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MEDIA RELEASE
PAGE ONE OF TWO
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 17, 2013
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STATE AIR POLLUTION CONTROL OFFICERS RELEASE NEW REPORT

High Desert Air Quality Improves Considerably Over Past 12 Years

The California Air Pollution Control Officers Association today released its annual air quality report *California's Progress Toward Clean Air* for all 35 local air districts in the state documenting dramatic reductions in unhealthy levels of fine particulate pollution in every county reporting air quality data.

Fine particulate pollution, also known as PM2.5, is associated with a wide range of health effects from increased hospitalizations to premature deaths. The report also shows a general trend of improving air quality for ground-level ozone, although some counties and their air district face unique challenges in reducing levels of that pollutant.

The report contains statistical information on ozone and PM2.5 air quality for 2000 and 2012 for each county; statewide air quality trends and detailed descriptions of air pollution control programs at each air quality district.

The High Desert portion of San Bernardino County - which is under the regulatory authority of the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District - was one of only eleven county regions in the state where no exceedances of the federal 24-hour PM 2.5 standard (35 micrograms/cubic meter) occurred in either 2000 or 2012. PM2.5 is primarily formed in the atmosphere from gases such as sulfur dioxides, nitrogen oxides and VOCs, and is also directly emitted into the air from fuel combustion, and as fugitive dust.

The report also highlights a 19% decline in exceedances of the federal 0.075 part per million ozone standard which occurred throughout the MDAQMD's 20,000 square mile jurisdiction over the last twelve years. In 2000, 84 days were recorded district wide, while in 2012, only 68 days occurred. Meanwhile, "good" Air Quality Index days measured in the High Desert between 2000 and 2012 increased from 173 to 184, respectively. AQI levels are considered good when levels on the color-coded reporting scale fall between 0 and 50, and air pollution poses little or no risk in a region.

"Thanks to our collaborative partnerships with the regulated community and local residents, High Desert air quality continues to improve and serve as a top reason for people relocating into the region," said Eldon Heaston, Executive Officer for the MDAQMD.

California and its individual air districts have made remarkable progress in cleaning the air during the past three

decades in spite of dramatic increases in population and driving. From 1980 to 2010, the state's population increased by 65 percent and daily miles driven by all vehicles increased by 137 percent. But thanks to a comprehensive air pollution control strategy, smog-forming pollutants were cut by 55 percent during the same period. California's largest industrial plants also cut their greenhouse gas emissions by 17 percent between 2008 and 2011.

These improvements have occurred in spite of the fact that neither the state nor local air districts have the authority to regulate federally controlled sources of air pollution including ships, locomotives and aircraft.

For a copy of *California's Progress Toward Clean Air*, visit www.mdaqmd.ca.gov