

Air district kicks off healthy living initiative

BY MARK RIVERA , Staff reporter
Turlock Journal, Thursday, March 20, 2008

Concerns for air quality typically rise with the temperature, but the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has decided to start early in educating residents about healthy air living.

The district is hosting three Healthy Air Living summits in Bakersfield, Fresno and Modesto during the last week of the month to present its new, comprehensive initiative that aims to improve the health and life of all Valley residents through effective, efficient and entrepreneurial strategies that will clean up the air.

"This is the broadest, most comprehensive initiative the district has ever undertaken," said Seyed Sadredin, the district's executive director. "We envision Healthy Air Living becoming an exciting part of the Valley's fabric of life - the way we live and the way we do business."

The free events will showcase different strategies that provide air-quality benefits while also improving economic issues and employee moral. An electric lawn mower will be given away at each presentation as an example of small changes that can be made.

Healthy Air Living, a year-round voluntary program, offers tools for every segment of the valley's population to make better lifestyle choices that will improve the valley's air quality and, consequently, quality of life.

The program's goals are: to make air quality a priority in all business and individual decisions, to reduce vehicle miles traveled, to reduce emissions from high-emitting equipment and process, and to reduce emissions through energy efficiency and cleaner fuels and/or equipment.

Key to the initiative is Healthy Air Living Week, planned for July 7-13. The week aims to provide a snapshot of valley life to encourage people to make air quality-conscious decisions in their daily business and private lives.

"Healthy Air Living is ambitious, and I hope that it will be embraced by the entirety of the Valley's population," Sadredin said. "It will change the way we live, work and play in the Valley."

The Healthy Air Living initiative will effectively replace the Spare the Air program, which involves over 700 valley employers. Spare the Air is one of the district's longtime standing programs.

"Although Spare the Air will cease to exist per se, we will wrap components of this signature program into Healthy Air Living," said Jaime Holt, district chief communications officer.

The first summit will be March 26 in Bakersfield at the Holiday Inn Select Hotel and Conference Center. The second presentation is March 27 in Fresno at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center. The final presentation is on March 28 in Modesto at the Doubletree Hotel.

For more information on Healthy Air Living or to register for the summit, visit www.healthylairliving.com or call the district's offices in Modesto at 557-6400, Fresno at (559) 230-6000, or Bakersfield at (661) 326-6900.

Council OKs ethanol plant

By Eiji Yamashita
Hanford Sentinel, Wednesday, March 19, 2008

After months of testimony and debate, it took Hanford decision-makers less than a half-hour Tuesday night to decide the future of ethanol in this rural Central Valley town. Despite staunch opposition from some segments of the community and environmental advocates, the City Council

approved the permit application by Great Valley Ethanol for a \$115 million corn-to-ethanol production facility in the low-tax south Hanford industrial area by a unanimous vote.

The action also denied an appeal by opponents who challenged the legality of the December planning commission action to approve the environmental impact report and the project.

"We're absolutely excited," said Edward Settle, president/CEO of the Bakersfield-based company. "We have extensively studied this project and have talked to members of the community, who were overwhelmingly in favor of the project. And people had plenty of time to address their concerns, and we've done our absolute best to make sure this is a clean, green plant."

The plant proposed on Iona and 10th avenues is designed to produce 63 million gallons of grain ethanol, a gasoline additive, each year. But the plant is expected to have a significant air quality impact with 313,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions and above-threshold nitrogen oxide emissions, prompting concerns from nearby residents to the state justice department.

Foes of the plant say the city has set its foot in a legal mire.

Luke Cole, executive director of San Francisco-based Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment who represents a handful of concerned residents, said he came to Tuesday's meeting with no expectations.

"This is what we expected," Cole said. "The council's vote and deliberation indicate that they fundamentally don't understand the project and its impact. Our next step is to determine whether we'll be filing suit or not.

"We have excellent legal grounds. The city has left itself wide open for a California Environmental Quality Act suit," Cole said.

The opponents have 30 days to file a lawsuit.

But in a landmark deal reached Monday with the state Attorney General's Office, the company agreed to pay \$1 million over three years to the San Joaquin Valley Air District's mitigation fund. In exchange, state prosecutors promised not to sue.

Based on the agreement, the company could reduce payment by \$25 for every ton of greenhouse gas emission reduction achieved through possible mitigation measures, such as CO2 capture and marketing and cellulosic ethanol production.

Members of the council said they were satisfied with the solution.

"(For) the fact that the attorney general said the mitigations which have been made will indeed mitigate the concerns, I feel very comfortable in saying the EIR is acceptable," said Councilwoman Marcie Buford, who made a motion to deny the appeal and approve the project.

"The state of California and federal government both have said we need ethanol in order to reduce the amount of pollutants we're putting into the air. This is a lot bigger than just the next-door neighbors in Kings County. It would have an effect across the state."

Settle says 60 million gallons of ethanol can replace \$257 million worth of crude oil, thus making it an important step toward independence from foreign oil.

Some would agree. Others would question the economic and environmental viability of the ethanol plant, pointing to the fact that it takes 6.5 gallons of water to produce 1 gallon of ethanol and it creates significant impact on air quality, which isn't required by the city to be fully offset.

Public debate on the Great Valley Ethanol plant proposal began in October, when the city held a public session regarding the environmental impact report. Highly divisive debate continued in December, when the planning commission voted 6-1 to approve the project.

The decision was followed by an appeal by residents and environmental advocates. The city council closed oral testimony on the hearing process on Feb. 19.

The decision was postponed then to give Cole a final chance to respond to newly proposed mitigation measures added to the environmental impact report.

On Tuesday, the city council went straight into deliberations.

Councilman Dave Thomas made a PowerPoint presentation regarding his tour at a Pacific Ethanol plant in Madera where he said he took one of his constituents, Joe Flores, with him to inspect the ethanol production process.

Thomas said he asked Flores to go back to an unknown number of concerned residents to discuss and make a recommendation for a vote. "I'm neutral on this."

Thomas had City Attorney Robert Dowd publicly announce the recommendation, which ultimately spurred Thomas to approve the plant.

"That's the way the people want it, and that's the way I'll vote," Thomas said.

Andre Booker, an outspoken foe of the plant who lives a quarter mile from the project site, expressed his dismay toward the council as well as apathy in the community.

"I'm disappointed by the elected officials and citizens of Hanford," Booker said. "Democracy is participatory. Whether you agree or disagree, we all have to get involved in the solution that's best for our community."

"What's best for our community is not just new jobs, not just economic benefits, but health," Booker said.

Previously, the company was to break ground as early as April. Settle said the project timeline has since been pushed back.

The company currently plans to break ground in June or July. Construction is expected to take about 18 months, he said.

Study says diesel emissions raise cancer risk

By Elizabeth Fernandez, staff writer

S.F. Chronicle, Thursday, March 20, 2008

OAKLAND -- Diesel emissions from trucks, machinery and other sources elevate the risk of premature death, cancer, asthma and other chronic diseases for more than 3 million people living in West Oakland and the surrounding region, according to the most detailed study yet on the issue.

The analysis by the California Air Resources Board, released Wednesday night, shows that the greatest health dangers related to toxic air emissions stems from diesel trucks traversing the freeways and other roadways around West Oakland and the Port of Oakland.

The two-year public health inquiry covered a large swath of the Bay Area - an area of 3,800 square miles that is home to 3.1 million people. The residents had an elevated risk of cancer - nearly 1,200 additional cancers per million people due to long-term exposure to diesel particulate matter than people living elsewhere, the study reported in preliminary findings.

The study also found other considerable health problems resulting from exposure to port-related diesel pollution: 18 potential premature deaths annually occurring among people 30 and older, 290 asthma attacks, 2,600 days of work lost and 15,000 "minor restricted activity episodes."

Exposure to diesel particulate matter is a hazard especially for children and elders. The air board has estimated that the toxins contributed to some 160 premature deaths in the Bay Area three years ago.

"We no longer live in the Industrial Age. People should not be exposed to known toxins in their own homes," said Dr. Anthony Iton, director of the Alameda County Public Health Department.

He said that the report, which he had not yet read, confirms earlier health findings.

"We have extensive data on the disproportionate burden of disease in West Oakland," he said. "We hope that this health risk assessment will be helpful in quantifying the responsibility of the port to the adverse health outcomes in West Oakland."

The study concentrated on three sources of the toxic air contaminant: the Port of Oakland, the Union Pacific Railroad near the port, and freeway truck traffic and nonport-related marine vessel traffic in and around West Oakland in general. Diesel trucks accounted for 70 percent of the elevated health risks - amounting to 850 potential cancer cases per million above the expected rate of cancer in the general population. Of the remainder, 15 percent of the total risk came from port operations - 200 excess cancer cases - and 5 percent came from Union Pacific rail-yard emissions - 40 additional cancer cases. The remainder came from a variety of other sources including Amtrak and construction businesses in the area.

Similar studies have been conducted to assess health risks associated with the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, but this one included a much wider region than the others. "It was a huge undertaking," said Patricia Rey, a spokeswoman for the air board.

Taking a novel approach to measure marine vessel emissions, the large study utilized data from 33 onshore and offshore weather stations to generate a regional wind field.

"This health risk assessment will provide the community the focus and momentum needed to mobilize and combat air pollution," said Mary Nichols, chairman of the air board. "We look forward to working with community activists to converge on the main pollution culprits, such as trucks motoring on nearby freeways, affecting a growing and vibrant West Oakland."

This week Port of Oakland commissioners began reviewing a slate of goals designed to reduce diesel emissions by 85 percent over the next dozen years.

The port had come under heavy criticism in recent years for the dirty emissions of trucks doing business with it. In 2005, county public health officials compiled state data revealing that West Oakland children ages 5 and under visited the emergency room for asthma at a rate nearly three times higher than children in Alameda County overall. Additionally, a study of death certificates dating to the 1960s showed that residents of West Oakland lived 10 years fewer than people living in the Oakland hills.

The Air Resources Board is a department of the California Environmental Protection Agency. The study was conducted in cooperation with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the Port of Oakland and Union Pacific Railroad.

Study cites health risk to West Oakland residents

By Denis Cuff, Staff Writer

Contra Costa Times & Tri-Valley Herald, Thursday, March 20, 2008

West Oakland residents face an elevated risk of getting cancer because of diesel exhaust from trucks, ships, trains and other sources, according to a study released Wednesday.

The extra risk of getting cancer is 1,180 in a million for lifelong West Oakland residents, the California Air Resources Board said in its health risk assessment.

The study examined all diesel sources, including the Port of Oakland, freeways and a Union Pacific railroad line.

In comparison, the risk of getting cancer in the general population is about 200,000 to 250,000 in a million.

"The risks are too high," Peggy Taricco, a pollution expert, told an audience of about 100 people in Oakland on Wednesday night. "We have to bring them down."

The study, based on computer models, does not estimate risks for specific people but rather the risk spread out over the 22,000 people living in industrialized West Oakland.

It was no surprise that diesel, listed as a known carcinogen by the state, elevates risk.

The study, however, reaffirmed the need for more actions to cut pollution to protect public health, Port of Oakland officials and air pollution regulators said Wednesday.

"This is an involuntary risk," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. "The study shows West Oakland faces risks about three to four times higher than the rest of the Bay Area."

Port officials said they plan to continue a multimillion dollar plan to curb diesel emissions.

"Air pollution comes from many sources in the Bay Area, and we are committed to doing our part to help reduce diesel pollution from Port-related activities," said Richard Sinkoff, the Port of Oakland's acting director of environmental programs.

On Tuesday, the port commission took the first step toward levying cargo container fees to fund pollution-reduction measures such as buying cleaner truck engines and equipment to operate ships more cleanly when they dock.

Port officials have vowed to make an 85 percent reduction in the higher cancer risk attributable to the port.

The state report found that diesel trucks account for the largest share -- 71 percent -- of the elevated cancer risk to West Oakland residents. Most of those trucks were not going to the port, officials said.

"The major portion of this risk came from the diesel trucks on the freeways surrounding West Oakland," authors of the study concluded.

While ship traffic and the port generate greater amounts of diesel exhaust, the truck exhaust is a bigger problem because the trucks come closer to homes.

Port-related diesel sources account for an increased cancer risk of 190 in a million.

The Union Pacific rail yard accounts for an elevated risk of 40 in a million. Free traffic and other sources around West Oakland account for the largest share -- 950 in a million -- of the extra risk from diesel, the report found.

The state air board has passed or soon will pass a series of diesel engine and fuel rules aimed at achieving an 80 percent reduction in the cancer-risk from diesel soot statewide. Still, more needs to be done to lower the risk in West Oakland, pollution regulators said.

The study by the California Air Resources Board is part of a statewide effort to reduce diesel soot. The soot particles particularly threaten children with lung problems and the elderly with heart and lung problems.

The study used estimates where pollution originated and where winds blew it.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District also was a partner in the study. The nine-county district has awarded several millions of dollars in grants to help trucks using the port buy cleaner engines or equipping existing ones with filters.

Port to levy fees in effort to help reduce pollution

OAKLAND: Officials aim to raise \$520 million over the next several years

By Francine Brevetti, Staff Writer

Contra Costa Times & Tri-Valley Herald, Thursday, March 20, 2008

In an effort to reduce diesel particulates from truck emissions, the Oakland Board of Port Commissioners will levy fees on containers passing through the port.

In making the decision Tuesday, however, the board did not set the fee amount, nor did it say when the levy would be imposed. Port staff members will study those issues and report back to the board in June.

The new policy is meant to generate \$520 million over the next several years to reduce air pollution around the port and to fall in line with California's stated goal of reducing health risks around ports by 85 percent.

The container fees the port hopes to raise will provide funding to retrofit older trucks and replace trucks. It also will fund a mechanism to reduce the emissions from vessels idling while they are at the port. Truck drivers who want to apply for funds to retrofit or have their equipment replaced must apply to the Port of Oakland by Tuesday.

But the commissioners circumvented a hot-button issue by relegating to future study its former proposal that truck drivers who are independent contractors be employed by truck holding companies.

Omar Benjamin, executive director of the port, acknowledged the health risks to the local community of particulate matter at the port. He said the goal is to decrease that risk, per state goals, by 2020.

At least part of the drive behind the port commission decision was the opportunity to receive money from state bond measure Proposition 1B, which requires matching funding. The port is eligible for \$20 million from the measure, but it must first come up with \$30 million in matching funds by March 31.

The port will hold a community meeting at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the West Oakland Senior Center, 1724 Adeline St., to explain requirements of the retrofit and vehicle replacement programs. The port will hold a public forum in the spring to consider the ramifications of truckers entering the employ of trucking companies. The date is yet to be announced.

Last year, the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach also introduced container fees, much to the displeasure of the shippers and retailers who must pay them. The \$35 fee for every 20-foot container helps fund the ports' \$2 billion Clean Trucks Program.

But Erik Autor, vice president of the National Retail Federation's international trade council, said legal challenges are likely to stop the ports from collecting the fees.

Richmond panel to review Chevron report

RICHMOND: Group will determine fate of environmental assessment that could clear way for upgrades

By Katherine Tam, Staff Writer

Contra Costa Times, Thursday, March 20, 2008

Three years after Chevron first proposed it, the oil company's contentious plan to upgrade equipment at its Richmond refinery reaches a critical decision-making point tonight.

The Richmond Planning Commission will decide whether the environmental impact report issued in January is complete and whether the project should get the green light to move forward.

The public hearing at Richmond City Council chamber is likely to be packed and emotionally charged.

Chevron wants to replace its hydrogen plant, power plant and reformer. The company would process the same amount of oil as it does now, but new equipment would allow it to refine a wider range of crude into gasoline, according to the EIR.

At the heart of a very heated debate is whether the project is good for Richmond.

Refinery representatives say the project would mean a more reliable and efficient refinery that also creates construction jobs and revenue. But critics fear the oil company will process more-

contaminated crude that would increase pollution for residents and wildlife; they say the environmental report must be redone.

State Attorney General Jerry Brown also weighed in with a letter to the city, saying the report fails to fully analyze some air pollutants and mitigation measures.

Both sides have intensified their lobbying efforts in the final days leading up to tonight's hearing. On Monday, Chevron sent an e-mail blast, urging supporters to enter their name and address into an automated letter in support of the project to the Planning Commission and City Council.

Opponents tried to foil that approach by putting sentences such as "Don't Let Them Rip Off Richmond Again" and "Please Protect Us" in the fields where names and addresses were to go.

Tonight's hearing will allow time for supporters and opponents to make their cases. Chevron and an opponents group plan to give presentations.

Others then will be allowed time at the microphone. If there are 15 or fewer speakers on a side, each person on that side will get three minutes to speak. If there are 16 to 24 speakers on a side, each person will get two minutes to speak. The time per person drops to one minute if there are more than 25 speakers on a side.

The commission's decision can be appealed to the City Council in writing within 10 days.

The city is the lead agency in the review process. Chevron's proposal also must secure permits from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and the California Energy Commission to move ahead.

Reach Katherine Tam at 510-262-2787 or ktam@bayareanewsgroup.com.

IF YOU GO

? WHAT: Richmond Planning Commission public hearing on Chevron Richmond Refinery renewal project

? WHEN: 7 tonight

? WHERE: Richmond City Council chamber, 1401 Marina Way S.

Notes: IOC to allow inhaler use due to bad air

By Janice Lloyd, USA TODAY

Thursday, March 20, 2008

The bad rap about athletes using inhalers has increased over the years. That will not be the case this summer in Beijing, where asthma-related problems could surface.

The chief medical officer for the International Olympic Committee said Monday that Beijing's pollution could put endurance athletes at risk if air quality doesn't improve. Arne Ljungqvist said athletes will be allowed to take pulmonary tests when they get to Beijing and be granted therapeutic use exemptions (TUEs) if deemed necessary by physicians.

A TUE allows the use of an inhaler that is comprised of drugs on the banned list. Beta-2 agonists, commonly used to treat asthma in inhalation form, are also available by injection and could have anabolic effects.

Kristine Karlson, the team physician for USA Rowing, is being proactive about alerting potential Olympians. She posted a message on the team's website telling athletes to get tested if they've ever had the slightest symptom.

"We're trying to get everybody who might have used an inhaler in the past, even if it was just for a cold, to be tested beforehand, so we don't get to Beijing and find out somebody is having a problem," said Karlson. "You can't predict it, but there are provocative tests you can do in a laboratory that would alert you to a problem."

Karlson has heard from two athletes but isn't expecting to hear from many more.

Neither the U.S. Olympic Committee nor the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency tracks the numbers of athletes requesting TUEs. The IOC has pushed for fewer exemptions.

Jill Geer, spokesperson for USA Track & Field, said the USOC will be ready to test athletes in China, a step that's not unprecedented. One glitch: track's training camp is in Dalian, east of Beijing on the coast.

"Athletes can be tested through training camp, but the conditions on the coast aren't going to be like those in Beijing," said Geer.

USA Cycling spokesperson Andy Lee said its staff is in Beijing now.

"When they return, I'm anticipating we'll be discussing air quality," said Lee. "They've been on top of this problem all along."

Compromise Preserves Board's Permitting Clout Panel Overseeing Air Pollution Urged Scrutiny of Power Plant in Alexandria

By Kirstin Downey, Washington Post Staff Writer

Washington Post Thurs., March 20, 2008

After weeks of intensive lobbying and negotiations, environmentalists and industry officials have hammered out a compromise on a bill that would have stripped permitting power from the Virginia Air Pollution Control Board.

The citizen panel oversees regulations that affect the control and reduction of air pollution. The board has urged stronger scrutiny of the Mirant power plant in Alexandria.

The aging, coal-fired plant provides electricity to hundreds of thousands of homes in the District and Maryland and also affects Northern Virginia residents because it fouls the air. Alexandria officials said they think pollutants emitted from the plant are giving residents respiratory ailments, and they have applauded the air board's role in the debate.

The compromise was a victory for Alexandria officials, who had asked state environmental agencies to impose restrictions on the Mirant plant, on the Potomac River north of Old Town.

"I'm pleased to report we won that fight," said Del. David L. Englin (D-Alexandria), who had called stopping the original measure his top legislative priority.

He said the final outcome turned the bill on its head but gave industry leaders enough of what they wanted that in the end they accepted the transformation.

"We're very pleased with how it turned out," said David Anderson, a spokesman for the Virginia Chamber of Commerce. "All sides came together to agree on reforms that would make the process more predictable, efficient and rational."

The transformed bill passed the House and the Senate last month with unanimous support.

The original bill, strongly supported by business interests in the state, would have gutted the authority of three citizen boards -- the Air Pollution Control Board, the Water Control Board and the Waste Management Board -- and vested all responsibility for their permitting decisions in the state Department of Environmental Quality.

The new bill retains the boards and preserves their power to issue or deny permits, but gives them 90 days to take action. It also requires them to document the reasons for their decisions. The number of members on the air pollution board was expanded from five to seven, which both sides said will provide a further opportunity to influence decisions.

The new legislation is a "positive outcome," said Debra Raggio Bolton, Mirant Mid-Atlantic's vice president and general counsel, noting that the company supported the decision to expand the air board to seven members. The final bill also would strengthen financial conflict-of-interest rules for board members.

[In the Hanford Sentinel, Editorial, Wednesday, March 19, 2008:](#)

Another View: Ozone alert!

(This editorial appeared in the Washington Post)

Last week the Environmental Protection Agency tightened the limits on the amount of smog-inducing pollutants that could be released into the air from 84 parts per billion to 75 parts per billion. This is important. Not since 1997 had the ozone standard been strengthened. The EPA estimates up to 2,300 fewer premature deaths and savings of up to \$19 billion in health-care costs by 2020. But the intervention of President Bush in the decision has environmental activists questioning whether politics trumped science in fashioning the new ozone rules.

Good ozone is what protects Earth from the burning rays of the sun. But bad ozone, which can lead to and aggravate respiratory ailments during long exposure, forms when sunlight and heat at the ground level mix with the emissions from cars, power plants and other entities. The Clean Air Act regulates the bad ozone on two levels. The primary standard seeks to protect public health while the secondary one guards the public welfare or the overall environment. A unanimous Supreme Court ruled in 2001 that in setting the new limit, only science can be considered, not the costs of implementation.

There was a vigorous debate within the administration over how to monitor and measure the two standards and over whether to join the two standards under a common approach or to deal with them separately. The back-and-forth is discussed in the EPA's final rule, including Bush's decision last week that the two standards should be joined. Environmentalists are enraged because, they say, the president usurped EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson's authority under the Clean Air Act to make the final determination.

They are also unnerved that the agency ignored a scientific advisory panel's recommendation of limits between 60 and 70 parts per billion for public health. And they are concerned that Bush's "consistent with administration policy" justification for joining the standards is a cover for letting cost considerations determine the new limits.

In fact Johnson wants the law changed so that costs can be counted when pollution standards are crafted. The administration's rationale: What's the use in passing standards that states and counties can't afford? Under the previous standard, 85 counties were in violation, including a few between Washington and New York. That number shoots up to 345 under the new rules.

[Sacramento Bee, Letters to the Editor, Monday, March 17, 2008](#)

Bush EPA to state: Drop dead

Re "EPA tightens smog rules / Decision is modest but puts the Sacramento area farther behind in meeting ozone standard," March 13: The Environmental Protection Agency missed a huge opportunity to protect the health of millions when it set the revised smog standard.

Smog burns lung tissue and puts everyone at risk, especially children and infants, seniors and anyone suffering with heart and lung illnesses like asthma and chronic bronchitis.

California recognized the dangers and set a tighter state ozone standard of 70 parts per billion three years ago. Despite California's leadership, clear scientific evidence and the recommendations of health and medical experts for a stronger standard, the agency chose a compromise level of 75 ppb.

The American Lung Association is especially alarmed that the EPA administrator also recommended that Congress weaken the core principles of the Clean Air Act.

For starters, he would allow state or federal government officials to forego cleanup efforts for some pollutants if they determines the measures would be too costly, an unacceptable outcome that would leave people unprotected.

The guiding principle in setting air quality standards has always been protection of public health, as upheld by the Supreme Court. The American Lung Association will continue to vigorously defend this core principle and the public's right to healthy air.

Bonnie Holmes-Gen, Sacramento Senior Policy Director, American Lung Association of California

Warming claim: A heated rebuke

It was disappointing to read Tom Knudson's March 12 article "Wildfires emit more global warming gases than thought," which based its discussion on a sketchy and non-peer-reviewed report on carbon emissions from wildfires by Tom Bonnicksen.

Forgetting for the moment that Bonnicksen previously argued for an oil company institute that there was no such thing as climate change and that he has absolutely no technical expertise on this subject, his argument is a red herring.

Yes, fires release tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, but what Bonnicksen chooses to ignore is that the vegetation quickly regrows after fire and sequesters this carbon again through photosynthesis if natural forest processes are allowed to take place. The result is no net change in the atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide.

California has some of the premier scientists in the world studying issues of carbon flux and global change, and who could offer expert opinion on this subject. They would find Bonnicksen's arguments and calculations to be naïve and dangerously misguided.

Philip W. Rundel, Los Angeles

Distinguished Professor of Biology, UCLA

Nuclear power is the way to go

With all this talk of carbon footprints and foreign oil, why would we not wholeheartedly embrace a fuel that has no exhaust, no carbon emissions, no sulfur sludge and no air, water or ground pollution? Indeed, the United States, once the world leader in nuclear power technology, has bowed to France, China, Russia and Japan for nuclear leadership. This country has an irrational fear of nuclear power, grossly stoked by Three-Mile Island and Chernobyl.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses plans to build an ethanol plant in Hanford, California continues. For more information on this clip or other Spanish clips, contact Claudia Encinas at \(559\) 230-5851.](#)

Planes de construcción de planta de etanol continúan en Handford, California

By Zaidee Stavely

Noticiero Latino

Radio Bilingüe, Wednesday, March 19, 2008

Los planes para construir una planta de etanol en la ciudad de Hanford en el Valle Central de California continúan, a pesar de la oposición de residentes. Anoche el Consejo Municipal de Hanford rechazó una apelación en contra de construir la planta. La discusión sobre el etanol en esta pequeña ciudad de California ejemplifica la controversia sobre el biocombustible a nivel nacional.

Andre Booker vive cerca del terreno donde está propuesta la planta en Hanford. " Dicen que nos liberará de la dependencia del petróleo extranjero, y nos traerá desarrollo económico. Bueno, el problema es que tiene mucha contaminación," dijo Booker.

La planta de Hanford emitiría más de 300 mil toneladas de gases invernadero al año. Es una planta entre al menos cuatro plantas de etanol propuestas para el Valle Central, una de las áreas con el aire más contaminado del país.

Abogados de los residentes consideran llevar el caso a la corte.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses California Ports decide to take action against air pollution.](#)

Puertos de California deciden nuevas acciones contra la contaminación del aire

Noticiero Latino, Fresno, CA
19 de marzo de 2008

Los tres principales puertos marítimos de California deciden nuevas acciones para reducir la contaminación del aire.

Los puertos de Los Ángeles y Long Beach informaron que impondrán a cientos de barcos cargueros que llegan diariamente a sus astilleros, sustituir diesel por consumo de combustibles menos contaminantes al acercarse a tierra.

Autoridades del puerto de Oakland informaron por su parte que sustituirán unos mil 900 viejos camiones de carga que usan diesel en los astilleros.

El Departamento de Salud de California considera que la contaminación de los puertos causa más de cuatro mil muertes prematuras anuales.