

## **Judge upholds air quality rule**

Stockton Record, Thursday, August 23, 2007

A Superior Court judge has upheld a rule that San Joaquin Valley air quality officials call the strongest and most expensive ever imposed on the dairy industry in the United States.

The rule, approved last year, requires dairies to adopt practices that will lessen the amount of gaseous emissions from their properties.

The problem stems from volatile organic compounds released from decaying animal manure. The compounds are part of the reason for the Valley's notoriously bad air.

The Association of Irrigated Residents, based in Shafter, sued in July 2006. Environmentalists said the rule requires only what dairy farmers do already.

A Fresno County Superior Court judge supported the rule, the air district announced this week.

## **Smoke from distant fire fuels local worries**

By Debbi Farr Baker, UNION-TRIBUNE BREAKING NEWS TEAM  
San Diego Union-Tribune, Thursday, August 23, 2007

SAN DIEGO - Smoke from a massive fire burning around 200 miles away was drifting into the county Wednesday, keeping local fire dispatchers busy with calls from skittish residents worried that a fire was burning nearby.

Engine companies from several agencies were checking out reports all morning and have found nothing burning in the county, said Cal Fire spokeswoman Denise Caster.

The smoke that's being detected is coming from the Zaca fire, which is burning in the Los Padres National Forest in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties, Caster said.

That fire, which started July 4, has scorched more than 222,000 acres and is only 79 percent contained.

Dispatchers from San Diego, Heartland fire communications and Cal Fire say they have been getting calls from all over the county, including Palomar Mountain, Julian, Descanso, Chula Vista and Pine Valley, as well as from all along the U.S.-Mexico border.

National Weather Service forecaster Stan Wasowski said the smoke is trapped under a subtropical high-pressure area which acts like a lid over the southern part of the state.

It is being circulated to the San Diego area because it's caught in an inversion layer and there is no jet stream to blow it away, Wasowski said.

The high pressure area is typical for this time of year and usually moves out in late September, Wasowski said.

He said residents can expect to see haze in the air and a more colorful sunset tonight because of the smoke.

Cal Fire officials originally thought the smoke was coming from a small fire that burned Tuesday in the San Bernardino mountains, but later decided that was not the case. That blaze, called the Snow incident, burned about 80 acres, Cal Fire officials said.

## **West goes wild in battle over greenhouse gas emissions**

Matthew Yi, Chronicle Sacramento Bureau  
Thursday, August 23, 2007

Sacramento - -- Following California's lead in efforts to fight global warming, six Western states and two Canadian provinces pledged Wednesday to work together to cut greenhouse gas emissions. The coalition formed six months ago when the governors of Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington created the Western Climate Initiative partnership to reduce carbon emissions. Since then, Utah and Canadian provinces Manitoba and British Columbia have joined the effort.

The governments agreed to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions 15 percent below 2005 levels by 2020. The goal is similar to California's standard set by last year's landmark legislation AB32, which requires the state to cut its emissions 25 percent by 2020.

Although the coalition represents only about 2.3 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, officials say achieving its goal could cut 350 million metric tons of carbon dioxide - roughly the same as taking 75.6 million cars off the road.

"We know that California alone cannot defeat global warming," said Linda Adams, secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency. "It's a global problem that requires a global solution."

The agreement is North America's most comprehensive and overarching regional program because it could affect every business sector, as well as consumers' daily lives, such as what type of fuel motorists pump into their vehicles, she said.

Adams said the coalition should pressure Congress and the White House to cap greenhouse gas emissions nationwide.

"Today's action sends another strong message to the federal government ... (that) at the absence of federal action, states and provinces are not waiting and will be taking action," Adams said.

Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano criticized the federal government for not doing enough about climate change.

"It has been left up to the states and provinces of North America to recognize the critical need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide the solution, not just rhetoric," she said in a statement.

Since California's Legislature passed AB32, some states have adopted similar measures. The law does not say how the state must cut emissions; a policy is being worked out by state air regulators. Similarly, the coalition does not say what specific measures might be imposed.

Adams said the new regional standard was set based on each state's and province's individual emission-reduction goals, although Utah and Manitoba don't have such measures set for 2020.

Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr. said his state will develop an emission-reduction goal by June 2008 to meet the requirements of the new regional standard.

The agreement requires each government to report its greenhouse gas emissions every two years, but there are no enforcement mechanisms other than what each state or province requires for itself.

"What we need is for other states to set enforceable limits on emissions," said Bill Magavern, a lobbyist for the Sierra Club. "California has done it (with AB32). Hawaii has done it, and New Jersey has done it. Without those definable limits, we do not have a real enforceable cap on emissions."

Still, Magavern applauded Wednesday's announcement.

"I think we're seeing progress, and we need to have regional cooperation in reducing emissions," he said.

Theo Spencer, senior project manager at the Natural Resources Defense Council's Climate Center, echoed that sentiment, although he said he believes some states within the partnership could have a tougher time meeting the new regional goal than others.

"In states like Arizona, this is going to be tough, because as I understand it, this is slightly more aggressive than that state's own reduction goals," Spencer said. "In fact, they may have the toughest row to hoe than any of the states because their (population) growth is tremendous and that will impact their emissions."

Arizona officials said while the regional goal complements their own state standards, the state does face tough challenges because of population growth.

Although the Western Climate Initiative partnership won't dictate what regulations each member should enact, the group plans to create a blueprint for the so-called cap-and-trade system in the region, a proposal that would allow high-polluting businesses to buy carbon credits from low-polluting firms.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and some business organizations have championed such a system for California, although Democratic lawmakers and environmentalists have argued that AB32 requires regulations to cut emissions before considering such a market-based system of trading carbon credits.

Sarah Cottrell, energy and environmental policy adviser to Gov. Bill Richardson in New Mexico, said a regional cap-and-trade approach will be critical for her state because it has many coal-fired power plants that may end up having to buy carbon credits from other states where companies have successfully cut emissions.

## **Summit examines county's growth**

### **Speakers discuss renewable energy, land-use policies**

By Cheryl Winkelman, STAFF WRITER  
Tri-Valley Herald, Thursday, August 23, 2007

STOCKTON — Since 1900, San Joaquin County has doubled in population every 30 years. Now with nearly 650,000 people, it won't be long before 1 million people call the area home.

To plan for that growth explosion, lawmakers, business leaders and transportation officials gathered Wednesday for the 2007 Economic Summit at Stockton's University of the Pacific.

Chaired by Rep. Jerry McNerney,

D-Pleasanton, guest speakers bandied about words like smart growth, renewable energy, higher-paying jobs and cooperation between agencies, cities and counties.

Managing smart growth can be difficult, particularly when agricultural land is at stake. Agriculture, the county's core industry, brings in

\$1.4 billion in revenue annually.

But preserving agricultural land, accommodating the population explosion and ensuring the [quality of air](#) and water are opposing forces, said San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors Chairman Victor Mow.

"What's given up to accommodate this growth?" he asked. "We need to ask ourselves (as a community) what we want for the future."

Can people give up large homes for multidensity dwellings and lessen their dependence on cars, Mow asked.

Stacey Mortensen, the executive director of the Altamont Commuter Express, suggested relegating trucks to specific travel times to lighten the area's already overcrowded highways.

Public transportation, she added, also could be used to haul goods and products.

To lure better-paying and more skills-intensive jobs here, Mike Locke, president of the San Joaquin Partnership, which brings businesses to the area, said the bioscience/agriculture industry should be targeted because of the county's agricultural base.

He also suggested finding entrepreneurs to back new businesses.

The renewable energy industry already is popping up in San Joaquin County and could bring many jobs to the area.

In fact, the Manteca office of Akeena Solar, a company that designs and installs solar electric power systems, is set to open today, Executive Vice President Bill Scott said.

Scott said there are about 10,000 jobs available across the county in solar power, and hundreds of thousands will be available in the future.

In addition, Community Fuels, a biodiesel production facility, will be operational at the Port of Stockton by the end of the year, Vice President Ryan Lamberg said.

The renewable, biodegradable energy source is the fastest-growing fuel on the market today.

Another growing industry, agriculture/tourism, needs better infrastructure or public transportation in place to help Bay Area visitors access places like Lodi, which has 70 wineries and several new bed and breakfast inns.

## **Economic summit aims to make county vital job center**

By Ross Farrow - News-Sentinel Staff Writer  
Lodi News Sentinel, Thursday, August 23, 2007

San Joaquin County has a lot of talented professionals and skilled laborers, but it needs to provide job opportunities for these people, according to community and business leaders at Wednesday's economic summit hosted by Rep. Jerry McNerney, D-Pleasanton.

McNerney focused on three of the county's major assets — agriculture, transportation and schools — that will encourage county residents to work locally rather than commute from the Bay Area.

"Let's take advantage of our world-class (ag) land," McNerney said.

The summit, held at University of the Pacific, also focused on one of McNerney's pet projects — development of renewable energy, such as solar, wind and biodiesel power.

Energy technology will create 500,000 to three million new jobs, McNerney said. It could bring the same economic impact to San Joaquin County as the computer industry did for Silicon Valley, he added.

Three other panels commented on job development — one each on entrepreneurship, "smart growth" and transportation and education.

Twenty people spoke on these topics, including Mark Chandler, executive director of the Lodi-Woodbridge Winegrape Commission.

Chandler touted the Lodi-area wine industry, saying that winegrape farmers have been working their land for four to six generations. He noted that Lodi and other American wine regions are getting competition from foreign countries and urged people to buy American.

"If it has a cute label, look at the country of origin," Chandler said.

Brad Alderson, general manager of Woodbridge Winery, told the panel that state water quality and air quality regulations seriously hamper the ability for wineries to grow.

"Agencies don't want to help you," Alderson said. "They tell you what you can't do."

Jim O'Neal, regional director for the Small Business Administration, said his agency can provide a forum bringing business and regulators together to discuss how regulations affect businesses. He pledged to arrange such a forum.

McNerney added, "Farmers I've met here are dedicated to maintaining quality of life. They want to follow regulations. Farmers drink the same water, breathe the same air."

Summit participants also focused on the value the Port of Stockton has added to the county's economy. Ships can transport goods by water into Stockton instead of by truck across Altamont Pass or by freight train, thereby reducing road traffic. The Port of Stockton should also be improved to help take the load off the Port of Oakland, which expects to increase in demand in the next few decades, participants said.

Another panel focused on transportation and noted that San Joaquin County must beef up its transportation and infrastructure to attract more jobs.

Tim Hunt, former editor and associate publisher of the Tri-Valley Herald in Pleasanton, said groups from different regions must work together to make it all work.

"We need to do more than look at our own county — this is a region," Hunt said.

San Joaquin County needs homegrown jobs and entrepreneurs to create those jobs, Hunt said.

Randy Hatch, Lodi's community development director, an attendee of the economic summit, said the sessions were good, especially the one that dealt with transportation and related planning.

The area needs higher density development so that less land is used, he said. One example is higher density development in Downtown Lodi so that residents can use bus and passenger train service from Lodi Station, Hatch said. That way, maybe families can get by on one car rather than two.

"We want to take Lodi to the next step with a higher-density Downtown," former Lodi Mayor Phil Pennino, now a consultant for Altamont Commuter Express, said during a break.

One way to increase density is to create residences on the second and third story of Downtown buildings where the ground floor is a store or office, Pennino said. The way to get something positive done is for the community to support elected officials and their staff.

Pennino also hopes transportation can increase through commuter train service between Merced and Sacramento, with a stop in Lodi. Pennino, in his role as consultant, hopes to bring four to six commuter trains per day through Lodi. As to when that will happen requires regional support for the project, he added.

## **Lawmakers urge Schwarzenegger to spare money for high-speed rail**

By STEVE LAWRENCE , Associated Press Writer

Modesto Bee, Wednesday, August 22, 2007

SACRAMENTO — Two Democratic lawmakers on Wednesday urged Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to stand by his previous statements of support for California's high-speed rail project and spare its funding when he trims \$700 million from the new state budget.

"We want to make sure the governor knows we're watching, that Californians are watching, and that we expect the governor to be futuristic, to be optimistic and to keep a project on line that makes a lot of sense in terms of getting people out of their cars," said Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter.

The state's high-speed rail board has recommended that California build a 700-mile system linking its biggest cities with trains running at top speeds of more than 200 mph.

The overdue state budget that lawmakers approved Tuesday includes \$20.7 million to continue engineering and environmental work on that project. But Florez and Assemblywoman Fiona Ma, D-San Francisco, said they were concerned Schwarzenegger might veto the money before he signs the budget into law.

Schwarzenegger promised Republican lawmakers he would use his line-item veto power to cut \$700 million to balance the \$145 billion budget. A spokesman for the governor's Department of Finance, H.D. Palmer, would not say whether the high-speed rail money would be among the cuts.

"We have never telegraphed in advance what we will or will not veto," Palmer said. "That remains the case today."

Eliminating the high-speed rail funding from this year's budget could undercut efforts to convince voters to approve a \$9.9 billion bond measure that is on the November 2008 ballot, Ma and Florez said.

Most of the bond money would be used to help pay for a first leg of the high-speed rail project between Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay area.

Keeping the \$20.7 million in the budget would give voters a better idea of what the system would look like and where stops would be instead of asking them to back a "nebulous high-speed rail system," Florez said.

Removing the funding from the budget would be damaging, Ma said, in part because the authority has pending contracts for environmental and other studies.

Mehdi Morshed, the high-speed rail board's executive director, said the \$20.7 million would be enough to continue doing some environmental and engineering work on the project, but it would fall far short of the \$104.2 million the board requested for the fiscal year that began July 1.

"It keeps us from having to close up shop," Morshed said.

Schwarzenegger had been cool toward the high-speed rail project, which was begun before he took office. But in an op-ed column he wrote in May, he said high-speed rail would be a "tremendous benefit" that would help relieve freeway congestion, [improve air quality](#) and create greater mobility.

The budget proposals he made that same month included \$5.2 million for the project, far below the amount requested by the authority.

The governor supports high-speed rail but wants the board overseeing the project to do more to line up federal and private funding, said David Crane, Schwarzenegger's special adviser for jobs and economic growth.

"We want to see it done and would like everyone focused on the steps to actually getting it done, not just spending more money on consultants," said Crane, who also is a member of the rail board.

## **Activists challenge port on truck pollution, jobs**

### **Community group presents survey results to board members Concerns delivered to port board**

By Francine Brevetti and Douglas Fischer  
Tri-Valley Herald, Thursday, August 23, 2007

OAKLAND — Wearing their signature red T-shirts, a contingent of West Oakland members of ACORN, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, made their complaints clear about pollution and heavy truck traffic to the Port of Oakland board this week.

The group also challenged the port's efforts to offer jobs to local residents, saying available jobs are not sufficiently publicized.

Shirley Burnell, an ACORN member and part-time staffer, told the commissioners that 31 percent of the 200 people surveyed so far in West Oakland said they suffered from asthma, a result of the unhealthy atmosphere surrounding port operations.

According to the survey, 90 percent of respondents reported they were looking for jobs, of which 10 percent said they could not find work at all. And 37 percent are currently unemployed.

Community and ACORN members gave impassioned pleas for the port to change its acceptance of trucking companies using independent contractors. This practice, according to Corlena Decatur, a West Oakland resident and ACORN member, provides neither security nor work opportunities for the community.

"You need to do something to alleviate truck pollution by passing a comprehensive Clean Truck Program and that program needs to include employee status for drivers and local hiring," Decatur said. But port officials countered that the port's own study had found a large part of the pollution was created by ocean-going cargo ships rather than idling trucks — a contrast to other emissions inventories by larger ports in Los Angeles and Long Beach that found trucks contribute a greater share of the operation's pollution.

However, Bernida Regan, the port's director of social responsibility, said the board has been addressing both concerns for some time and will continue to work on them.

She said she met with ACORN representatives just last week to explain the board's attempts to study the trucking industry and plan a local trucking job program. Regan said she expected a detailed plan to be ready within the next year.

The group repeatedly asked the port to establish an outreach program to inform the community of job openings.

Regan said the port maintains an employment office, the Employment Resources Development Program, which posts opportunities in the port building's lobby as well as online.

On the issue of truck pollution, the port's "emissions inventory" found that 80 percent of diesel particulates, or soot, came from the large container ships calling at the port's 20 berths.

Big rig trucks, in contrast, account for 6 percent of the emissions, with harbor craft such as tug boats and miscellaneous cargo-handling equipment contributing the rest.

Soot is a leading contributor to many breathing ailments, particularly asthma. Community advocates and others pushing the port to reduce the amount of soot spilling into neighboring West Oakland homes and schools say the report's methodology appears to understate the trucks' role, potentially undermining efforts to spend money to clean up the fleet.

Cargo ships — and their emissions — are governed by a complex, hard-to-change web of international laws. What comes out of a trucks' exhaust pipes is far easier to regulate. But while the port's emissions inventory tracked ship pollution from nearly 15 miles outside the Golden Gate, the port stopped counting truck pollution once the rigs hit the nearest freeway on-ramp.

"This (report) makes it look like investing money or time in trying to clean up trucks is not the best use of resources," said Swati Prakash, director of Oakland-based Pacific Institute's environmental justice program.

"Putting out an emissions inventory like this ... undermines that effort."

Port spokeswoman Marilyn Sandifur said the study was developed to be compatible with other assessments under way by regional and state air regulators. More information about truck emissions outside the port's boundaries will be incorporated in the future, she added, and efforts to trim truck pollution will continue.

"This information is going to help us as we move forward," Sandifur said. "It's not just about addressing one source. The way you deal with emissions is to look at all sources, and (ask) how can you best address these, and is it a good investment."

But the Port of Oakland's inventory places a far larger share of the blame on ships than inventories from California's two other large ports, in Long Beach and Los Angeles.

Those ports employ different methodologies. At the Port of Long Beach, cargo ships account for 59 percent of the soot, while the ships account for about 21 percent at the Port of Los Angeles. Trucks contribute about 10 percent.

Sandifur cautioned that comparisons among ports can be misleading.

"When you look at the scale, you're dealing with significantly different operations," she said.

Oakland, the nation's fourth busiest container port, handles about 15 percent of the volume of the combined ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, the nation's first and second busiest ports, respectively.

### **States set goal for reducing emissions**

By PAUL DAVENPORT , Associated Press Writer  
Modesto Bee, Wednesday, August 22, 2007

PHOENIX — Six western states and two Canadian provinces announced a regional goal Wednesday to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

The Western Climate Initiative includes Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah and Washington and the provinces of British Columbia and Manitoba. The group wants emissions cut by 15 percent over 2005 levels within 13 years.

Governors of the most of the states created the WCI in February, pledging to work together to significantly reduce emissions, partly by designing a market-based system such as a cap-and-trade program planned by California.

"The regional goal reflects the combined impact of the individual (greenhouse gas) emissions goals that each WCI member has already set for itself and does not replace the members' individual goals," the states and provinces said in a joint announcement.

Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano said the states need to act because the federal government "is choosing to delay action."

The group's announcement said the WCI members were also working to meet an August 2008 deadline for designing the market-based mechanism.

## **BART parking may be lost to housing Planning Commission discusses transit-oriented development**

By Rachel Cohen, STAFF WRITER

Tri-Valley Herald, Thursday, August 23, 2007

SAN LEANDRO — Tim Gentile has been parking his car at the downtown San Leandro BART station and commuting to work in Oakland for 14 years.

Each morning the Washington Manor resident drives about five miles to be at the BART station a half-hour early, around

6 a.m., to make sure he gets a close parking spot.

"Anytime after 7:30, there's no parking," he said, explaining that, by then, a line of waiting cars has formed in the parking lot.

While Gentile's early-bird commute time may not be affected, many people's commutes will if the city decides to move forward with a transit-oriented development plan that would reduce parking by 11 percent, or 325 spaces, at the downtown San Leandro BART station.

Parking already is crowded at the station's three lots and on adjacent Martinez Street. Development is planned to enhance downtown San Leandro by building housing next to the BART station so residents can use the combination of the station, nearby shopping, the East 14th Street corridor and AC Transit bus lines, said Kathleen Livermore, the project's interim planning manager.

The Planning Commission will hold its final meeting to discuss downtown transit-oriented development this evening, before the issue goes to the City Council on Sept. 4, Livermore said.

She added that a 27-member citizens advisory committee gathered for 10 meetings about the project from January 2006 to May 2007 and voted on recommending the strategy. In the same period, the Planning Commission also hosted three meetings, which 240 local residents attended. A draft environmental impact review has been presented and zoning changes recommended that would increase the density to implement the development strategy.

"There are concerns about BART parking," Livermore said. "But we want to keep our options open and look very carefully at any proposal there."

Usually parking that is removed is replaced on a one-to-one basis, Livermore said, but the proposed zoning changes recommend replacing just 75 percent, a loss of 81 spaces. The commission is hoping that these spaces could be picked up from nearby streets by narrowing them to include more parking and make them more pedestrian-friendly.

As a disclosure document, the environmental impact review includes five "significant and unavoidable impacts" identified from development including high noise levels to residents of a new apartment complex if one were to be built next to the tracks.

[Air quality](#) is also expected to be negatively impacted, though Livermore said overall development will improve it with more people walking downtown to do their errands. It is unknown how more housing would affect school enrollment, so the city will track this with the school district. Traffic is also expected to move even slower at the intersection of MacArthur Boulevard and Estudillo Avenue.

Tonight's Planning Commission meeting will begin at 7 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at City Hall, first floor, at 835 E. 14th St.

## **Regional climate pact sets limit**

**The leaders of six states and two Canadian provinces agree to cut emissions to 15% below 2005 levels.**

By Margot Roosevelt, staff writer  
L.A. Times, Thursday, August 23, 2007

Stepping in where the Bush administration has refused to tread, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and five other Western governors, joined by two Canadian provincial leaders, pledged Wednesday to enforce a tough regional cap on greenhouse gas emissions.

Under the Western Climate Initiative, the leaders agreed to slash emissions of carbon dioxide and other climate-warming pollutants to 15% below 2005 levels in their states and provinces in the next 13 years. That is about the same percentage as California's commitment under last year's landmark global warming law. Overall, the region would cut emissions by 350-million metric tons over that time period.

To achieve their goal, the partners, including Democratic and Republican governors, committed to designing a carbon-trading system within a year. That approach, now in use in Europe, allows industries to trade pollution credits among themselves. Seven Northeastern and mid-Atlantic states are also designing a so-called cap-and-trade system, but that initiative will be limited to power plants.

"Climate change is a global problem that requires a global solution," Schwarzenegger said in announcing the accord. "Our collective commitment will build a successful regional system to be linked with other efforts across the nation and eventually the world."

California officials took pointed aim at the Bush administration's refusal to enact a national program to cut greenhouse gas emissions. "The federal government needs to step up to the plate, but the states aren't waiting," said Linda Adams, California's secretary for Environmental Protection. "Ideally, we would have a cap at the federal level."

Although the Bush administration has rejected the Kyoto Protocol, a global climate pact ratified by more than 140 countries, White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said that the charges of federal inaction are "false" and that Bush is "supportive of actions by the states and respects the role governors play."

The administration, she said, has supported billions of dollars in incentives for clean-burning technology and building retrofitting, a legislative proposal to cut the nation's traditional gas use by 20% over the next decade, as well as an effort to slow the growth of greenhouse emissions nationwide.

But in contrast to the administration's embrace of voluntary emissions targets, Schwarzenegger has traveled the West in recent months, cajoling other political leaders to join in a commitment to fixed cuts. The states that have signed up are Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington and Utah. Canadian provinces British Columbia and Manitoba have also joined the effort. Several states and provinces are official "observers," still considering whether to commit to the initiative's stringent goals. They include: Colorado; Kansas; Nevada; Wyoming; Ontario and Quebec, Canada; and Sonora, Mexico.

One goal of the regional pact is to prevent polluting industries from playing off states with stiff anti-pollution regulations against those without. In recent years, for instance, Nevada has advertised itself as a haven for businesses fleeing California.

"It is a big concern in California that companies might move to other states," Adams said. "This kind of regional program will help minimize that."

Environmental groups applauded the regional initiative. "It shows major momentum in the fight against global warming," said Theo Spencer of the Natural Resources Defense Council. "The public has grown impatient with the Bush administration's denying and ducking. There's a wave of

state action moving from coast to coast."

Under the initiative, the partner states have signed up with a national climate registry to measure how much greenhouse gas they emit. They are free to design how to cut their own emissions to meet the cap. To slash fossil-fuel consumption, which produces climate-warming carbon dioxide, states are mandating more energy-efficient buildings, increased use of solar and wind energy, less sprawl and more hybrid cars in government fleets.

But given that vehicle tailpipe emissions account for between one-quarter and one-third of states' CO2 emissions, it could be hard to meet the regional initiative's ambitious cap without also requiring auto companies to produce less-polluting cars. California passed a landmark law in 2002, which mandated a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in automobiles by 2020.

Eleven other states have signed on to California's approach, but with the auto industry fiercely opposed, the Bush administration has delayed granting a necessary federal waiver to allow the law to take effect.

Under the cap and trade program envisioned in Wednesday's agreement, heavy polluters could purchase credits from below-average emitters. The success of the system depends on setting an overall cap that is sufficiently low so that it will result in actual reductions. The European system faltered at first by setting its caps too high and failing to verify industry emissions claims. California officials say that they will incorporate lessons from the European experience in designing a new cap-and-trade program.

California's 2006 global warming law requires emission reductions of 15% below 1990 levels. The regional cap would amount to capping pollution at about 2% above 1990 levels, said Christopher Busch, an economist with the Union of Concerned Scientists, an advocacy group. But since emissions in other states and provinces have been growing faster than in California, he said, "the regional cap will result in greater reductions than California's law would on its own."

[Modesto Bee editorial, Thursday, August 23, 2007:](#)

### **Wanted: Cream of crop UC ag research leader**

Help wanted: Administrative giant to lead agricultural and natural resources research for world's top public university; located in nation's top farm state with sixth- biggest agricultural economy in the world. Staff: More than 1,100 people. Annual budget: More than \$300 million. The job title for this position is vice president -- agriculture and natural resources, division of academic and health affairs for the University of California. The responsibilities spread over two pages. It is a pivotal job for the San Joaquin Valley because everyone is affected by food production, and how crops are produced has a lasting effect on our landscape.

This is a vital appointment and the UC search committee cannot settle for second best.

UC and its competitive researchers have been a driving force behind the valley's unrelenting, world-class crop production and now, more than ever, we need to continue that tradition.

Who should lead UC into the future? Let's dream about the perfect person.

The head of the search committee, Rich Rominger, a former U.S. Department of Agriculture undersecretary and a farmer in Winters, says the ideal candidate would not only help set the UC vision for farm research, but also fight for funding in Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

He says a solid foundation of collaboration with the state university system has been established, and it is important that cooperation continues to make sure we are not duplicating efforts and are getting the most for our tax dollars.

Provost and Executive Vice President Wyatt R. Hume points out that UC serves every Californian with its agricultural research, and by delivering the results directly to the people who apply that information to improve the quality and production of California's more than 350 commodities.

The next ag vice president needs to be agile, ensuring that university programs are organized in the most efficient way to get knowledge developed and quickly transferred to the industry and to create a steady supply of cutting-edge farmers.

Agriculture grows more complex and competitive by the day. Our universities must ensure that their students and professors are prepared to tackle the latest challenges of [air and water quality](#) and supply issues, as well as the impact that agriculture has on global warming.

We hope UC will think creatively in its search for this candidate and look for someone whose authoritative voice will make sure ag is properly represented in the university's priorities.

Agricultural leaders should take note of this important opportunity, ask questions and volunteer their recommendations of good candidates to the search committee. Send recommendations to Daniel F. Parker Sr. or Laurie C. Wilder; 770-804-1996, ext. 109 or e-mail [lwilder@parkersearch.com](mailto:lwilder@parkersearch.com).

If the UC settles for second best, ag -- and the the valley -- will have missed a truly golden opportunity.

[Contra Costa Times editorial, Thursday, August 23, 2007:](#)

### **Poor way to clean air**

CALIFORNIA ATTORNEY General Jerry Brown has a lot of people worried. He's using his power as the state's top law enforcement official to focus on global warming. Brown sued San Bernardino County for not doing more to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions and has criticized plans to expand two refineries in Contra Costa County.

Brown contends that state law requires public agencies to evaluate and mitigate for significant environmental impacts. Also, Assembly Bill 32 calls for a reduction by 2020 to 1990 levels of carbon dioxide emissions that scientists say contribute to global warming.

That is why Brown sued San Bernardino for not adequately addressing global warming in its general plan. Contra Costa officials fear Brown might also file a suit regarding expansion plans by the Chevron refinery in Richmond and the ConocoPhillips refinery in Rodeo.

Republican legislators in Sacramento were quite worried about Brown's zeal to combat global warming. They held up approval of the state budget until a deal was made to block Brown from initiating lawsuits that could delay transportation projects financed by bonds.

Brown said he is not targeting such projects. But there are no assurances, and lawsuits based on global warming could seriously interfere with highway construction, refinery expansion or other projects.

It is difficult for anyone to fully comply with AB32 right now because the law does not require the state to adopt greenhouse gas regulations until Jan. 1, 2011.

However, government agencies can begin to take action by requiring greenhouse gas emissions to be included in environmental impact reports and perhaps also by levying fees to fund mitigations of any negative impacts from highway or refinery projects.

Refinery expansion could increase CO emissions, but the refineries also will produce cleaner burning gasoline and help moderate prices. New highways reduce congestion, which also can lessen auto emissions.

What is important now is for government agencies, businesses and unions to work together to reduce [air pollution](#) so that AB32's 2020 goals can be met.

Litigation by the attorney general is hardly the best route to success, particularly at this time, before AB32 regulations are in place. Lawsuits are costly, cause delays, create confrontation and generally end up in compromise anyway.

Brown needs to understand that he can succeed better by working cooperatively with government agencies and private companies than by issuing lawsuits.

[Letters to the Fresno Bee, Thursday, Aug. 23, 2007:](#)

### **'Such a pollution problem'**

If Palm Desert can outlaw drive-throughs, why aren't Fresno and Clovis changing their building codes that allow this, plus outlawing those already built? This Valley has such a pollution problem that I think this would be a no-brainer.

I cringe every time I see cars idling in line at fast food places, drive-up pharmacies and ATMs.

*Merna Doerr, Clovis*

### **Charge for the privilege**

I've read several versions of the suggestions that we Californians reduce or stop the use of drive-through lanes at fast-food or quick-service establishments (coffee and related beverages).

I propose taking that one step further: If the people of California don't want to get out of their car seats to go into a restaurant or coffee shop, then perhaps they won't mind paying a state-imposed surcharge of 15 cents to 25 cents for the convenience (excluding disabled persons).

This way, all the owners of these tens of thousands idling cars will help California financially while their cars continue to contribute to our already polluted air.

*Michael Kobata, Fresno*

[Letter to the Modesto Bee, Wednesday, August 22, 2007:](#)

### **Grain grinder endangers neighbors' health**

There has been a lot of information depicting the need to improve our valley's air quality. There have been quotes from the California Air Resources Board and [the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District](#) citing steps taken, studies conducted, etc. Yet, here in our midst (along Santa Fe Avenue in Empire) operating with impunity is the Central Valley Agricultural Grinding Co. How they were allowed to gain a foothold so close to so many residents is mind-boggling.

The Bee ran a story ("Dirty film envelops homes by grain site," Page B-1) Dec. 15 on how local residents were coping with the dust and smell. I continue to have dust residue on everything and fear future respiratory problems. Are all people within the dust fallout supposed to wait for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease to develop before something is done?

A representative of the air agencies needs to take samples and have them analyzed. Drive by and see large, untarped piles of grain. Talk to any of the residents along Santa Fe. Park your car for a day or two on my property and then ask yourself if you would like to be breathing what you see on your windshield.

*Vincent Lane, Empire*

