2007, when five endangered blue whales drifted onshore after being killed by ship strikes. We hope to build on the success of the vessel speed reduction program through this proposed award program, which will recognize the shipping companies that take action to protect endangered whales and improve air quality. It is great to see this type of partnership celebrated, and we commend Representatives Lowenthal, Carbajal, Brownley, and Khanna for proposing this legislation.”

The 2017 VSR incentive program started July 1 and continued until November 15. Eleven shipping companies participated, and the program was expanded to include the shipping lanes in and out of the San Francisco Bay area (not currently a part of the Blue Whales & Blue Skies Act).

“This year, the VSR incentive Program partnership expanded across the National Marine Sanctuary System in California bringing greater regional recognition for the need to conserve whales and work to prevent deadly ship strikes,” said Kris Sarri, CEO and President of the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation. “The Foundation appreciates these Congressional champions for introducing this legislation to recognize the efforts of the VSR program to conserve whales and a healthier environment for all.”

The Blue Whales & Blue Skies Act, H.R. 3682, was introduced September 6, 2017 by Congressman Alan Lowenthal with the following Congressional Representative co-sponsors: Salud Carbajal, Julia Brownley, and Rohit Khanna.

See <https://lowenthal.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=398882> for more information. Individuals and organizations wishing to send letters to support this legislation may contact Congressman Lowenthal’s office for information at (202) 225-7924. To view more information on the VSR programs, visit our [Air Pollution from Marine Shipping](#) page.



Welcome!

APCD would like to welcome its newly appointed members to the District's Boards and Committees.

Supervisor Kelly Long was elected as the Air Pollution Control Board (APCB) Chair for 2018 at the January APCB meeting. She has been a member of the Board since January 2017.

Council Member Mike Morgan was elected as the APCB Vice Chair for 2018. He has been a member of the Board since 2005 and is a council member for the City of Camarillo. Council Member Morgan was also selected to serve as the APCB representative on the South Central Coast Basinwide Air Pollution Control Council for 2018.

Supervisor Linda Parks and **Council Member, Carrie Broggie**, were appointed to serve on the APCB's Standing Committee for 2018.

Mark Andrizzi was appointed to the Air Pollution Control District Advisory Committee as a representative for the City of Port Hueneme.

Gene Rubin was appointed to the Ventura County Clean Air Fund Advisory Committee as a citizen member. He is a Ventura County business owner and advocates for renewable energy and environmental progress.



At the Board

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

January 9, 2018

- ◆ Approved the APCD Rulemaking Calendar for 2018.
- ◆ Authorized \$225,950 in additional funding for the APCD's Voluntary Accelerated Vehicle Retirement Program.

February 13, 2018

- ◆ Received and filed study sessions regarding:
 - Air monitoring during the Thomas Fire
 - Significant new state air quality legislation (AB 617, AB 1132, and AB 1274)

April 10, 2018

- ◆ Approval of, and authorization for the acceptance of a grant award of \$142,000 from the California Air Resources Board under the Community Air Protection Program for the implementation of Assembly Bill 617.
- ◆ Repeal existing operating procedures and project selection criteria and approve new bylaws for the Clean Air Fund Advisory Committee (CAFAC).
- ◆ Approval of \$25,400 in additional funding for assistance by the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District for database system software set up.
- ◆ Received and filed a study session regarding the voluntary vessel speed reduction program.

Videos of archived Air Pollution Control Board meetings can be viewed at

<http://www.vcapcd.org/agendas.htm>