

[Tracy Press, Guest Commentary, Tuesday, May 22, 2007](#)

## **Valley air is better to breathe**

Seyed Sadredin /San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

Air quality in the San Joaquin Valley is better than it has been in recorded history. With tough regulations, innovative measures and investment by businesses and residents, air pollution has been reduced significantly throughout the valley. Despite this tremendous progress, the valley's pollution-retaining geography and meteorology make meeting new federal ozone and particulate standards a challenge that is unmatched by any other region in the nation.

Having already reduced valley smog by 80 percent since the 1980s, virtually eliminating the remainder will not be cheap and cannot happen overnight. On April 30, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's governing board adopted the first eight-hour ozone plan in California. This overarching and comprehensive plan is designed to help the valley attain cleaner air, as measured by the federal smog standard, as expeditiously as practicable. The regulatory cost to businesses will be about \$20 billion. The board members should be commended for their courage, resoluteness and commitment to clean air.

In fact, an objective assessment of the board's work on air quality gives valley residents a great deal to be proud of. A child born today in the valley breathes air that is 80 percent cleaner than it was 25 years ago and that now meets the federal standard for particles 10 microns and smaller. The valley is the only "serious" noncompliant area in the state to meet the standard for airborne particles of this size, and it did it five years ahead of the federal deadline. The valley is also on track to meet the one-hour ozone standard by 2010, making it the only "extreme nonattainment" area in the state on track to do so. Meeting this health-based standard will further diminish the proven respiratory and health-related ailments associated with strong ozone concentrations.

The district's recently adopted plan to meet the new, federal, health-based ozone standard is the first of its kind in the nation. Under the plan, 50 percent of the valley's population will live in "attainment" areas — that is, areas without any recorded violations of the air-pollution standard — by 2015; that number will increase to 90 percent by 2020. By law, the valley cannot claim attainment because in a couple of areas, air pollution still will violate the standard at least a few days each year until 2023.

Undisputed analysis by experts shows that even if money were no object and we ignored all logistical constraints, the technology available today and in the foreseeable future could not reduce smog-forming emissions enough for these areas to attain the clean-air standard any sooner than 2023. In this situation, the only option provided under federal law is to seek an "extreme" designation and incorporate future technology when it becomes available — thus, the proposed deadline of 2023. All local measures that can be adopted by the air district will be in place by 2010. As a result, every area in the valley will see significant, steady reductions in ozone concentrations and the number of days above the standard.

The measures contained in the ozone plan also will help the valley meet the federal standard for fine particles by 2015. (Fine particles are 2.5 microns and smaller.) This makes the valley the only noncompliant area in the state on track to meet this standard by the deadline. Doing so will eliminate more than \$3 billion per year of the estimated \$3.1 billion annual health-related costs attributed to airborne particles in the valley.

With public health as the foremost priority, the air district's governing board also acted to seek other innovative and creative strategies to clean the air. These measures, which focus on alternative modes of goods- and people-movement, as well as alternative fuels and energy, will require broad support from the public, as well as business and government.

About 80 percent of our smog-causing pollutants come from mobile sources over which the air district has no jurisdiction. More than ever, we will need the state and federal government to do their fair share for the valley by providing funding and regulatory assistance to reduce emissions from cars, trucks and locomotives.

By any objective measure, the plan adopted by the air district is a comprehensive effort that leaves no stone unturned to bring the valley into attainment with federal air-quality standards as quickly as possible. Those who champion clean air are invited to join us on this challenging but fulfilling journey to cleaner air in the valley.

Seyed Sadredin is executive director and air pollution control officer for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

## **High winds prompt health warning**

The Business Journal, Mon., May 21, 2007

High winds throughout the San Joaquin Valley have prompted local air-pollution officials to issue a health cautionary statement through Monday evening.

The winds are expected to affect San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the Valley portion of Kern counties, District forecasters said.

“Strong northwesterly winds, with locally higher gusts, can kick up dust in these areas and create unhealthy concentrations of particulate matter 10 microns and smaller,” or PM10, said Shawn Ferreria, a meteorologist for the District.

The District’s air-monitoring stations in Corcoran have recorded elevated PM10 measurements since 2 p.m. According to reports received from various parts of the San Joaquin Valley this afternoon, visibilities were quickly shrinking from 10 miles to just 300 feet because of blowing dust.

Exposure to particle pollution can cause serious health problems, aggravate lung disease, cause asthma attacks and acute bronchitis, and increase risk of respiratory infections. In people with heart disease, short-term exposure to particle pollution has been linked to heart attacks and arrhythmias, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Residents of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the Valley portion of Kern counties are advised to use caution Monday afternoon and this evening. People with heart or lung diseases should follow their doctors’ advice for dealing with episodes of unhealthy air quality.

Additionally, older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion. Everyone else should reduce prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion.

The updated air-quality forecast for Monday is in the moderate range (51-100) for southern, central and northern regions of the Valley.

The Valley Air District covers eight counties including San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the valley portion of Kern. For more information, visit <http://www.valleyair.org> or call the nearest District office: Modesto (209) 557-6400, Fresno (559) 230-6000 and Bakersfield (661) 326-6900.

## **Bakersfield oil company faces \$25k fine for smell**

From the Bakersfield Californian on Fresno Bee.com, Monday, May 21, 2007

An oil company faces up to a \$25,000 fine for allegedly leaking a chemical that blanketed parts of the city with a strong stench, air officials said.

Air pollution authorities cited Subservice Oil Field Specialists for a nuisance violation after there was a discharge of methylmercaptan, a chemical used to warn of the presence of natural gas, said Brenda Turner, spokeswoman for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

Two workers who thought a tank they were cleaning was empty caused the leak last month, she said.

No one was injured by the gas, but several hundred calls were logged with 911 and Pacific Gas & Electric Co.

The district has three months to settle with Subservice. The fine will depend on the company's liability and public threat, Turner said.

Methylmercaptan is poisonous with direct exposure, but it poses no threat when dispersed, said Capt. Doug Johnston of the Kern County Fire Department.

"It makes a skunk smell good. Just a tiny bit goes a long way," he said.

The Kern County Environmental Health Services Department is also investigating the company.

## **Plans will be unveiled for proposed city**

By Seth Nidever

Hanford Sentinel, Tuesday, May 22, 2007

The first detailed analysis of Quay Valley Ranch, a new city proposed for southern Kings County, will get an airing at Tuesday's regular Kings County Board of Supervisors meeting.

A Sacramento planning firm will present a public services and financial plan to supervisors for the first time, giving them some idea of the proposal's feasibility.

If the city takes shape as outlined, it would turn alkali flatland along a barren stretch of Interstate 5 into a utopian community of 150,000 residents with solar power, recycled water and electric cars.

But before a single resident arrives, all the infrastructure of a working city - sewer, water, schools, roads, hospitals and the like - has to be in place.

Tuesday's highly anticipated presentation will provide a first look at how the city would be governed, where the revenue to operate it would come from and how the infrastructure would be built.

In other business, supervisors will consider finalizing the county's participation in a San Joaquin Valley electricity co-op.

The City of Hanford formally joined last week. Corcoran and Lemoore are expected to follow suit.

The plan promises a minimum 5 percent electricity generation savings for cities and counties that enter long-term power purchasing agreements with Kings River Conservation District.

KRCD is seeking to build a 500-megawatt natural gas plant in Parlier to meet the base needs of the co-op, which could include as many as 14 Valley communities in Kings, Tulare and Fresno counties.

KRCD is a tax-exempt, non-profit government agency that runs hydroelectric power plants, maintains Kings River levees and promotes water conservation efforts.

Supervisors meet at 9 a.m. in the board chambers at the Kings County Government Center, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd.

## **Lindsay Residents Report Pesticide Contamination in Their Bodies**

Valley Voice Newspaper, Tuesday, May 22, 2007

*Lindsay* - At a news conference in Lindsay on May 16<sup>th</sup>, the results of a new study showed that chlorpyrifos, one of the most commonly used pesticides in the Central Valley, has been found in the bodies of people who live near orange groves.

With results from a previous study indicating that the air contained high levels of chlorpyrifos, community members wondered if the insecticide made its way into their bodies as well. Results from that study showed that chlorpyrifos levels in Lindsay's air exceeded levels of concern derived from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) studies by up to 11 times. To answer this question, 12 Lindsay residents provided urine samples during the height of the 2006 summer spray season.

The study found that 11 of the 12 people tested had above average levels of the primary chlorpyrifos breakdown product in their urine, and seven of the eight women had amounts above the "acceptable" level for pregnant and nursing women calculated from U.S. EPA data.

"They might ignore poisons in our air, but how can they tell us it doesn't matter that nerve toxins are in our bodies and in the bodies of our children?" asked Irma Arrollo, President of the community group El Quinto Sol de América.

"We haven't seen the study yet," said Glenn Brank, spokesperson for the California Department of Regulation. "We don't know if the study has been peer-reviewed and from a scientific standpoint, that's important.

"Chlorpyrifos has been for some time a chemical of regulatory concern," he said, adding that this was not due to any health concern associated with the pesticide, but instead based on the fact that it was found more frequently than expected.

"It wouldn't be surprising to see it detected in urine," he said. "We would be surprised to see it in high quantities."

Chlorpyrifos is an insecticide that is a white crystal-like solid with a strong odor. It does not mix well with water, so it is usually mixed with oily liquids before it is applied to crops or animals. It may also be applied to crops in a capsule form and has been widely used in homes and on farms. In the home, it is used to control cockroaches, fleas, and termites; it is also used in some pet flea and tick collars. On the farm, it is used to control ticks on cattle and as a spray to control crop pests.

Breathing the air in an area in which chlorpyrifos has recently been sprayed may produce a variety of effects on the nervous system including headaches, blurred vision, watering of the eyes (called lacrimation), excessive salivation, runny nose, dizziness, confusion, muscle weakness or tremors, nausea, diarrhea, and sudden changes in heart rate. The effect depends on the amount in the air and length of time exposed.

Ingesting chlorpyrifos orally through contaminated food containers or, in the case of children, putting objects of hands in their mouth after touching chlorpyrifos may cause similar symptoms.

There is no information at present to show that chlorpyrifos either effects the ability of humans to reproduce or causes human birth defects. It is also not known whether chlorpyrifos can cause cancer in people. Animal studies have not shown that it causes cancer. The EPA has not classified it for carcinogenicity.

According to statistics at [pesticideinfo.com](http://pesticideinfo.com), 358,038 lbs. of chlorpyrifos was used in Tulare County in 2005, the most recent year documented. The majority of it was used on oranges in Tulare County, but in the state, cotton receives the biggest amount of the pesticide. The 2005 total represents an increase of about 16% over 2004 and is almost double that of 2003.

Brank points out, however, that statewide the use of the pesticide went down significantly from 1995 (over 3 million lbs.) to 2005 (under 2 million lbs.). He expects the number to continue its

decline because of voluntary grower efforts to reduce the use of pesticides, as well as some newer alternatives to chlorpyrifos and other older generation pesticides.

New insect grower regulator (IGR) chemicals only attack the pest they were designed to target. Smart sprayer technology electrically pinpoint sprays just the target.

## **California urges EPA to approve greenhouse gas emissions waiver**

By ERICA WERNER - Associated Press Writer

In the N.Y. Times, Fresno Bee, S.F. Chronicle and Sacramento Bee, Tuesday, May 22, 2007

ARLINGTON, Va. -- Top California officials implored an Environmental Protection Agency panel Tuesday for permission to impose reductions on greenhouse gases from cars and other vehicles.

If California gets the federal waiver it needs to implement its emissions law, at least 11 other states are prepared to follow its lead.

"This is more important than any issue that EPA's going to have to face," California Attorney General Jerry Brown told an EPA air quality hearing board.

Brown asked the regulators to relay a message to EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson.

"We want him to speak truth to power," said Brown. "There is a tremendous influence of the oil industry. We know Cheney and Bush are oilmen, they think like oil folks. ... We say grant the waiver."

The EPA panel was led by Margo Oge, director of EPA's office of transportation and air quality. She gave no indication of how the agency might be leaning as a daylong hearing got under way, including testimony from the auto industry, officials from other states and environmentalists.

At issue is a 2002 California law that requires automakers to cut emissions by 25 percent from cars and light trucks and 18 percent from sport utility vehicles starting with the 2009 model year. The law can't take effect unless California gets a federal waiver.

While air pollution standards typically are set by the federal government, California has a unique status under the federal Clean Air Act that allows the state to enact its own rules as long as it receives permission from the EPA. Other states can then choose to follow either the federal or California standards.

The EPA has declined to say how it will act on the waiver request, and Tuesday's hearing came after more than a year of inaction since the state submitted its petition in 2005.

Meanwhile, the auto industry has sued California and Vermont in an attempt to block the regulation, arguing that emissions standards are de-facto fuel economy standards which can only be set by the federal government.

Charles Territo, a spokesman with the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers in Washington, D.C., said before the hearing that the industry will ask the EPA to deny California's request in favor of a national program to curb greenhouse gases.

Territo said the industry also plans to challenge California's legal standing, saying the state has not met certain legal criteria for a waiver under the Clean Air Act. He declined to offer specifics.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger last month said the state will sue if the EPA does not act on the state's request by October 25.

"We're preparing a lawsuit but we certainly don't want to bring it," Brown told the panel Tuesday.

The auto regulations are a key part of California's overall strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which scientists blame for the Earth's warming temperature over the last three

decades. The state is the world's 12th largest producer of greenhouse gas emissions, 40 percent of which come from transportation sources.

The state last year embarked on a statewide effort to reduce emissions by 25 percent by 2020. A 2006 law relies on the auto regulations to accomplish 17 percent of the overall target.

President Bush last week signed an executive order giving federal agencies until the end of 2008 to continue studying the threat of greenhouse gas emissions and what to do about them. Critics fear the directive could undermine state efforts.

In an opinion piece published in The Washington Post on Monday, Schwarzenegger and Connecticut Gov. M. Jodi Rell said Bush's directive "sounds like more of the same inaction and denial."

## **Hayward residents promise to fight plant**

### **Group says they'll protest energy facility even if regulators approve it**

By Matt O'Brien, STAFF WRITER

Tri-Valley Herald, Tuesday, May 22, 2007

HAYWARD — Dissatisfied by the findings of the region's air quality protection district, opponents of a proposed Hayward power plant say they will fight the project to the end — regardless of whether regulators determine if it is OK or not.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District has found that plans to build a 115-megawatt gas-fired power plant, named Eastshore Energy Center, are likely to comply with "all" regional environmental rules and regulations.

Texas-based Tierra Energy's plant is still expected to produce more pollutants than what is technically allowed, but the company can offset that excess pollution by buying credits to reduce pollution elsewhere in the Bay Area.

Because ozone creation, and resultant smog, is a regional phenomenon, the district says using a credit system to control regionwide pollution based on federal and state laws makes sense.

Residents, however, have criticized the report for not taking into account Eastshore's location in highly populated Hayward and the sharp increase in local pollution that is expected if Eastshore and another proposed west Hayward plant, the 600-megawatt Russell City Energy Center, open for business.

Opponents also have criticized the air quality district for relying too heavily on untested data provided by Tierra and the Finnish company Wartsila that will manufacture the plant's 14 reciprocating engines.

"Wartsila obviously stands to make a huge profit on the sale of these engines and is clearly not an unbiased party in the process," wrote Hayward resident Kim Finn in a letter of opposition to the district's report. "Their self-determined emissions data should not be used without comparing them to sufficient independently gathered data."

Both plants would serve the Pacific Gas & Electric power grid. The California Energy Commission is in the process of reviewing both projects and has ultimate authority in deciding whether they are built.

Even with credits, the district said, the Eastshore plant would not be able to exceed annual emissions of about 54 tons of nitrogen oxides, 84 tons of carbon monoxide, 64 tons of particulate matter, 76 tons of precursor organic compounds (POC) and six tons of sulfur dioxide per year.

The company would be able to use POC credits to offset both POC and nitrogen oxide emissions, each of which contributes to ozone formation.

The public can send comments on the report — which is preliminary — until June 1 to Brian Lusher, an air quality engineer with BAAQMD, 939 Ellis St., San Francisco, 94109, or e-mail [blusher@baaqmd.gov](mailto:blusher@baaqmd.gov). The document can be obtained by calling (916) 654-5076 or visiting <http://www.baaqmd.gov>.

The California Energy Commission is also hosting an upcoming meeting on the project this week, from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday, to obtain more information and resolve issues with the developer and other parties. That meeting will be held at City Hall, Room 2A, 777 B St.

[Sacramento Bee and Modesto Bee, Guest Commentary, Tuesday, May 22, 2007](#)

## **Schwarzenegger and Rell: Lead or step aside, EPA**

By Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jodi Rell

It's bad enough that the federal government has yet to take the threat of global warming seriously, but it borders on malfeasance for it to block the efforts of states such as California and Connecticut that are trying to protect the public's health and welfare.

California, Connecticut and 10 other states are poised to enact tailpipe emissions standards -- tougher than existing federal requirements -- that would cut greenhouse gas emissions from cars, light trucks and sport-utility vehicles by 392 million metric tons by the year 2020, the equivalent to taking 74 million of today's cars off the road for an entire year.

Since transportation accounts for one-third of America's greenhouse gas emissions, enacting these standards would be a huge step forward in our efforts to clean the environment and would show the rest of the world that our nation is serious about fighting global warming.

Yet for the past 16 months, the Environmental Protection Agency has refused to give us permission to do so.

Even after the Supreme Court ruled in our favor last month, the federal government continues to stand in our way.

Another discouraging sign came just last week, when President Bush issued an executive order to give federal agencies until the end of 2008 to continue studying the threat of greenhouse gas emissions and determine what can be done about them.

To us, that again sounds like more of the same inaction and denial, and it is unconscionable.

Under the Clean Air Act, California has the right to enact its own air pollution standards, which other states may then follow, as long as the EPA grants California a waiver. The waiver gives California, and other states, formal permission to deviate from federal standards.

California has requested more than 40 such waivers over the past 30 years and has been granted full or partial permission for most of them.

By continuing to stonewall California's request, the federal government is blocking the will of tens of millions of people in California, Connecticut and other states who want their government to take real action on global warming.

The EPA is finally holding the first of two hearings on the waiver request Tuesday, and we welcome the opportunity to call attention to the harmful effects that global warming is having on people and the environment.

But we are far from convinced that the agency intends to follow the law and grant us our waiver.

If it fails to do so, we have an obligation to take legal action and settle this issue once and for all.

The threat is real. Scientists tell us that if nothing is done to stop the warming of Earth's atmosphere, we can expect an increasing number of droughts, greater risk of forest fires, a

reduction in our snowpack, an increase in sea levels, more flooding in winter and hotter temperatures in summer.

There can be little debate anymore on whether the effects of climate change constitute a looming threat to the public's health and welfare.

Republicans and Democrats in statehouses around the country have already spoken loudly that federal inaction on climate change is unacceptable and have acted on their own initiative.

Whether it is Northeastern states uniting to reduce greenhouse gases from electric generators or Western states looking to reduce emissions throughout the economy, momentum is building everywhere but in Washington. The federal government should not stand in the way of dealing with the most serious environmental challenge facing the world.

While the United States represents just 5 percent of the world's population, it produces 25 percent of the world's greenhouse gases.

With the landmark legislation authored by former assemblywoman Fran Pavley and passed in 2002, California demonstrated that it is serious about cutting down these emissions from cars.

Connecticut also has a strong record on greenhouse gas reduction, which includes adoption of California's tough standards for vehicle tailpipe emissions.

California, Connecticut and a host of like-minded states are proving that you can protect the environment and the economy simultaneously.

It's high time the federal government becomes our partner or gets out of the way.

[Bakersfield Californian editorial, Monday, May 21, 2007](#)

## **Air rule targets pollution spewers**

Cleaning up California's polluted air isn't a job for people weak in heart or short on political will. The resolve of the California Air Resources Board will be tested this week when members consider a controversial, but much needed rule to reduce pollution spewing from diesel-burning construction equipment.

The rule has been in the making for years. But opposition from the construction industry and other delays have stalled the requirement that particulate matter, or PM, and nitrous oxide, a trigger ingredient of smog, emitted from bulldozers, graders and other off-highway equipment be reduced in phases over the next several years.

The industry contends meeting the requirement and deadlines will be expensive and difficult because cleanup technology presently does not exist. Industry representatives warn that major public works projects, including those funded by the voter-approved mega-bonds on last November's ballot, could be delayed if construction firms have to idle polluting, outdated equipment.

The proposed rule gives the industry years to phase in the use of cleaner equipment. Cleanup technology is being developed and is expected to be in place fairly soon. But industry representatives, who have stalled the rule for years, want more time. They also want financial help to convert equipment to be cleaner burning.

While the fight over this new rule has been intense, it has been in the background for years. Only as the rule faces board consideration this week are average Californians those who breathe the state's polluted air and are being sickened by it learning about the fight.

The proposed rule would take effect in 2010 and be implemented in phases. Large companies and government agencies would have to replace or retrofit their off-road equipment by 2020. Smaller companies would have until 2025.

Next to implementing the greenhouse gas law, CARB's adoption of the proposed diesel rule is considered to be one of most significant cleanup steps the state board will take this year. It is being closely watched for its ripple effect on regulators throughout the nation.

Off-road diesel equipment use contributes an estimated 20 percent of California's overall air pollution 1 percent PM and 9 percent NOx. The proposed rule is expected to cut PM emissions by 75 percent and NOx by about 30 percent.

Industry representatives argue the cost of achieving these small reductions is too high. The state's Air Resources Board staff estimates implementing the rule will cost \$3 billion, while industry representatives say it will be more like \$9 billion. Some inflate the figure to \$14 billion.

The rule is just one more step in a tough, long march to clean up California's polluted air. The oil industry, agriculture, manufacturing and average Californians have had to pay cleanup costs. Now it is time for the construction industry.

[S.F. Chronicle editorial, Tuesday, May 22, 2007:](#)

### **A diesel dilemma**

DIESEL engines are durable, thrifty and hard working. But the power plants are also poster kids for pollution, spewing soot and smog-causing chemicals. These workhorse engines are also lightly regulated compared to cars.

California's state smog board, at long last, is proposing rules to chip away at dirty air from diesels. On Friday, the panel will hold a hearing on requiring emission controls on construction equipment, including behemoth road-graders down to forklifts, airport baggage trucks and ski resort snowcats.

The rules will impose financial pain, but, on balance, they will benefit the state with cleaner air and fewer incidents of death and disease linked to cancer-causing soot. The rules should help precisely where it's needed most: in the construction-heavy Central Valley and inland Southern California where the air is already among the dirtiest in the nation.

The state Air Resources Board should withstand a determined push from the construction industry, which is fighting the rules. While acknowledging the problem, this business sector wants a too-long period to phase in the clean air rules. The state proposes to require cleaner diesels beginning in 2010, while the industry is asked for several years more, depending on the age of the machinery. The rules affect some 180,000 vehicles.

The off-road equipment accounts for about a quarter of diesel-caused particulates, the specks of grit spewed from the smoky diesel tailpipes. The state aims to remove 85 percent of the amount, in a series of steps running from 2010 to 2025, and up to 70 percent of oxides of nitrogen (NOX), a smog-causing chemical. During this phase-in, the board estimates the changes will save 4,000 lives.

Cost is a factor. The state smog board estimates the bill at \$3 billion. Industry critics say it will be \$13 billion because new engines may be needed. The results will add to building costs and lead to job losses as small businesses struggle to upgrade old equipment, opponents say. The state could offer financial incentives to ease the changeover.

But the goal of cleaner air can't be denied. Since 2000, the state has steadily moved on diesel engines, pushing changes on buses, fuels and rules on idling engines. Next year, the smog panel will take on the biggest target, diesel trucks. This is no time to waver from the important goal of clean air and public health.