

NEWS

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SCAQMD releases updated statement on sulfur odor

The South Coast Air Quality Management District last night released the following statement. Please contact SCAQMD at 800-CUT-SMOG for additional information:

*Air Quality Officials Continue to Probe Source
of Widespread Sulfur Odors*

September 10, 2012

Air quality officials are continuing to investigate the source of a rotten-egg odor reported last night and today across much of Southern California, from the Salton Sea to the San Fernando Valley.

"Several factors indicate that the Salton Sea may have been the source of these odors," said Barry Wallerstein, executive officer for the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD). "However we do not have any definitive evidence to pinpoint the Salton Sea or any other source yet."

AQMD deployed field inspectors today to the San Fernando Valley, Long Beach, Colton, San Bernardino, Riverside, Perris, Temecula, Banning, Palm Springs, La Quinta and the Salton Sea in an attempt to locate the source of the odor.

Several sources have reported hot weather and a possible release of bacteria from the bottom of the sea due to winds there. Those conditions could cause strong sulfur odors.

In addition, strong thunderstorm activity in the Salton Sea area and resulting high winds from the southeast could have pushed odors into the Los Angeles basin. However, it is highly unusual for odors to remain strong up to 150 miles from their source, Wallerstein said.

AQMD will collect air samples this evening in several locations throughout the Coachella Valley and at the Salton Sea. An analysis of those samples may provide further evidence of a possible source.

Since midnight last night, AQMD has received about 200 complaints of sulfur- and rotten-egg odors. Most callers were from the Coachella Valley and other portions of Riverside County as well as San Bernardino and Los Angeles counties. Only a few calls came from Orange County.

A strengthening onshore breeze tomorrow may keep any additional odors from spreading as far west as they did today, AQMD officials said.

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