

## **Fresno again passed for seat Clovis mayor is recommended for air district board.**

By Mark Grossi

The Fresno Bee, Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2007

Central California's largest city may not get a seat on the local air district governing board after 12 years of waiting — a neighboring city five times smaller has the inside track.

Clovis Mayor Nathan Magsig last week was recommended for the seat on the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District board, ahead of City Council Member Henry T. Perea of Fresno. Fresno, a city of more than 470,000, was last represented on the air board in 1994. Clovis has a population of 90,000.

Magsig was recommended for the air board because he is active in the California League of Cities, said one official on the league's executive council. The council made the recommendation last week, and the league's general membership in February will vote on it in accordance with state law.

The recommendation frustrated air quality advocates who want some of the 11 air board members to have health or science backgrounds and represent large cities and minorities.

"We think the description of the qualifications should be changed, but that didn't happen," said Liza Bolaños, coordinator of the Fresno-based Central Valley Air Quality Coalition.

Advocates also noted Magsig is a plaintiff in a lawsuit against the district over millions of dollars in developer fees. Magsig heads a nonprofit, affordable housing group, and he said he is only involved in the lawsuit because the district did not exempt such groups.

One league executive council member defended Magsig, saying he would fairly represent the central area of the Valley and report regularly to the league.

"It's not a matter of picking one council member over another for this recommendation," said Clovis City Council Member Harry Armstrong. "Our problem in the past was that we were not getting reports back from our representatives on the air board."

Magsig has been active in the league for more than five years and serves on a policy committee. Perea takes part in the league's Latino Caucus, a nonprofit affiliate of the league.

League officials added that Magsig's construction work helps lower-income residents. He is executive director of the Fresno-based, nonprofit Coalition for Urban Renewal Excellence.

Magsig said he would refrain from discussing developer fees at board meetings because he is a plaintiff in the lawsuit over the fees. But he said the issue is just one among many.

"I hope I can be a fresh voice on the board," Magsig said. "I want to be part of finding a solution to our air problems."

Armstrong said representatives of 37 cities in the central part of the Valley would vote on Magsig next month. The cities are known to follow the recommendations of the executive council.

Other candidates, such as Perea, still can be nominated at the meeting and run against Magsig. The meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. Feb. 21 at West Hills Community College in Lemoore.

In the past, few people have paid any attention to air board appointments or such elections. But according to opinion polls, air quality has become the No. 1 issue in the Valley, and there has been increased scrutiny of the board.

Air advocates last year backed Senate Bill 999 to restructure the air board, hoping to get a physician, a scientist and more members from large cities. The bill failed.

Air advocates are becoming involved as the league replaces three seats on the air board. The seats are supposed to represent cities from Stockton to Bakersfield.

In November, the league's executive council recommended Jack Ritchie, a Woodlake City Council member and retired farmer, for another of the three seats. His name will come before the membership for the February vote as well.

Two minority candidates, Shafter Mayor Fran Florez, mother of state Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter, and Arvin Mayor Tim Tarver, who is black, were passed over for Ritchie, who is on the league's executive council.

## **Workshop on cleanup activities**

Staff Reports

Stockton Record, Wednesday, January 24, 2007

TRACY - Representatives of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and the U.S. Department of Energy will hold a public workshop on environmental cleanup activities at Site 300 at 6 p.m. Feb. 7 at the Tracy Community Center, 300 E. 10th St.

The workshop will include a poster session on proposed final cleanup actions and standards for most areas of Site 300, the high-explosives test range southwest of Tracy. Federal and laboratory representatives will be available to answer questions.

An environmental cleanup at Site 300, property of the U.S. Department of Energy, began in 1981 after the detection of contamination in shallow aquifers on the property. Work has been under way to clean up soil and groundwater contamination. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency placed Site 300 on the Superfund list in 1990, and cleanup activities have been conducted under U.S. EPA and state regulations.

Additionally, a five-year review of environmental cleanup in the southeast corner of Site 300 is complete and available for viewing at the Tracy Branch Library, the laboratory's Discovery Center and online at [www-envirinfo.iinl.gov](http://www-envirinfo.iinl.gov).

## **Bush proposals may aid ethanol producers**

By David Espo, AP Special Correspondent

Fresno Bee, Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2007

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Bush's push for a new immigration policy and his acknowledgment of global climate change as a serious concern won praise from presidential candidates in both parties Wednesday even as they split on partisan lines over Iraq.

Bush appealed to Congress in his State of the Union speech to give his Iraq strategy a chance to work, running into a wall of skepticism, especially from Democrats who control the House and Senate.

That response carried over into the morning talk shows, where Democratic presidential aspirants Barack Obama and Bill Richardson voiced firm opposition to Bush's troop escalation. "He has not made the case," Obama, an Illinois senator, said on CBS' "The Early Show."

Two Republican presidential hopefuls - Arizona Sen. John McCain and former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani - countered that there is no choice but to give Bush's plan a chance to succeed. "It's the only game in town," McCain said on the same program.

Giuliani, on NBC's "Today" show, said: "I believe we should give the president the support to do this."

Bush also urged lawmakers in his speech Tuesday night to send him legislation helping more Americans afford health insurance, reduce the nation's dependence on foreign oil, overhaul immigration laws and renew his signature No Child Left Behind education program. He declared climate change a "serious challenge" but did not endorse proposals for mandatory reductions of greenhouse gas emissions.

"The idea of climate change finally passed his lips," Obama said. "That's long overdue."

McCain also welcomed Bush's acknowledgment, while saying "of course" the U.S. needs to go farther than Bush has proposed on the issue. "We've got to start reducing these greenhouse gas emissions before our planet is unalterably heated, and the consequences of that are catastrophic," he said on CNN.

Richardson, the New Mexico governor, predicted Bush and the Democratic Congress will be able to work together on a comprehensive plan to control illegal immigration. McCain agreed: "We can come together on that issue."

Bush flew to Wilmington, Del., on Wednesday to plug his energy proposals at a DuPont Co. facility where scientists conduct research on biofuels such as cellulosic ethanol, made from wood chips, switch grass and parts of the corn plant other than the kernels used in traditional ethanol.

But Democrats kept the spotlight on the war, as the Senate Foreign Relations Committee took up a nonbinding measure that rejects Bush's planned troop increase as "not in the national interest of the United States."

As is customary, Republicans cheered longer and louder than Democrats on Tuesday night when Bush walked down the middle aisle of the House chamber to deliver his annual address to Congress and the nation.

But it was the Democrats' turn to whoop it up when the president remarked he was the first chief executive to "begin the State of the Union with the words Madam Speaker." Rep. Nancy Pelosi, the first female House speaker, was seated next to Vice President Dick Cheney on the dais behind the president, and smiled and reached down to shake Bush's hand.

In power for the first time in a dozen years, Democrats have talked optimistically of finding common ground with the president and Republican lawmakers on immigration, education and other areas.

But they voiced concern with his proposal to subject a portion of some taxpayers' employer-provided health insurance to taxes, and were unenthusiastic about his proposals on energy.

"For me, the president's speech was more notable for what he didn't say on global warming than what he did say," said Sen. Barbara Boxer. The California Democrat advocates steps to halt the gradual rise in the earth's temperature.

The president called for greater domestic oil production as well as an effort to more than quadruple the nation's production of alternative fuels over the next decade.

The war is an issue apart - a conflict that helped Democrats win control of Congress in last fall's elections, and that leaves Republicans torn between a president of their party on the one hand and public opinion on the other.

Democrats chose Sen. Jim Webb of Virginia to deliver the party's formal televised response to the speech, and the former Republican Navy secretary and Vietnam veteran responded with a blistering attack on the president, the war and the consequences.

"The president took us into this war recklessly. He disregarded warnings from the national security adviser during the first Gulf War, the chief of staff of the Army, two former commanding generals of the Central Command," and more, Webb said.

"We are now, as a nation, held hostage to the predictable - and predicted - disarray that has followed."

Republican leaders generally expressed support for Bush's Iraq strategy. "If we fail in Iraq, or withdraw our troops prematurely, the terrorists will follow us home. Success is our only option," said Rep. John Boehner of Ohio.

But numerous members of the rank and file did little to hide their concern.

"To put more American personnel in harm's way without a realistic chance for success is something I'm not in favor of," said Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa. "And a realistic chance for success depends upon having the Iraqis with the will and the ability to fulfill their share of the bargain, and so far they have not."

## **The President's main proposals - and their prospects**

McClatchy Washington Bureau

Sacramento Bee, Wednesday, January 24, 2007

**ENERGY:** Cut U.S. gasoline consumption by 20 percent by 2017 by boosting mandates for production of ethanol and other alternative fuels and by raising vehicle fuel-efficiency standards. Let transportation secretary set the standard, not Congress. Double the oil-storage capacity of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve over 20 years to 1.5 billion barrels.

**OUTLOOK:** Congress is likely to boost support for alternative fuels. Raising fuel-efficiency standards could be more difficult politically, but it's possible.

**GLOBAL WARMING:** Cut emissions from cars and light trucks by 10 percent over 10 years by reducing gasoline consumption and improving fuel efficiency. The president's goal is to stop the growth of greenhouse gas emissions from U.S. motor vehicles by 2017.

**OUTLOOK:** Congress may go along with these goals but Democrats want a more ambitious program to combat global warming than Bush has ever been willing to support. Watch for lots of hearings on the issue in an effort to build support for more aggressive programs in the post-Bush years.

**HEALTH INSURANCE:** Make employer-provided health insurance taxable income after a standard deduction of \$15,000 for families and \$7,500 for singles. Redirect money from Medicare and Medicaid and hospital funding toward new grants to states to help subsidize health insurance for individuals.

**OUTLOOK:** Faces uphill battle. Some key Democrats oppose it as insufficient help to the poor and burdensome to the middle class. Some union leaders oppose it as threatening employer-based health insurance. Some health-care experts said it could be the basis of a compromise plan if all sides are flexible.

**IMMIGRATION:** Pass comprehensive overhaul of immigration law. Create a temporary guest-worker program. Provide a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants already here, including making them pay fines and learn English. Continue stiff border enforcement.

OUTLOOK: Possible. Democrats favor comprehensive change, but exact terms could prove sticky. Senate Republicans could hold the key; will they go along with letting illegal immigrants apply for legal status or will they try to block it? Labor unions and other Democratic constituent groups could impede agreement on a guest-worker program. This is probably the best prospect for bipartisan agreement on a major policy area over the next two years.

IRAQ: Expand U.S. forces by 21,500 to help Iraqis quell sectarian violence in Baghdad and Anbar province. Press the Iraqi government to make measurable progress on benchmarks toward a political settlement to strengthen public support for it.

OUTLOOK: Both houses of Congress are expected to pass nonbinding resolutions of no confidence in Bush's troop-buildup plan, but Congress isn't expected to cut off money for the plan, which leaves the president able to carry it out.

EDUCATION: Renew the No Child Left Behind Act, which sets federal test standards for elementary school children.

OUTLOOK: Congress may fight or change this law. Some key lawmakers say No Child Left Behind's mandates are woefully underfunded and that some portions of the law need to be revised. Teachers unions and civil rights groups -- key Democratic constituencies -- complain that the act puts too high a premium on testing and not enough on critical thinking.

STRONGER MILITARY: Boost the number of service members by 92,000 over five years. Add 65,000 soldiers to the Army, raising the total to 547,000. Add 27,000 Marines, bringing the total to 202,000.

OUTLOOK: Congress is expected to support the increase and share concerns that the force has been stretched thin by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

RESTRAIN SPENDING: Balance the budget by 2012. Cut "earmark" spending projects' cost in half this year. Make identities of earmark sponsors more transparent.

OUTLOOK: The new Congress is disclosing earmark sponsors and vowing to restrain the practice. Its leaders also vow fiscal restraint and rules to enforce it, but balancing the budget in five years would still be difficult.

-- McClatchy Washington Bureau

## **Bush's domestic agenda resonates with Valley**

By Michael Doyle - Bee Washington Bureau  
Fresno Bee, Wednesday, January 24, 2007

WASHINGTON — San Joaquin Valley lawmakers applaud President Bush's call for bipartisan cooperation but caution he still faces serious Capitol Hill challenges.

"Unfortunately, if you evaluate our president's current credibility level, both at home and abroad, it's not good," said Rep. Jim Costa, D-Fresno.

And Rep. George Radanovich, R-Mariposa, said, "He's facing a legislative body that's changed as a result of his policies, in large part because of his way of running the worldwide war on terror, especially in Iraq."

Domestically, Bush's State of the Union priorities resonate locally when painted with a broad brush.

Immigration reform makes sense, Valley lawmakers seem to agree.

Investing in the No Child Left Behind education reform is perennially a favorite. Energy already has mobilized three of the region's House members, who have produced their own plan.

"He could have success in a few areas," said Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Visalia. "One would be energy."

Nunes, Costa and Dennis Cardoza, D-Merced, collaborated in writing an energy bill that includes touches dear to the Bush administration's heart, such as boosting ethanol production and opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for drilling.

That bill hasn't gone far, though, and the House as one of its first steps this year sought to reverse some energy tax breaks. This foreshadows future fighting.

Bush could have more success with his State of the Union call to increase the supply of renewable and alternative fuels fivefold by 2017. The Valley House members' energy bill likewise calls for greater reliance on corn ethanol and other alternatives.

Bush's support for a temporary worker program likewise finds a sympathetic audience in Costa, Nunes and Radanovich. All three back a temporary agricultural guest-worker plan, though details remain to be worked out. Cardoza is not yet committed.

"There may be some success in immigration reform," Nunes said, "but only if [Bush] does immigration reform and border security first, and not border security only."

## **State set to limit coal-fired electricity**

**Utility regulators are expected to adopt rules that would cut emissions of greenhouse gases.**

By Marc Lifsher, Times Staff Writer

L.A. Times, Wednesday, January 24, 2007

California utility regulators are poised to take a major step toward curbing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming.

On Thursday, the California Public Utilities Commission is expected to approve rules that would require all investor-owned utilities to make sure that the power they generate or purchase is at least as clean as that produced by the latest generation of natural-gas-fired turbines.

The rules, if adopted by the four-member commission, would effectively ban Southern California Edison Co. and other non-municipal utilities in California from signing long-term contracts to import electricity from existing plants that burn coal in the intermountain West.

Such coal-fired electricity accounts for about 20% of electricity consumed in California.

"This will limit new coal development aimed at California," commission President Michael R. Peevey said Tuesday in a conference call with reporters.

Peevey predicted that the imported coal power would be replaced by electricity from new plants fueled with natural gas plants and by the increased commercial development of alternative energy, such as solar, wind and geothermal power.

Edison said in a statement that "we generally agree with the commission's objective."

State law requires that Edison, Pacific Gas & Electric Co. and San Diego Gas & Electric Co. satisfy one-fifth of their customers' needs with nonpolluting alternative power by 2010. Recent reports from the PUC and the California Energy Commission indicate that the utilities are moving toward the goal but are likely to miss the 2010 target.

The PUC's impending ban on importing electricity produced by coal plants, which emit carbon dioxide, is based on a new law sponsored by state Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata (D-Oakland). The law is an important tool in a pioneering effort by the state Legislature and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by one-quarter by 2020.

Environmental groups said they were pleased with the PUC's expected action.

Jim Metropulos of the Sierra Club predicted that the ban on conventional coal power would stabilize greenhouse gas emission levels from electric power plants despite population growth that would spur demand for electricity.

"What we need to do is transition to an energy market that produces less greenhouse gas emissions from [electric] power," he said.

PUC President Peevey predicted that the ban on importing electricity from burning pulverized coal would spur the development of new technology. Coal mining companies and the federal government are experimenting with cleaner-burning power plants that turn coal into a gas. Carbon dioxide produced by the process would be kept out of the atmosphere by pumping it into underground depositories.

## **Air board sues over PUC 'hot gas' ruling**

By Elizabeth Douglass

L.A. Times, Wednesday, January 24, 2007

The state Public Utilities Commission illegally sidestepped California law when it set rules allowing dirtier grades of natural gas into the state without reviewing evidence that the change would worsen air pollution, air quality officials said in a pair of lawsuits filed Tuesday.

The utilities commission "acted arbitrarily and capriciously and abused its discretion" in setting new guidelines for natural gas quality, bypassing the California Environmental Quality Act, the South Coast Air Quality Management District said in regulatory filings.

"At a time when we are searching for every possible means to further reduce air pollution, we cannot afford a setback that will significantly increase emissions and subject residents to worsened air quality," Barry Wallerstein, executive officer of the air board, said after the suits were filed with the California appeals court and the state Supreme Court.

A similar court challenge was filed days after the commission's ruling by Ratepayers for Affordable Clean Energy, a coalition of environmental groups. In addition, the coalition, the air board and the city of San Diego have asked the commission to reconsider the action, a request that is set for review in March.

Commission spokeswoman Terrie Prosper said regulators could not comment on the suits because the issue was still pending at the agency. She said the commission would seek an abeyance at the courts until after the March review.

The dispute concerns so-called hot gas, a type of natural gas that is chemically different and burns at higher temperatures than the gas that commonly flows through California pipelines, fueling power plants and millions of gas stoves, water heaters and other appliances.

Relatively small amounts of hot gas are produced and used in California, but those flows are either treated or blended with other grades to bring the characteristics in line with traditional supplies. The September ruling, the commission has said, was aimed at easing the way for a stream of foreign

natural gas that would be imported through liquefied natural gas plants under construction or proposed to serve California.

The commission's ruling on gas quality is of particular benefit to San Diego-based Sempra Energy Co., the leading partner in a liquefied natural gas plant under construction in Baja California and parent of Southern California Gas Co. and San Diego Gas & Electric Co. Under the new rules, that plant could send hotter imported natural gas into the U.S. without taking steps to make the inflow mimic California's traditional supplies.

In urging passage of his proposal, commission President Michael R. Peevey noted that the environmental review was "vigorously debated," but, he said, "our legal division has concluded that narrowing natural gas quality specifications is not a 'project' ... therefore, detailed environmental review is not required."

## **PUC plan restricts utilities' coal-power purchases**

**Commission vote set for Thursday would help limit greenhouse gases.**

By Edie Lau

Sacramento Bee, Wednesday, January 24, 2007

As part of California's continued quest for cleaner energy, state utility regulators Tuesday announced a new standard for long-term electricity contracts that effectively steers the state away from coal.

A so-called greenhouse gas emissions performance standard basically says that fuel used to generate electricity for California consumers must be at least as clean-burning as natural gas.

A spokesman for Pacific Gas and Electric Co., the state's largest utility to come under the regulation, said the company supports the standard in spirit, though it has not yet seen the details.

"Only 1 percent of our energy mix comes from coal, so in that sense, I think there's a limited impact on our business," said Keely Wachs, PG&E's environmental communications manager.

Wachs said the utility has only a "handful" of long-term coal deals.

"My understanding is that those contracts were signed in the '80s," he said. "They're not contracts we would necessarily sign today."

Statewide, California relies on coal for about 20 percent of its electricity, nearly all of that imported from out of state.

The standard doesn't explicitly bar the use of any particular fuel, but because coal is the most carbon-intensive of fossil fuels, the regulation is considered a de facto prohibition.

Moving away from coal is part of the state's campaign to clamp down on emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases associated with global climate change.

A ground-breaking law passed last year, the Global Warming Solutions Act, establishes the nation's first mandatory cap on climate-changing emissions.

A related law, also passed last year, requires the state Public Utilities Commission and the state Energy Commission to establish greenhouse gas emission performance standards for investor-owned utilities and municipal utilities.

The public utility district in the mountain city of Truckee attracted a national spotlight last month when it proposed to sign a 50-year contract for electricity from a yet-to-be-constructed coal-burning plant in Utah.

Pressure from townspeople as well as public officials including Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger helped spike the plan.

The PUC announced its greenhouse gas performance standard Tuesday just hours before President Bush delivered a State of the Union address devoted in part to concerns about America's energy consumption habits and climate change.

PUC officials said they expect the cost of electricity made from fossil fuels to rise as state and, eventually, federal regulations of greenhouse gases kick in.

"We are trying to protect California ratepayers on the assumption of new controls on these plants in the years ahead," said commission President Michael Peevey.

A spokeswoman for the coal industry argued that the standard itself will drive up electricity prices in California.

"The larger concern for the people of California will be, where are they going to get their electricity?" said Carol Raulston of the National Mining Association in Washington, D.C. "They are going to pay more for electricity under any scenario because the legislation limits their choices."

Peevey said no one can say for certain how the standard will affect supply and price in the short-term.

"It will limit new coal development that is aimed for California, no question about that," he said.

Peevey said he hopes California's commitment to developing more renewable sources of energy, increasing energy efficiency and relying on modern natural gas plants will make up the difference.

The greenhouse gas standard doesn't rule out coal generation under all circumstances. Utility companies may commit to coal for periods shorter than five years (although they will not be allowed to sign four-year contracts repeatedly, Peevey said).

They also may buy coal power for "following load," or intermittent demand -- the spikes in electricity use that come each morning as Californians wake up and get ready for the day, and each evening as they arrive home.

Electricity to meet the very highest demand, which comes on hot summer afternoons when air conditioners are running full blast, also may come from coal.

PUC officials said they don't expect the standard to put a dent in the state's present greenhouse gas emissions -- estimated at 492 million metric tons a year -- but it may help prevent emissions from continuing to rise.

The PUC standard is scheduled for a vote Thursday and considered all but certain to pass. A comparable standard by the Energy Commission, for municipal utilities, is due by June 30.

## **Smog agency sues Public Utilities Commission over "hot" gases**

By PAT BRENNAN, The Orange County Register  
Tuesday, January 23, 2007

The region's smog agency sued the state Public Utilities Commission Tuesday, contending that a decision by the commission will lead to increased air pollution in Southern California.

The suit by the South Coast Air Quality Management District asks that an appellate court overturn the September decision allowing "hot" natural gas to be imported into the state.

Hot natural gas is chemically different and burns hotter than the type of natural gas now used in California. Burning it would nearly double the amount of nitrogen oxides, a key component of air pollution, the smog agency contends.

Energy companies have proposed installing liquid natural gas terminals on the California coast to help meet growing demand. These would receive imported natural gas.

The Public Utilities Commission will revisit the issue in March, so will ask the court to take no action on the case before then, said commission spokeswoman Susan Carothers, otherwise declining comment.

## **Point Richmond meeting will address refinery fire**

By Ryan Huff

Contra Costa Times, Thursday, January 24, 2007

Contra Costa County officials will hold a community meeting tonight about last week's Chevron Richmond Refinery fire.

That meeting will happen from 7 to 8:45 p.m. at Washington Elementary School, 565 Wine St., Point Richmond.

Agencies making presentations will include the Health Services Department, Sheriff's Office, Contra Costa Community Awareness and Emergency Response, Bay Area Air Quality Management District and Chevron.

For more information, call 877-662-8376.

The Jan. 15 fire caused no obvious damage to Point Richmond neighborhoods. Because of a software malfunction and other delays, a Tennessee company contracted with the county to notify residents about refinery emergencies took more than an hour to call 2,800 households.

It is unclear what caused the leak, said Randy Sawyer, county hazardous materials programs director.

The fire started at 5:18 a.m. at the refinery's No. 4 crude unit, which was in the process of being shut down for planned maintenance and inspection. The Richmond refinery -- the Bay Area's largest, with refining production of up to 240,000 barrels of crude oil per day -- was not expected to slow down due to the fire, Sawyer said.

Initial reports show the fire expelled sulfur dioxide and other toxins into the air, but at low levels that would not impact nearby residents, he said.

Residents, some of whom had Jan. 15 off work for the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, were asked to close their windows, shut off ventilation systems and stay put for three hours.

Chevron released a brief report Thursday that included few new details on the fire or its impacts. The San Ramon-based company updated its initial findings of one injured worker to two. Both employees -- one with minor burns and the other with minor skin irritation -- returned to work later on Monday, according to the report.

The state's Division of Occupational Safety and Health has roped off the area where the fire began as part of its investigation. Chevron officials, who will release a more detailed report by Feb. 14, did not return phone calls seeking comment Thursday.

## **State's activists call global warming plans half-baked**

BY LISA FRIEDMAN, Washington Bureau

LA Daily News Wed. Jan. 24, 2007

WASHINGTON - California's environmental activists criticized President George W. Bush's global warming proposals Tuesday as lukewarm, half-measures if compared with the state's tough laws reducing the emission of greenhouse gases.

While advocates praised the president for highlighting global warming in his State of the Union address, they said they are skeptical of his plan to increase the supply of alternative fuels to 35 billion gallons and set new fuel economy standards.

Many compared Bush's vow to cut greenhouse-gas emissions by 18 percent through 2012 with California's target of reducing emissions 25 percent by 2020.

"As usual, California sets stricter standards and gets there more quickly than Washington," said Hal Harvey, environmental program director with the William and Flora Hewitt Foundation in Menlo Park, Calif.

"California is far beyond what this proposal would do," added Eli Hopson of the Union of Concerned Scientists. "California is clearly leading here."

As part of his plan to wean the U.S. off its dependency on foreign oil, Bush called on Congress to "diversify America's energy supply."

His vow to require 35 billion gallons of renewable and alternative fuels by 2017 is about five times the current target of 7.5 billion gallons by 2012.

The administration predicted that that would displace 15 percent of the country's projected annual gasoline use.

The other reductions would come from new fuel economy standards for cars.

That plan, the White House said, would reduce gas consumption by up to 8.5 billion gallons a year in 2017 - a 5 percent reduction in that year's projected consumption.

"We think this is a very important set of proposals," said Paul Bledsoe, spokesman for the National Commission on Energy Policy, a bipartisan panel of industry experts in D.C.

"This is the first time a president has proposed fuel standards in 20 years," Bledsoe said.

Others, however, poked holes in the president's outline, particularly when compared with legislation that Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed earlier this year.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein noted that Bush specifically aims to block Congress from setting the new fuel standards. Legislation that Feinstein recently introduced would raise standards by 10 miles per gallon over 10 years, an amount her staff estimates would reduce carbon emissions by 18 percent.

"The president has had the ability to make changes to fuel efficiency with regard to light trucks for six years and he hasn't made substantial increases. Why should we trust him now?" she said.

By calling for an increase in alternative fuels - not simply renewable fuels - the administration opens the door to beefed-up production of coal to liquid fuel and other fuels that could increase gas emissions, said Roland Hwang, vehicles policy director of the Natural Resources Defense Council in California.

"It's potentially a Trojan horse for highly polluting fossil fuels," Hwang said.

## **Twenty In Ten: Strengthening America's Energy Security**

The White House Office of the Press Secretary  
Washington Post, Tuesday, January 23, 2007

Tonight, President Bush Will Ask Congress And America's Scientists, Farmers, Industry Leaders, And Entrepreneurs To Join Him In Pursuing The Goal Of Reducing U.S. Gasoline Usage By 20 Percent In The Next Ten Years -- Twenty In Ten. For too long, our Nation has been dependent on oil.

America's dependence leaves us more vulnerable to hostile regimes, and to terrorists -- who could cause huge disruptions of oil shipments, raise the price of oil, and do great harm to our economy.

America Will Reach The President's Twenty In Ten Goal By:

- Increasing The Supply Of Renewable And Alternative Fuels By Setting A Mandatory Fuels Standard To Require 35 Billion Gallons Of Renewable And Alternative Fuels In 2017 Nearly Five Times The 2012 Target Now In Law. In 2017, this will displace 15 percent of projected annual gasoline use.
- Reforming And Modernizing Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards For Cars And Extending The Current Light Truck Rule. In 2017, this will reduce projected annual gasoline use by up to 8.5 billion gallons, a further 5 percent reduction that, in combination with increasing the supply of renewable and alternative fuels, will bring the total reduction in projected annual gasoline use to 20 percent.

The President's Plan Will Help Confront Climate Change By Stopping The Projected Growth Of Carbon Dioxide Emissions From Cars, Light Trucks, And SUVs Within 10 Years.

The President's Plan To Strengthen America's Energy Security Also Includes:

- Stepping Up Domestic Oil Production In Environmentally Sensitive Ways.
- Doubling The Current Capacity Of The Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) To 1.5 Billion Barrels By 2027.

Reducing Gasoline Consumption Through The Growth Of Alternative Fuel Sources

The President's Plan Calls For Facilitating The Growth Of Renewable And Alternative Fuel Sources By Increasing The Size And Expanding The Scope Of The Current Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS).

- The RFS, established by the President and Congress in the Energy Policy Act of 2005, has contributed to the rapid acceleration of the development and use of renewable fuels. Significant ongoing technological advances have made it possible to increase and expand the standard to displace even larger volumes of gasoline.
- Under current law, fuel blenders must use 7.5 billion gallons of renewable fuels in 2012.
- Under the President's proposal, the fuel standard will be set at 35 billion gallons of renewable and alternative fuels in 2017. This will displace 15 percent of projected annual gasoline use in 2017. The President's proposal will also increase the scope of the current Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), expanding it to an Alternative Fuel Standard (AFS).
- The Alternative Fuel Standard will include sources such as corn ethanol, cellulosic ethanol, biodiesel, methanol, butanol, hydrogen, and alternative fuels.
- The increased standard will contain multiple "safety valves."
- The EPA Administrator and the Secretaries of Agriculture and Energy will have authority to waive or modify the standard if they deem it necessary, and the new fuel standard will include an automatic "safety valve" to protect against unforeseen increases in the prices of alternative fuels or their feedstocks.
- American Technology And Innovation Will Lead To Energy Security.

President Bush believes our scientists, farmers, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders will continue to lead the world in developing and investing in cutting-edge technology, infrastructure, and farming methods.

Advances in many fields will play an important role, such as continued improvement in crop yields, optimization of crops and cellulosic materials as fuel feedstock, and cost reduction in the production of cellulosic ethanol and other alternative fuels. The increased and expanded fuel standard creates a tremendous incentive for research, development, and private investment into alternatives to oil.

- Global Production Of Alternative Fuels Helps Us Reach Our Goal And Increases Our Energy Security. The President expects most of the expanded fuel standard to be met with domestically-produced alternative fuels.

However, importing alternative fuels also increases the diversity of fuel sources, which further increases our energy security.

The President's Plan Enables America To Lead The World To Energy Security. By establishing such a visible and ambitious fuel standard, America's global leadership will help encourage our friends and allies to consider similar policies. Actions by America's friends and allies to increase their production of oil and oil alternatives, diversify their supplies, reduce their consumption, and increase their oil reserves will enhance the energy security of America and the rest of the world.

Conversely, foreign actions that undermine free, open, and competitive markets for trade and investment in energy supplies diminish the energy security of America and the world. This is why America opposes the political manipulation of oil and gas exports.

#### Reducing Gasoline Consumption Through Increasing Vehicle Efficiency

The President's CAFE Plan Will Reduce Gasoline Consumption By Up To 8.5 Billion Gallons Per Year In 2017. The President's plan calls for reforming and increasing CAFE standards for cars, and for further increasing light truck and SUV standards. The President believes new technologies can be deployed to significantly improve fuel economy without impacting safety.

Reducing projected consumption by up to 8.5 billion gallons in 2017 means a 5 percent reduction in projected gasoline consumption in that year. The fuel efficiency standard will have even larger benefits later, when consumers replace even more of the auto fleet with purchases of the more efficient new vehicles. These amounts are based on an assumption that on average, fuel efficiency standards for both light trucks and passenger cars are increased 4 percent per year, beginning in Model Year 2010 for cars and Model Year 2012 for light trucks. Given the changing nature of the marketplace for both cars and light trucks, the Secretary of Transportation will determine the actual standard and fuel savings in a flexible rulemaking process.

- Congress Must Reform CAFE For Passenger Cars. The Administration has twice increased CAFE standards for light trucks using an attribute-based method. An attribute-based system (for example, a size-based system) reduces the risk that vehicle safety is compromised, helps preserve consumer choice, and helps spread the burden of compliance across all product lines and manufacturers. Congress should authorize the Secretary of Transportation to apply the same kind of attribute-based method to passenger cars.
- Congress Should Not Legislate A Particular Numeric Fuel Economy Standard. The Secretary of Transportation should be given the authority to set the fuel standard, based on cost/benefit analysis, using sound science, and without impacting safety.
- The President's Plan Incorporates Flexibility To Minimize Consumer Costs And Increase Consumer Benefits. The plan will enable auto companies to increase fuel economy at the lowest possible cost to consumers by building flexibility into the CAFE standard for both

cars and light trucks, such as giving companies the opportunity to buy and sell CAFE credits.

The President's Plan Calls For The U.S. Department Of Transportation (DOT) To Work With States And Cities To Explore Ways To Reduce Traffic Congestion, Help Save Fuel, And Reduce Commute Times. In 2003, drivers in America's 85 most congested urban areas experienced 3.7 billion hours of travel delay and wasted 2.3 billion gallons of fuel, costing a total of \$63 billion.

- The President's Budget Redirects DOT Funds To A New \$175 Million.

Highway Congestion Initiative For State And Local Governments To Demonstrate Innovative Ideas For Curbing Congestion. These ideas include congestion pricing, commuter transit services, commitments from employers to expand work schedule flexibility, and faster deployment of real-time traffic information. In one year, this wasted fuel accounts for more than 20 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

Stepping Up Domestic Oil Production In Environmentally Sensitive Ways

The President Calls For Stepping Up Domestic Oil Production In Environmentally Sensitive Ways By:

- Continuing to support Congressional action to authorize environmentally responsible oil and gas exploration in a small area of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge located in northern Alaska, which could produce as much as 1 million barrels of oil per day. Congress reserved this small area after the late 1970s oil shocks to help prevent future ones.
- Continuing to work with Congress to develop legislation to encourage investments in refinery capacity.
- Continuing to encourage all parties to resolve remaining issues regarding the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline.

Doubling The Current Capacity Of The Strategic Petroleum Reserve

The President Proposes Doubling The Current Capacity Of The Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) To 1.5 Billion Barrels By 2027. The SPR's purpose is to provide the United States with an emergency inventory of oil, an insurance policy in the event of a severe supply disruption, such as from a natural disaster or a terrorist attack in the energy supply chain.

Doubling the SPR alone will provide approximately 97 days of net oil import protection, enhancing America's ability to respond to potential oil disruptions.

- The SPR Is Currently At 691 Million Barrels And, Due To Increased Consumption,

This Represents Only 55 Days Of Net Oil Imports. In 1985, the SPR, with 493 million barrels of oil, represented 118 days of net oil imports.

Our Nation Has Already Made Great Progress In Strengthening Our Energy Security

Technology Has Enabled Us To Make Significant Progress. We need to continue with important research into plug-in and advanced hybrid vehicles, and expand the use of high efficiency clean diesel vehicles and biodiesel fuel. We must continue investing in new methods of producing ethanol and other biofuels. We must further expand the use of clean coal technology, solar and wind energy, and clean, safe nuclear power.

Including The 2008 Budget, The Federal Government Will Have Spent \$15 Billion Since 2001 To Develop Cleaner, Cheaper, More Efficient, And More Reliable Energy Sources.

The President Signed The Gulf Of Mexico Energy Security Act To Increase Domestic Oil And Gas Production By Allowing Access To Key Portions Of America's Outer Continental Shelf. This allows access to areas with potential resources of more than 1 billion additional barrels of oil and nearly 6 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

The President's Plan Enables Us To Further Enhance Our Energy Security

Technology Will Help Diversify America's Energy Supply. America is close to technological breakthroughs that will decrease our oil dependency, protect our environment, and help us confront the serious challenge of global climate change. The President's new proposals build upon the advances made possible by the Administration's previous initiatives, including the Advanced Energy Initiative, American Competitiveness Initiative, and the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

Energy Security Will Be Further Enhanced By:

- Increasing The Transportation Sector's Energy Diversity. Increasing renewable and alternative fuels used in automobiles from 3 percent in 2006 to 15 percent in 2017 can give drivers a built-in defense against supply disruptions and high gasoline prices.
- Increasing The Supply Of Oil Alternatives And Reducing Oil Demand. The President's plan will reduce our oil consumption by 10 percent in 2017, or 2 million barrels per day. Increasing the supply of oil alternatives and reducing oil demand could slow the growth of oil prices and lower the price over time, increasing our energy security.
- Building Resilience Through Doubling The Current Capacity Of The Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Uninterrupted oil supply is critical to our energy security. Increasing oil reserves strengthens our ability to respond to oil shortages and reduces our vulnerability to terrorist attacks on energy supplies and infrastructure.

The President's 2008 Budget Continues Robust Funding For Advanced Energy Technologies That Can Help Reduce Our Dependence On Foreign Oil And Provide Clean, Lower Carbon Energy To Change The Way We Power Our Homes And Businesses. The 2008 budget includes nearly \$2.7 billion for the Advanced Energy Initiative, an increase of 26 percent above the 2007 request and 53 percent above 2006. The 2008 budget provides \$179 million for the President's Biofuels Initiative, an increase of \$29 million (19 percent) compared to the 2007 budget. The President's Biofuels Initiative aims to accelerate cost reduction and commercial development of cellulosic ethanol, which can be made from abundant biomass materials, including agricultural waste and forest residues, and from dedicated energy crops such as switchgrass.

The President's Farm Bill Proposal Will Include More Than \$1.6 Billion Of Additional New Funding Over Ten Years For Energy Innovation, Including Bio-Energy Research, Energy Efficiency Grants, And \$2 Billion In Loans For Cellulosic Ethanol Plants.

The Administration's Ongoing Energy Policy

The Administration's 2001 National Energy Plan Provided A Blueprint For Diversifying And Conserving Our Energy Resources To Increase Our Energy Security.

- Energy Policy Act Implementation: In August 2005, the President signed the Energy Policy Act of 2005, which was a significant first step towards achieving greater energy security. Among its many achievements, the Energy Policy Act established the Renewable Fuel Standard that has increased the use of biofuels; provided incentives for renewable energy, clean coal, and advanced nuclear energy; and instituted mandatory reliability rules for the electricity grid and promoted investment in transmission upgrades.
- Advanced Energy Initiative: Building upon the Energy Policy Act's clean energy foundation, the President announced the Advanced Energy Initiative in the 2006 State of the Union

Address. The Advanced Energy Initiative focuses on increasing R&D to encourage technological breakthroughs in the transportation and power sectors that will diversify our resource portfolio and reduce our dependence on foreign oil in order to strengthen our energy security. The Advanced Energy Initiative also incorporates the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, aimed at reducing proliferation risks while expanding availability of clean, safe, climate-friendly nuclear energy.

The President's Plan Enables Us To Further Protect Our Environment

The President's Plan Will Help Confront Climate Change By Stopping The Projected Growth Of Carbon Dioxide Emissions From Cars, Light Trucks, And SUVs Within 10 Years.

- By 2017, the renewable fuel and fuel efficiency components of the plan would cut annual emissions from cars and light trucks by as much as 10 percent, about 175 million metric tons, equal to zeroing out the annual emissions of 26 million automobiles.
- The plan could cumulatively prevent the buildup of more than 600 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

The President's Plan Will Help Improve Public Health By Significantly Reducing Carbon Monoxide Emissions And Cancer-Causing Benzene Emissions.

The Administration Is Taking Action To Address Climate Change And Improve Air Quality And Human Health:

- The Administration's Commitment: The President has set a target of cutting our greenhouse gas intensity by 18 percent through the year 2012 and his budgets have devoted nearly \$29 billion to climate-related science, technology, international assistance, and incentive programs.
- Asia-Pacific Partnership On Clean Development And Climate: Launched the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate, in concert with partners Australia, China, India, Japan, and South Korea, representing 50 percent of the world's economy. The Partnership is accelerating investment and opening markets for cleaner, more efficient technologies, goods, and services while fostering sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. Nearly 100 programs and actions are underway in eight public-private task forces: aluminum, building and appliances, cement, cleaner fossil energy, coal mining, power generation and transmission, renewable energy and distributed generation, and steel.
- Working With G-8 Leaders: Worked with G-8 leaders on a wide range of initiatives, including the 2005 launch of the G-8 Gleneagles Plan of Action for Climate Change, Clean Energy, and Sustainable Development, which encompasses more than 50 practical, results-oriented actions to address the interlinked issues of energy security and access, air pollution control, and climate change.
- International Technology Partnerships: Launched and actively contributed to major international technology partnerships to share breakthroughs and advances in fusion, hydrogen, next-generation nuclear power, renewable energy, energy efficiency, capture and underground storage of carbon dioxide emissions, and profitable capture of methane emissions from coal mines, landfills, inefficient oil and gas systems, and agricultural operations.
- Cooperation With Private Industry: Obtained specific commitments from 14 industrial sectors and the Business Roundtable, led by more than 100 major corporations, to address greenhouse gas emissions in partnership with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Agency.

- **Advancing Lower Carbon, Clean Coal Technologies:** Awarded nearly \$1 billion in tax credits last year, and will award \$650 million more this year, to help offset the cost of nearly \$10 billion in total investment to build more than nine highly efficient, advanced coal projects in at least nine states, using technology that cuts emissions through efficiency and holds the promise of cost-effective carbon capture and storage. This experience will culminate in 2012 with the construction of the \$1 billion FutureGen demonstration power plant, a public-private international partnership to build the world's first coal-fired power plant that produces electricity and hydrogen with nearly zero-emissions. The Administration is also pursuing large-scale tests in the United States designed to advance carbon sequestration technologies which can have the potential to store more than 600 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide, the equivalent of more than 200 years of emissions from energy sources in the United States.
- **Clean Air Interstate And Clean Air Mercury Rules:** Issued the Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR) and Clean Air Mercury Rule (CAMR) to require power plants in the Eastern part of the United States to cut their emissions of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and mercury, by nearly 70 percent, producing significant improvements to air quality, human health, and natural resources.
- **Clear Skies:** Proposed Clear Skies legislation to authorize in law the administrative changes of CAIR and CAMR and provide more flexible, more cost-effective, and nationwide application of the regulations.
- **New Source Review:** Proposed reforms to the New Source Review (NSR) program to eliminate regulatory uncertainty for power plants, refineries, and manufacturing facilities that want to improve efficiency, pollution control, and reliability. In the power sector, NSR reform will allow immediate efficiency investments and significantly lower carbon dioxide emissions, even as the power plants invest about \$50 billion over the next 15 years to cut their pollution to satisfy the new clean air regulations.

## **Automakers Highlight Fuel-Efficient Cars**

By KEN THOMAS, The Associated Press,  
in Washington Post, Tuesday, January 23, 2007

WASHINGTON -- Automakers highlighted their work to develop clean and fuel-efficient technologies at the Washington Auto Show on Tuesday, hours before President Bush outlined an energy agenda that could shape the industry's future.

DaimlerChrysler AG touted a new heavy-duty diesel pickup truck that would meet stringent emissions standards in 2010, while Ford Motor Co. showed off a fuel-cell hybrid electric vehicle with plug-in capability.

In several presentations at the car show, the industry stressed their work to reduce the nation's dependence on imported oil and their efforts to develop alternative technologies.

The events were aimed at key policy makers in Washington and came in the context of Bush's State of the Union address later in the day.

White House officials said Bush would call on Americans to reduce gasoline consumption by up to 20 percent by 2017 through a major increase in alternative fuels and an increase in gas mileage standards for vehicles.

Alexander Karsner, an Energy Department assistant secretary for energy efficiency and renewable energy, told industry officials that prototypes and concept vehicles were a positive step, but the nation needed millions of alternative vehicles to meet the energy challenges.

"If we don't begin to view this with the sense of urgency they merit, we will simply pass it on, the problems that we have," Karsner said.

Reflecting some differences of opinion, DaimlerChrysler AG Chairman Dieter Zetsche said the nation needed to move beyond the current Corporate Average Fuel Economy system, which requires automakers to meet fleetwide gas mileage requirements.

"It's an attempt to regulate supply, and not to use market forces to stimulate demand for more fuel-efficient vehicles," Zetsche said. "Trying to sell people what they don't want is not a winnable business proposition."

DaimlerChrysler unveiled 2007 Dodge Ram 2500 and 3500 heavy duty trucks, which would be the first heavy-duty diesel pickups capable of meeting stringent emissions standards going in place by 2010 in all 50 states.

The vehicles, using the company's clean diesel Bluetec technology, would be significantly cleaner than its competitors, using traps and filters to nearly eliminate emissions from particulate matter and slash nitrogen oxides.

Ford Motor Co. showed its Flexible Series Hybrid Edge, a combination of a plug-in hybrid vehicle with a hydrogen fuel cell. The vehicle, using the Edge crossover platform, can operate in "battery-only" mode for the first 25 miles and get about 41 miles per gallon.

"The future is about flexibility and this vehicle offers the ultimate in flexibility," said Sue Cischke, Ford's vice president of environmental and safety engineering.

## **Over 400 gather to watch film on electric cars hosted by Lodi utility**

By Matt Brown

Lodi News Sentinel, Tuesday, January 23,

Angela Daniel is concerned about America's reliance on foreign oil and would consider driving an electric car if the technology was more readily available. The stay-at-home mother from Lodi said she is worried that her children will inherit a planet ravaged by the effects of global warming.

"We need to switch to alternative energy sources to extend the life of the earth for all our future generations," she said.

Rob Lechner addresses a large crowd before starting the movie "Who Killed the Electric Car?" at Hutchins Street Square in Lodi on Monday night. (Angelina Gervasi/News-Sentinel).

Daniel was one of more than 400 residents who packed Hutchins Street Square's Crete Hall to discuss electric vehicles and watch the film "Who Killed the Electric Car?" The standing room only event, hosted by the Lodi Electric Utility, was intended to keep electric cars in the public awareness, according to Utility Director George Morrow.

"We are seeing people get more sensitive to these issues," Morrow said as he added more chairs to accommodate the growing crowd. "They all want to know 'who killed the electric car?' and why they can't have one in their driveway."

The movie documents the big automakers' adventure into the electric vehicle industry, and the lengths in which they went to get out. In 1990, California passed the Zero Emission Vehicle mandate requiring automakers to produce a small percentage of electric cars. The car companies complied, then fought to get the mandate suspended before taking back their leased electric cars and crushing them in the Arizona desert.

The film, narrated by Martin Sheen, partly blames big oil companies and the auto industry for covering up electric vehicle technology and furthering our dependence on fossil fuels.

Many people in the audience said they were interested in buying an electric car but lacked the information. Gene Corriea said he was there to learn more about electric vehicles.

"It's an interesting subject," he said. "It's something we should have but they won't let us."

Davey Drouin, a teacher from Lodi, got there early to avoid the crowd of people, some of whom waited 15 minutes to get into the theater. He said he was impressed with the turnout.

"I can see this crowd in Santa Cruz or Berkeley, but not Lodi," he said. "I was expecting to be the only one here."

Denise Jefferson, a Galt city planner, said she bought a Civic Hybrid, which runs on gas and electricity, for her daughter.

"I regret not buying a hybrid when I bought myself a new car," she said.

Alternative fuel vehicles

To reduce the dependence on oil, automakers have looked at other ways of powering vehicles, including:

- **Ethanol:** A biofuel derived from plants, most commonly sugar cane or corn, it is usually mixed with gasoline. In the United States, 85 percent ethanol to 15 percent gasoline is used in "flex-fuel" engines.
- **Biodiesel:** It is derived from vegetable oil or animal fat with alcohol and a catalyst. Biodiesel can be made from recycled fast food oil, and it can be mixed with traditional diesel.
- **Hydrogen:** Car can either burn hydrogen like in traditional gas engines, or turn hydrogen into electricity through fuel cells, which powers electric motors.
- **Hybrid:** These fuel-efficient cars combine a gas engine with an electric motor and a high-capacity battery. The gas engine charges the battery, which runs the electric motor.
- **Plug-in Hybrid:** Conversions of production hybrid cars, they add a more powerful battery that can be charged by plugging into the electric grid.
- **Electric:** The car plugs into the electric grid charging a battery which runs an electric motor. They can be charged with solar panels for the cleanest, most fuel independent vehicles.

Source: <http://www.sonyclassics.com/whokilledtheelectriccar>.

After the movie, Chelsea Sexton answered questions. Sexton, who was featured in the film, is the Executive Director of Plug In America, a nonprofit that promotes electric vehicles. She said that she drives a Saturn but hopes to one day have a wide range of electric cars from which to choose.

"I will not buy another car until I can buy one with a plug on it," she said.

Sexton said that, while it is a struggle to persuade big automakers to produce electric cars, smaller companies such as Tesla Motors can't keep electric cars on their lots. The 2007 all-electric Tesla Roadster, with a starting price tag of \$92,000, has completely sold out, she said.

The more economical Chevrolet Volt, unveiled at an auto show this month, is expected to cost around \$25,000. The all-electric Volt is designed to run for 40 miles before needing a recharge.

Having alternatives to gasoline-powered vehicles is welcome news to people like Patty Kirsten, a science teacher at Larson Elementary School. Kirsten has her classes studying alternative fuels, and 30 of her students went to see the movie to earn extra credit.

"I'm going to discuss the film with my students," she said. "These kids need to see the reality of what's happening out there."

## **Top California legislator discusses climate change in Switzerland**

The Associated Press

In the Fresno Bee, Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2007

SACRAMENTO (AP) - Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez is heading to Switzerland for a four-day trip to promote California's efforts to combat climate change.

Nunez leaves today to speak about global warming at the annual World Economic Forum in the eastern ski resort town of Davos.

Nunez says he will promote California's landmark bill that seeks to reduce the state's greenhouse gas emissions. The law took effect this month and sets the nation's first statewide cap on the emissions scientists say are warming the Earth.

About Two-thousand business leaders, academics and politicians are scheduled to attend.

The World Economic Forum is paying for hotel, food and local transportation expenses. California taxpayers will pay \$4,634 for two coach airline tickets for Nunez and his deputy chief of staff, Steve Maviglio.

## **A slippery slope for ski resorts**

**Kirkwood demonstrates the difficulties of caring for the environment and attracting new visitors.**

By Tim Reiterman, Times Staff Writer  
L.A. Times, Wednesday, January 24, 2007

KIRKWOOD, CALIF. — Beneath a steely sky and icy snow flurries, cross-country skiers glide over a 130-acre alpine meadow that Kirkwood Mountain Resort has preserved for wildlife and recreation.

In nearby restaurants, diners use plates and utensils that are reusable or made with recycled materials. And employees receive financial rewards for carpooling to work.

Kirkwood, a 35-year-old vacation community nestled in a box canyon south of Lake Tahoe, is a proud signer of a national environmental charter for ski areas.

Yet Kirkwood is the only California resort to receive an F in the current report card by an environmental coalition that rates Western ski areas for development practices, water and energy consumption and natural resource protection. And Kirkwood Mountain Resort and Development Co.'s plans for hundreds of dwellings and a ridgeline restaurant visible from wilderness trails have provoked the ire of community activists.

In the snow, construction workers toil on buildings where runoff fouled a waterway a few months ago, prompting an Alpine County district attorney's investigation. [The resort is powered by a diesel plant cited repeatedly by the regional air pollution agency.](#)

The contrasting images of Kirkwood highlight the complex challenges faced by a multibillion-dollar industry. As resorts seek to address environmental issues, including global warming, they compete for customers in a market in which being bigger and better often entails new buildings, roads and ski runs that intrude on wildlife habitat.

Seven years ago, the National Ski Areas Assn. kicked off its Sustainable Slopes program, encouraging its 326 member resorts to adopt practices such as recycling, energy and water conservation and efficient transportation.

Using television spots featuring Olympic gold medal skier Picabo Street and other snow sports stars, the association has also embarked on a public education campaign against global warming called Keep Winter Cool. Its partner in the campaign is the Natural Resources Defense Council, a nationwide environmental group.

The resorts "have had a tarnished image in the past of commercializing what are really wilderness areas," said industry analyst Nolan Rosall, president of RRC Associates in Boulder, Colo. "So there's an effort to change the image to being really sensitive about the environment."

About 180 resorts, accounting for 75% of the nation's skier visits, have adopted the Sustainable Slopes program, which asks participants to complete annual surveys on their environmental practices. But last year fewer than a third of the 180 resorts completed the surveys.

Seventy resorts endorsed the Climate Stewardship Act by Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Joseph Lieberman (I-Conn.), which would place mandatory caps on greenhouse gas emissions and is expected to be reintroduced this year.

### **Energy credits**

Nationwide more than 20 resorts report they use 100% renewable power, which usually means they have paid a premium to buy energy credits for renewable power. "You add up your kilowatt usage, and you purchase an equivalent amount of green energy to be placed on the grid by a provider," said Geraldine Link, the association's public policy director.

However, critics say such efforts do little to address the effects of a real estate development boom like one underway at several California resorts.

"A lot of resorts are buying 100% 'green energy,' which is wonderful," said Autumn Bernstein of the Sierra Nevada Alliance, part of the Ski Area Citizens' Coalition, based in Boulder, Colo., which grades ski areas on environmental practices. "But resorts buying it tend to be the worst offenders when it comes to protecting the local environment. [They are] destroying old-growth forest, impacting rivers and creeks and building into undisturbed, road-less areas."

The industry contends that its environmental performance has steadily improved and that the coalition is anti-growth.

"They love you to stay static or shrink," said Bob Roberts, executive director of the California Ski Industry Assn.

"But if you turn so much as a shovel full of dirt, you become Darth Vader."

On the national ski association website, information on Sustainable Slopes links to "The Green Room," a display of initiatives by individual resorts.

At the Heavenly ski area overlooking Lake Tahoe, which received a C grade, chief operating officer Blaise Carrig said buying green energy helps protect the environment while reflecting the sensibilities of outdoors-loving skiers and snowboarders.

"You can't kill the golden goose," he said. "When people look at ski resorts and see ... overdevelopment or unattractive development, you are going against the sensitivity of the customer base."

In response to concerns that proposed ski trail expansion would destroy 15 acres of forest, Carrig said plans have been scaled back to protect most of the larger trees. But Environmental Protection Agency officials said they remained concerned about protecting old-growth forest.

Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, California's most visited resort, also received a C, partly because of proposed development and ski trail expansion.

Mammoth plans a five-star hotel built according to "green" standards and is considering geothermal

power to heat buildings.

Lisa Isaacs, the resort's environmental programs manager, said Mammoth hopes to use its own renewable energy rather than following other resorts in buying clean energy credits.

### **F rating appealed**

Kirkwood Mountain Resort unsuccessfully appealed its F rating, which was partly based on plans to eventually increase dwelling units from several hundred to about 1,400.

Community activists fear the plans will cause traffic congestion and strain parking.

"The owners are not so interested in operating a ski resort as in real estate development," said Reid Bennett, president of Friends of Kirkwood, which represents many property owners.

Resort officials said their plans would improve skiing and increase overnight visits while protecting natural resources by clustering buildings.

"I think some do not want us to have any development," said David Likins, chief executive of Kirkwood Mountain Resort and Development Co. "We feel [our plan] will produce less disturbance over-all and be more environmentally friendly."

Environmentalists are upset that the resort has proposed a restaurant on Caples Crest in Eldorado National Forest, which they say will be visible from the neighboring Mokelumne Wilderness.

To help win Forest Service approval, the resort said it agreed to strictly limit the height, hours and lighting.

But Katherine Evatt, board president of the Foothill Conservancy, remains opposed. "National forests were not created to provide a fine dining experience."

In November, rain flushed sediment from a construction site at the base of the resort into a tributary of Kirkwood Creek.

A state game warden referred the case to Alpine County Dist. Atty Will Richmond, who is investigating. Likins said the resort fired the contractor.

Some of Kirkwood's problems stem from its remoteness.

The resort, whose major investor is Charles E. Cobb, ambassador to Iceland under former President George H.W. Bush, straddles El Dorado, Alpine and Amador counties at nearly 8,000 feet.

The community utility company, which Cobb also controls, provides diesel-generated power. According to Duane Ono of the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District, the utility has paid about \$104,000 to settle alleged air emissions violations over the last decade.

The utility company is exploring ways to connect to the power grid. But Cobb said getting approval for electricity lines across more than 20 miles of sensitive terrain is a long shot.

"If logic would prevail," he added, "the great god of environmental sensitivity would say the line power and underground power ... is not as big a negative as burning diesel fuel."

## **'Who killed the electric car?'**

### **Lodi utility to host talk on electric cars at Hutchins Street Square**

By Matt Brown

Lodi News Sentinel, Friday, January 19, 2007

It was among the most efficient cars ever built, running on electricity and producing no emissions. Yet General Motors crushed its fleet of EV1 electric vehicles in the Arizona desert in 2004.

The Lodi Electric Utility is highlighting the tragic fate of the first electric cars by showing the film "Who Killed the Electric Car?" on Monday at 6 p.m. at Hutchins Street Square.

Rob Lechner looks under the hood of one of the Lodi Electric Utility's 2001 Toyota Rav 4's on Thursday afternoon. The electric cars are completely powered from solar panels placed on the roof of a docking station. Once the cars get their full-powered one-hour charge, to drive 100 miles until empty, the excess solar energy goes back into the grid. (Brian Feulner/News-Sentinel)  
"This is a nice opportunity to talk about alternative fuel vehicles," said Rob Lechner, manager of customer service and programs for the utility. "This keeps the issue in the forefront for the community."

For the last five years, the utility has leased three electric cars from Toyota. The RAV4-EVs are used to drive to meetings and for meter reader routes.

Lechner added the vehicles have had virtually no maintenance problems. And the utility's cars run on solar energy, not fossil fuel-generated electricity.

"We have a charging station using the sun," Lechner said. "There is truly nothing wasted."

He said the cars take about an hour to charge and run for up to 100 miles before needing to be recharged. When the solar panels are not charging cars, the power they generate is put back into the utility's supply.

Chelsea Sexton, executive director of the nonprofit group Plug In America, will speak before the free showing of the film and answer questions afterward. Sexton, who sold many EV1s as a saleswoman at General Motors, now promotes electric-powered cars through her organization.

The film, which is narrated by Martin Sheen, explores the automobile industry's response to California's zero-emissions mandate. Automakers developed electric cars, then fought to have the rules relaxed before destroying their fleet of electric vehicles.

Utility Director George Morrow said the city has tried to purchase the RAV4-EVs from Toyota, but the auto maker prefers to lease them. Electric car makers have confiscated and crushed vehicles after their leases have expired.

Electric utilities have partnered with the electric car industry, Morrow said, adding that surplus electricity could power all the electric cars in the world.

"There's a nexus between the electric industry and electric vehicles," he said. "It's good for the environment, good for air quality and good for business."

Each family or individual attending the event will receive a compact florescent lamp, a bag of popcorn and will be entered into a drawing for one of five DVDs of the film.

[S.F. Chronicle column, Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2007:](#)

**Time for CEOs to step up**

By David Lazarus

The heads of some of the country's biggest companies and utilities were on the right track this week when they joined with environmental groups in calling for limits on carbon dioxide emissions.

But why stop there?

It's become increasingly clear that our elected officials -- Republican and Democrat -- are politically incapable of tackling some of the urgent problems that require far-reaching and difficult solutions. Because business leaders recognize that they have an important role to play in addressing global warming, the time has come for them to accept that they are similarly needed to break the logjam in Washington in dealing with health care, Social Security, Medicare and other pressing concerns.

"Political leadership has been unable to deal with the financial dimensions of some of these issues," said Raymond Horton, a professor of political economy at Columbia Business School in New York. "Today's business leader is more cosmopolitan and socially concerned than in the past," he said. "I wouldn't be surprised to see a more-aggressive stance on public policy issues."

This week's initiative on global warming highlights the potential for chief execs to use their economic clout to be prime movers in seeking political change.

The call for limits on carbon dioxide emissions was made at a Monday news conference by the heads of Alcoa, BP America, Caterpillar, Duke Energy, DuPont, FPL Group, General Electric, Lehmann Bros., PNM Resources and San Francisco's PG&E Corp.

Peter Darbee, PG&E's chairman and CEO, told me that he and other business leaders realize that global warming represents a serious threat to the planet and that action must be taken right away to address a key source of the problem -- emissions from power plants and factories.

Even though environmental groups have been saying that for years, he acknowledged that it's different when the call comes from the private sector.

"We have corporate leaders saying that this is a problem and that Congress needs to impose regulations on us," Darbee said. "People expect environmental groups to say such things, but they don't expect CEOs to be saying it. When we do, they can understand that this must really be a problem."

The business leaders were joined by Environmental Defense, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Pew Center on Global Climate Change and the World Resources Institute.

In an earlier letter to Congress, the CEOs and environmental groups called on lawmakers to pass mandatory curbs in carbon dioxide emissions with a goal of reducing such pollution by as much as 30 percent within 15 years.

They're also seeking creation of a nationwide "cap-and-trade program" under which companies could buy and sell carbon credits.

(In his State of the Union speech Tuesday night, President Bush was to address global warming, but focus on promoting alternatives to fossil fuels. A White House spokesman said Monday that mandatory limits on carbon dioxide emissions aren't part of Bush's approach to the problem.)

Beyond global warming, PG&E's Darbee said, business leaders can -- and should -- play a role in promoting solutions to a variety of problems facing policymakers.

"In the past, CEOs have focused on business, not the broader societal issues that we're faced with," he said. "We have a number of issues that have caused elected officials to get bogged down."

In his case, Darbee said, he's interested in efforts to reform the U.S. health care system as well as improve the quality of education in our schools.

"Business leaders can help," he said.

They can. And because CEOs (and the financial resources they represent) can get the attention of lawmakers, it can be argued that they have a responsibility to advance the public-policy agenda whenever politics prevent a meaningful discussion of the issues.

Health care is a perfect example. Virtually all major employers are being hammered by sky-high insurance costs. General Motors, the nation's largest private-sector purchaser of medical coverage, spends nearly \$6 billion annually to insure workers and retirees.

Meanwhile, politicians can't agree on ways to keep costs in check while extending coverage to the 47 million Americans now lacking insurance.

Clearly there will be no significant overhaul of the health care system until business leaders not only demand change but put their deep-pocketed influence behind a specific course of action (such as a government-run system that guarantees universal coverage).

The looming crises in Social Security and Medicare represent another opportunity for business leaders to flex their public-policy muscle and smash through the political gridlock that's prevented any movement toward fixes for these popular but troubled programs.

The shortfall for Social Security is projected to hit \$4.6 trillion over the next 75 years -- primarily due to the 77 million Baby Boomers who are about to place an unprecedented strain on government coffers.

Medicare, which provides health coverage for 43 million retirees and disabled people, is projected to run a funding shortfall of \$32.4 trillion over the same period.

Because policymakers have proven themselves unwilling (or unable) to face the tax increases and benefit cuts that will inevitably be part of any effort to shore up the finances of these programs, it may be up to CEOs to show why their leadership skills merit multimillion-dollar paychecks.

After that, there's tax reform, improving schools, eliminating poverty and promoting public transportation, among numerous other issues that have clear economic benefits for the nation and that lawmakers have failed to adequately address.

That's not to say that CEOs have all the answers for America's problems, or that we want business leaders to take control of civic affairs. But many of these challenges are so great, and so costly, that it's apparent the public and private sectors will have to work together to find lasting remedies.

Columbia's Horton called it "a great step forward" now that prominent CEOs have taken a stand in seeking solutions for global warming.

"In the next 10 to 15 years, I would expect business leaders to play a greater role in setting the social and public-policy agenda," he said.

Why's that?

"Money talks," Horton replied. "These guys can get heard."

[S.F. Chronicle commentary, Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2007:](#)

## **OPEN FORUM**

### **California's stake in farm bill debate**

By Richard E. Rominger, Tom Nassif

California farmers do more than just feed the world. They hold the key to maintaining the state's environment.

That's why all Californians have a huge stake in the debate already taking place on farms and in our nation's capitol about the next federal farm bill.

Farmers own nearly 28 million acres in California. Their stewardship, more than the actions of any other group, will determine whether our children will have clean air to breathe, plentiful, clean water to drink, and whether many of the state's more than 200 imperiled species will return from the brink of extinction.

Most farmers want to be good stewards. But they need help, because the price we pay for food doesn't cover what we want them to do for the environment.

The market doesn't consider the value a farmer provides when he leaves a stream bank intact as habitat for native plants and wildlife; when he replaces an old almond harvester that still does the job, with a new one that produces less pollution; or when she puts water back in her rice field after harvest to provide a safe stopover for migrating snow geese. Indeed, the biggest market failure of all is that farmland is more valuable for development than agriculture, pressuring farmers to sell -- forever foreclosing the possibility of good land stewardship and its environmental benefits, and compromising the nation's ability to feed ourselves.

That's where the farm bill's conservation provisions come in. They correct the market's inability to recognize environmental stewardship and farmland preservation as valuable to all Californians.

The farm bill passed in 2002 introduced a number of voluntary incentive programs that help farmers implement environmentally beneficial practices. These programs are a good start, but they aren't enough.

More than two-thirds of California farmers who apply for these programs cannot participate simply because there isn't enough funding available. At the same time, some programs need changes to make them work better for Californians, encourage innovation and more effectively help farmers meet environmental challenges sooner.

As Congress prepares the 2007 farm bill, it has a chance to fix it; but only if California's 53 members get engaged and stick together. The California congressional delegation needs to ensure that the 2007 farm bill does at least three things.

First, money for the conservation, air quality and water quality programs needs to increase to fill unmet demand. For the next farm bill, California's delegation should work to double the amount of money being provided for conservation on working farms and ranches.

Second, the conservation programs need to reflect the differences among states and regions. California farmland is expensive and subject to development pressure. Crop values are the nation's highest, because among the 300 crops we grow are most of the nation's fruits, nuts and vegetables. The programs need to pay higher rates for higher cost areas to offset the cost of buying and renting land in parts of California suffering from increasing urban sprawl.

Third, farm bill conservation programs must encourage innovative practices and cooperation among farmers to address air and water pollution challenges, and keep the most fertile farmland from developers, so it can continue to produce food and environmental benefits for society. For example, dairy farmers are working together to capture the methane emitted from manure to produce energy and reduce emissions of a potent global warming gas. There must also be more money available to provide technical assistance to ensure real results from these innovations.

The two major agriculture bills introduced in Congress -- "The Eat Healthy for America Act" (introduced by California congressmen), and "The Healthy Farms, Foods and Fuel Act," would bring more benefits to Californians through conservation, nutrition, energy and research policies. Both have bipartisan support; both have proposals for more conservation program funding. Unfortunately, fewer than half of California's 53 members of Congress have signed on in support of either of these bills.

The 2007 farm bill debate will soon heat up. We need our state's congressional delegation to work for all of California next year. Signing on as co-sponsors of these bills when they're re-introduced early this year would be a strong first step.

*Richard E. Rominger is a farmer in Yolo County and served as deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture during the Clinton administration and secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Tom Nassif is president of the Western Growers Association and served as the U.S. ambassador to Morocco during the Reagan administration.*

[Fresno Bee editorial, Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2007:](#)

## **State of the Union**

### **President Bush offers baby steps when bold action is needed.**

President Bush, facing increasing criticism over his Iraq war policies, turned to domestic issues in a wide-ranging State of the Union speech Tuesday night. But his proposal on health care falls short of the sort of comprehensive reform we desperately need, and his move to "energy independence" is a timid plan at a time when bold action is needed.

The president also defended his war policies, claiming his latest plan to increase troop levels in Iraq offers a good possibility of success. We disagree, and believe the president should begin a phased withdrawal of troops from Iraq.

In last night's speech, Bush came face-to-face with a Democratic Congress, which has already begun drafting resolutions opposing his plan to send an additional 21,500 troops to Iraq. But the president is pushing ahead, and he asked that the Democrats work with him.

The health care plan the president offered appears overly complex and relies on a scheme of taxing health insurance benefits and then offsetting those taxes with deductions. Although some parts of the program are promising, he must take a much broader approach to the health care crisis. The key to reform is making basic health care accessible to all citizens — not manipulating the insurance system to create incentives to get everyone covered.

We hope the president's initiative on health care begins a debate that will ultimately solve this problem.

On energy policy, Bush fell short of the bold strokes the situation demands. He has mentioned energy independence in every one of his State of the Union speeches. He criticized the nation's "addiction to oil" in last year's speech, and now suggests, a year later, a 20% reduction in the use of gasoline — over the next decade. That's no way to rapidly wean us from petroleum.

The push for alternative fuels, however mild, is welcome. Bush wants to vastly expand our use of ethanol, biodiesel and other fuels, which is wise.

The president still rejects the idea of raising fuel efficiency standards for manufacturers' fleets — which haven't been changed in 20 years — in favor of an industry-supported plan to apply new standards to individual models. That path leads to more gas guzzlers, not fewer.

Bush also continues to reject any serious effort to reduce greenhouse gases, relying instead on "voluntary" means, which are usually trumped by the desire for continued profits on the part of polluting industries.

On immigration, the president is on the right track. He proposed tightening border security and creating a temporary guest worker program for jobs that Americans won't take. Valley farmers need those workers to harvest their crops.

Bush rightly called for a balanced federal budget, and said he still wants to guarantee the stability of Social Security and Medicare. That must be done, although the president and Congress so far have not shown the courage to take on those challenges.

[Merced Sun-Star Letter to the Editor Tues., Jan. 23, 2007](#)

### **Grateful for energy vote**

Editor: I would like to thank U.S. Rep. Dennis Cardoza for voting in favor of the CLEAN Energy Act of 2007, HR 6, and Rep. McNerney for his leadership on clean energy. By shifting \$14 billion from big oil companies toward investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency, this bill is a down payment on solving our nation's energy problems.

It is time to start investing in America's vast reserves of renewable energy resources and energy efficiency technologies. By harnessing renewable energy sources like wind, solar, and clean biofuels, we can secure our economy and create new jobs. By promoting technologies to save energy such as hybrid vehicles, we can dramatically reduce our dependence on oil and save consumers money.

California has long led the way in passing strong environmental policy, and this bill sends a clear message that Congress is ready to start solving our energy problems. We now look to the Senate to pass this legislation.

MOIRA CHAPIN

*Federal Field Organizer, Environment California, San Francisco*

[Merced Sun-Star Letter to the Editor Tues., Jan. 23, 2007](#)

### **Merced: Whine country**

Editor: Looking for some good slogans for Merced? How about Home of the Malcontents, or maybe Home of the Litigants, or better yet, Home of the Obstructionists?

Frankly, I've had about as much as I can take of these whiners. They are upset about the traffic, about the [air quality](#), about the noise, the fairy shrimp, the city growth, the loss of farmland, and on and on. If they looked around they would see that they live in a beautiful city -- far different than it was in 1964, when I moved here and it was just a cow town. I see a well-planned community with lots of trees and landscaping, well-maintained homes and streets, no urban sprawl, UC Merced, and Lake Yosemite. I could suggest to these whiners that if they didn't like it here to move out. But the fact is that there is no better place around here.

The Merced Sun-Star could help if it tried developing city pride instead of splashing articles about drive-by shootings, drug busts, arrests, dropping home prices, etc., on the front page of the

newspaper. There is plenty of space on the inside pages for that. Try taking a poll to see what readers would like to see on the front page.

ROBERT L. ENO

*Merced*

Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses the lawsuit filed by South Coast AQMD. The AQMD is suing Public Utilities Commission to protect public health and prevent increased air pollution from "hot gas". For more information, contact Maricela at (559) 230-5849.

### **Demanda el sur de California al estado por permitir contaminación del aire**

Manuel Ocaño, Aire Libre, San Diego, CA  
Radio Bilingüe, Wednesday, January 24, 2007

Por primera vez una oficina encargada de garantizar la calidad del aire en la región más contaminada en Estados Unidos, el sur de California, demandó a una institución estatal por autorizar el consumo industrial de gas natural que pese a ser menos contaminante duplicaría el deterioro en la región.

La oficina distrital de Administración de Calidad del Aire de la Costa Sur de California informó en su demanda que el gas natural denominado "caliente" produce tanto óxido de nitrógeno como cualquier contaminante común.

La Comisión de Servicios Públicos de California había autorizado el consumo de ese combustible "caliente" en lugar del gas natural sencillo, el que en realidad limita la contaminación ambiental en el proceso industrial.