

August 18, 2026
File No. 01204123.21, Task 22

MEMORANDUM

TO: Stephen Dutz, SCAQMD

FROM: Stipe Markotic, Quincy Laris, Ray Huff

SUBJECT: **SUMMARY REPORT - POST ELEVATED AIR CONCENTRATION EVENT
INVESTIGATION: MS-08, AUGUST 13, 2026**

Summary of Event

On Thursday, August 13, 2026, benzene was recorded above the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment acute Reference Exposure Level (REL) of 8 parts per billion (ppb). There were three (3) readings above the acute REL, with readings of 10.55, 14.53 to 17.73 ppb at 12:00 AM, 4:00 AM and 7:00 AM respectively. These readings were accompanied by a public notification distributed through Chiquita's alert subscription list. However, the third exceedance did not trigger an alert due to an error in the air monitor. The initial data was not uploaded correctly, and thus the alert system received no data. An initial notification response from SCS Engineers (SCS) was sent to the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) on the same day, August 13, 2026.

Investigation

SCS was immediately notified of the readings at MS-08. SCS began formal investigation of the event with additional data review and discussions with on-site personnel to inquire as to site activities, flare operations, and local conditions to determine if any on-site occurrences could be the source of the readings.

During the event, as well as the time leading up to the event, the landfill gas collection and control system destruction devices (flares and thermal oxidation units) were all online and operating normally.

The investigation also included discussions with onsite technicians to determine if any other activity at the landfill could be related to this event. A review of the landfill gas collection and control system vacuum and the various pressure transmitters indicated no abnormal activity. Onsite technicians were not aware of any other activity or issues that could have been related to this event.

The investigation also included a review of the camera footage at MS-08. One car drove through the area during the 12:00 AM sampling period, one car drove through the area at 5:00 AM after the 4:00 AM sampling period had closed, and multiple cars drove through the area during the 7:00 AM sampling period. MS-08 is located in a parking lot and traffic is expected in the area. Considering there was no activity during the 4:00 AM sampling period, SCS does not believe that the cars that were observed in the other sampling periods were the sole source of the readings.



Leading up to and during the event, MS-08 was generally upwind (i.e., not along the path of wind travel) from the landfill. This wind behavior does not support the landfill being the source of the readings. However, it should also be noted that wind speeds were low (1-2 mph) during this event, which can impact the determination of wind direction, especially in a canyon area.

Figure 1. Graph of Selected Compounds at MS-08 on August 13, 2026

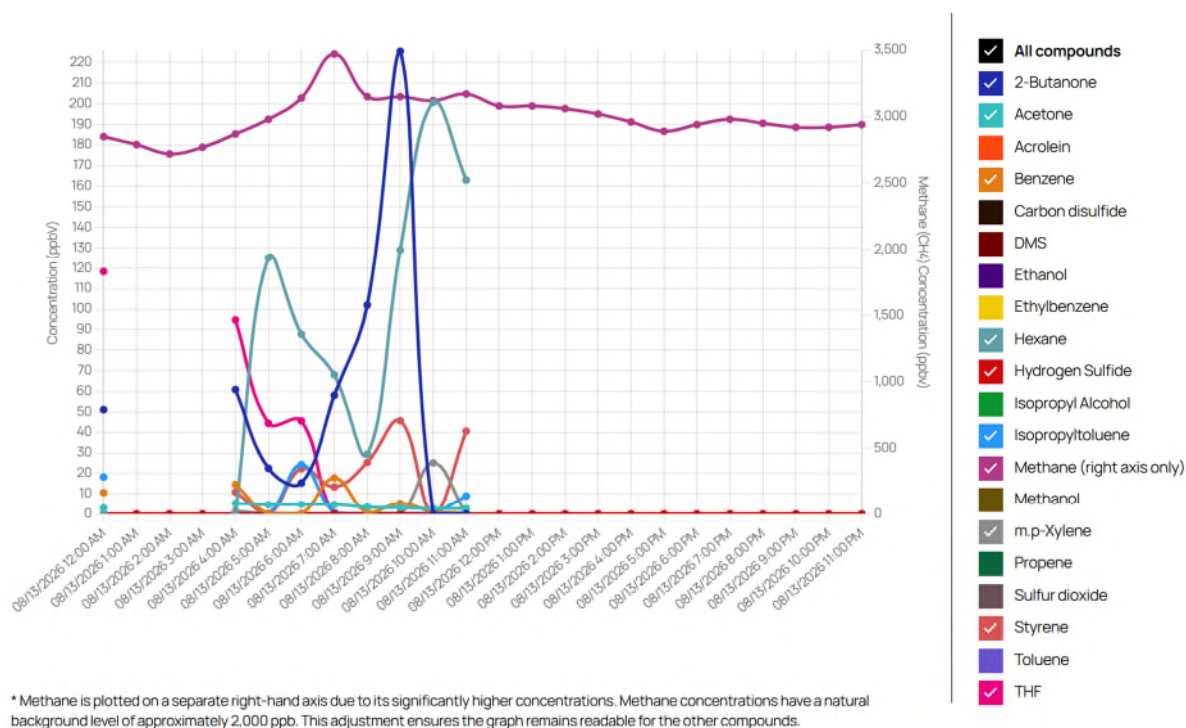


Figure 1 presents MS-08's August 13 air monitoring data, as displayed on the Chiquita Community Air Monitoring program website. There is no data from the GC from 1:00 AM to 3:00 AM due to routine calibration. As discussed below, the GC was taken offline after 11:00 AM for further calibration. The data shows erratic readings across a multitude of compounds. These readings started at 8:00 PM August 12, 2026 but did not reach the threshold for an alert until August 13, 2026. The highest reading recorded was 225 ppb of 2-Butanone, which is significantly higher than what would be expected at any location. At the same time, the readings from the AQM air monitor (which measures methane, hydrogen sulfide, and sulfur dioxide) were comparatively very stable and low. A related increase in one of these 3 compounds would be expected if the landfill was the source of these readings.

Figure 2. Graph of Selected Compounds at MS-04 on August 13, 2026

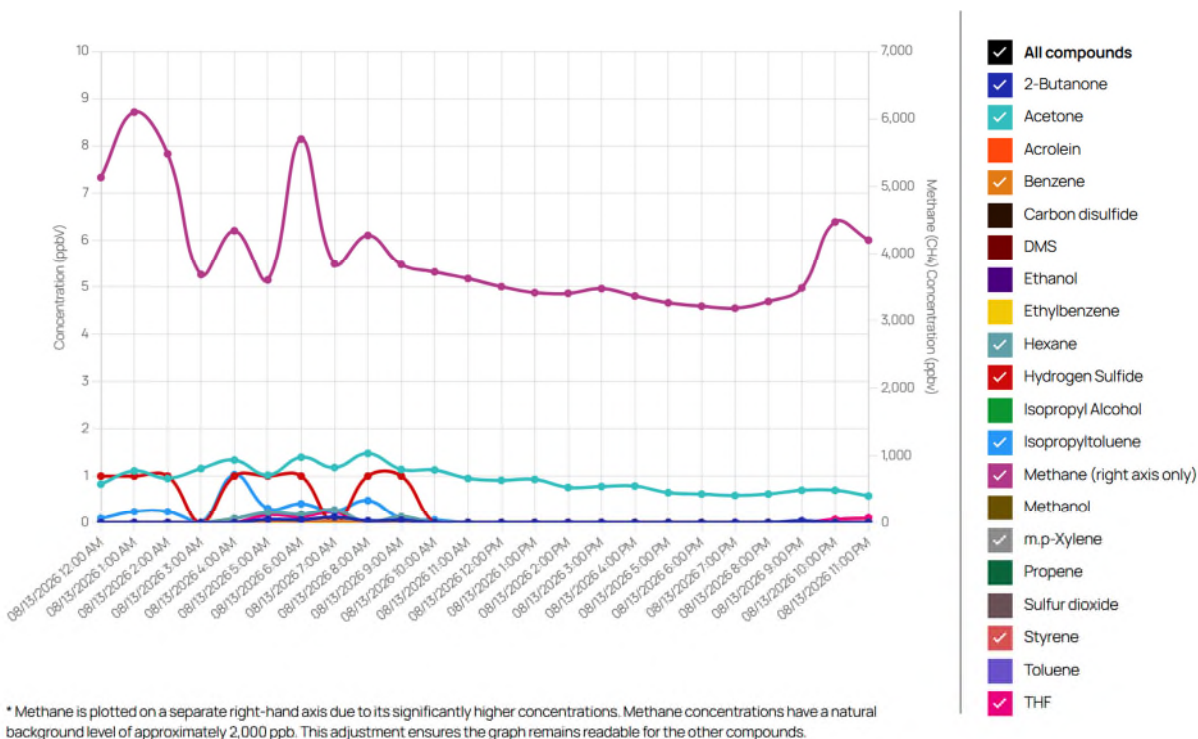
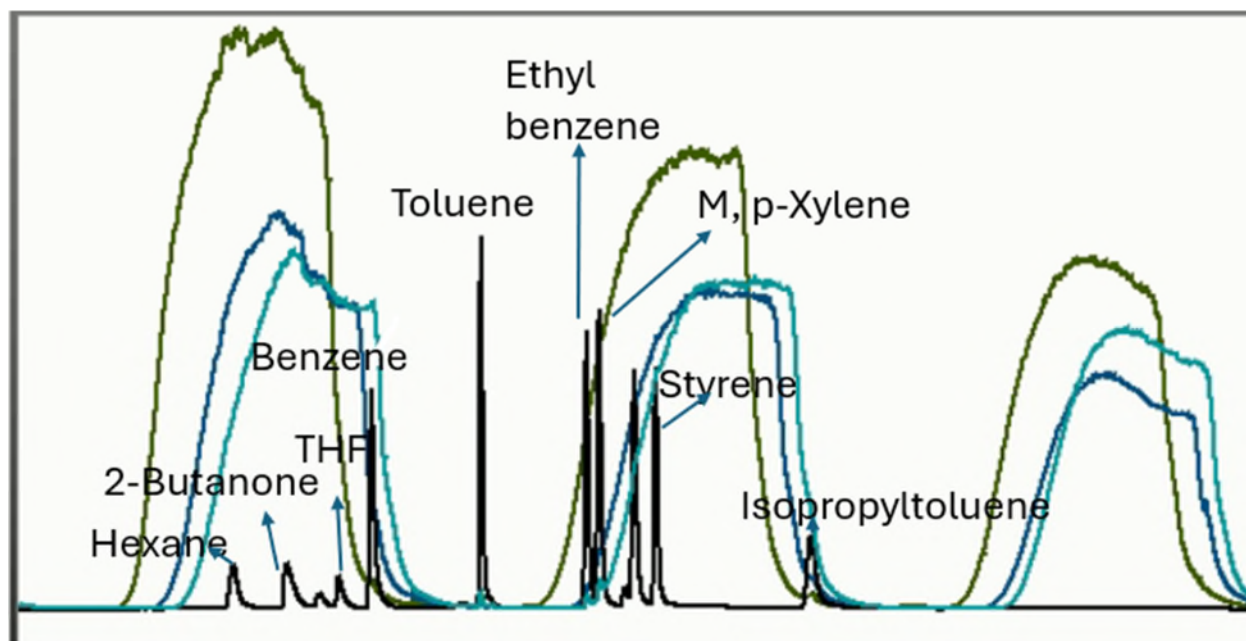


Figure 2 presents MS-04's August 13 air monitoring data, as displayed on the Chiquita Community Air Monitoring program website. MS-04 is located along the northwestern boundary of the landfill, which is between the landfill and MS-08. Similar impacts would be expected at this location if the landfill were the source of the event, because MS-04 would be along the path that the gas would have to travel from the landfill to MS-08. Slightly elevated methane is the only noticeable impact at MS-04. None of the compounds monitored by the GC were above 2 ppb, which again suggests that the landfill is not the source of the readings.

Figure 3. MS-08 Chromatogram – August 13, 2026



As part of the ongoing QA/QC procedures, Tricorn Tech (TCT) began an investigation of the event immediately on August 13. TCT's investigation included reviewing the gas chromatograms for MS-08 during the event. As shown in **Figure 3**, the black curve represents the calibration curve, while the other curves represent the ambient air samples. As shown, the sample curves do not match the expected pattern and are significantly elevated from expected levels. Following their review, TCT determined that the MS-08 GC sensor had failed completely and would need to be replaced.

Conclusions

Based on a review of on-site activities, wind direction, air monitoring data, and QA/QC analysis, SCS and TCT have concluded that the elevated benzene levels at MS-08 on August 13, 2026, were erroneous readings due to sensor failure in the GC.

The instrument was at the end of its lifecycle during the event. Sensor replacement had been scheduled but was delayed in order to maintain maximum coverage during site construction activities as previously discussed with SCAQMD. SCS and TCT were aware that sensor failure was a possibility with the aging sensor, so technicians responded quickly to the event. The instrument was taken offline once it was determined that the sensor had failed in order to prevent further erroneous readings. Maintenance began on the monitor to replace the sensor as soon as possible and it was completed on August 15, 2026. As of August 18, 2026 the monitor is functioning normally.

There are currently seven (7) GCs (MS-03, MS-04, MS-06, MS-07, MS-09, MS-10, and MS-12) with aging sensors. Sensor replacement and maintenance will be scheduled at all 7 locations to prevent a similar occurrence at those locations and are currently anticipated to be concluded by the end of August.