

## **Trucking companies: We can't afford tougher air regulations**

By Stacey Shepard, staff writer

Bakersfield Californian, Thursday, Dec. 4, 2008

With the California Air Resources Board poised to adopt a new rule to cut diesel truck pollution next week, local trucking companies Wednesday highlighted the economic burden it would impose on local businesses and an industry already feeling the squeeze from high fuel costs and the recession.

The rule would require truck owners to install pollution controls starting in 2010 and buy newer, cleaner trucks beginning in 2012. It is estimated to cost trucking companies \$5 billion over the next decade.

Truck owners say the costs are too high to absorb in the short amount of time they have to comply. They've proposed an alternative proposal that would delay compliance timelines and allow a more gradual phase-in of cleaner trucks.

Here's what the various sides had to say:

Daniel Mairs, president, Cox Petroleum Transport, Bakersfield company that hauls petroleum products nationwide

- "We are in favor of reducing emissions but believe there's a more flexible way to do it."
- Cox would have to spend an additional \$2 million to bring its 100 truck-fleet into compliance in coming years. The price of a new truck is expected to increase from \$100,000 to \$130,000 due to the new pollution controls it must have.

Michael Munoz, salesman, Bakersfield Truck Center, a truck dealership

- The financial crisis has already made it difficult for trucking firms to get credit to buy new trucks. Loan companies now ask for larger down payments and personal guarantees in some cases. Interest rates are up 3 to 4 percent.

Seyed Sadredin, executive director, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

- Diesel trucks are the largest source of pollution-forming emissions in the San Joaquin Valley. They emit 40 percent of the valley's nitrogen oxides, the main component in smog and fine particulate matter (PM 2.5).
- The valley must comply with federal standards for PM 2.5 by 2014 and for smog by 2023. "The timing may not be great with the economic situation we're in now, but without a significant contribution from the trucking industry, we won't get there."
- Stationary sources, such as oil refineries and factories, have cut emissions by 80 percent in the last 25 years, while trucks and passenger vehicle emissions have gone down about 40 percent in the same time. "By no means have mobile sources been subject to the same level of regulations and expenses as the valley's stationary sources."

Eric White, branch chief, California Air Resources Board

- The industry's alternative rule would get only about half the emission reductions as the agency's proposed rule. "There would be no way for Southern California and the San Joaquin Valley to meet federal clean air standards with the industry's alternative."
- The rule will cost the industry \$5 billion but is expected to save 9,400 lives and create \$48 to \$68 billion in health cost savings through 2023. (The state will make about \$1 billion in grants and low-interest loans available for truck upgrades and replacements.)
- "When you look at the cost-benefits, for a significant investment you get more significant societal and health benefits over the same timeframe."

## **Morada group sues Stockton over development, water**

By Ross Farrow, News-Sentinel Staff Writer  
Lodi News-Sentinel, Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2008

A group of Morada-area residents have sued the city of Stockton over the City Council's approval of a subdivision calling for 10,500 homes that would add 33,000 people to the city.

The Morada Area Association filed the suit Nov. 25 in San Joaquin County Superior Court. The lawsuit alleges the subdivision would affect water supply throughout the county, the depleted groundwater basin and saltwater intrusion from the west, according to Kurt Cooper, who will become the Morada association president in January.

The Mariposa Lakes lawsuit coincides with a previous lawsuit the association, commonly known as the MAA, filed regarding Stockton's newly adopted General Plan.

"We think the (environmental impact report) for both the General Plan and Mariposa Lakes are sound," Deputy City Attorney Guy Petzold said. "The city feels that there is (enough water). Otherwise they wouldn't have approved the General Plan or Mariposa Lakes."

The key to Stockton development, Petzold said, is that the city uses a combination of river water and groundwater.

"When you combine both, we find there is ample water," Petzold said.

Morada's lawsuit on the Stockton General Plan is scheduled for an April trial date. Cooper said the MAA hopes for a settlement rather than a trial. He said he hopes the new mayor and three new council members taking office in January will be willing to negotiate.

Ann Johnston will replace Edward Chavez as mayor, and Kathy Miller, Diana Lowery and Dale Fritchen will join the council. The council members will replace Dan Chapman, Clem Lee and Rebecca Neighbors.

Additionally, Councilman Steve Bestolarides, who had two years remaining on his term, will leave the council to join the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors in January.

"It's going to be whole new situation with Stockton City Council," Cooper said. "We think it will be much more even-handed when it comes to development and controlling urban sprawl. We worked with Ann Johnston a lot over the last couple of years."

However, Cooper fears that the outgoing council will approve more major developments this month.

"The current City Council has one more month," Cooper said. "They are approving projects right and left. There's a very good possibility we will sue."

The issues will be the same, mostly water supply and quality, he said.

"The city just does not agree with us on overdrafted aquifer," Cooper said. "They don't look beyond their own boundaries. The city of Stockton thinks they're doing a good job pumping water in their boundaries, but we're one big lake underneath."

In addition to water supply and quality, the MAA cites other issues with the Mariposa Lakes, including the fact that one of every 25 existing Stockton homes filed for foreclosure in second quarter of 2008 alone, lack of agricultural conservation, [air quality](#), traffic, noise and proximity to Stockton Metropolitan Airport, according to the lawsuit.

Highway 99 separates Morada from Stockton. Although Morada is not a city in itself and is governed by the county, the community pays close attention to what Stockton does because it is larger than any other government entity in the county.

"If you're a neighbor like Lodi or Morada, you pay attention to everything they do," he said.

In addition to Stockton's growth plans, the Morada Area Association is concerned about a possible peripheral canal that would export more Delta water to the southern San Joaquin Valley and Southern California, Cooper said.

"We'd lose a lot of the flushing action in the Delta and get more saline intrusion in our aquifer," Cooper said. "The water at Oak Grove Park is unpotable now. It's moving eastward 43 feet per year. That's a big, big thing there, and we're worried about that."

## **UC growth cheered at hearing**

### **Public can continue to comment on expansion through Jan. 5.**

By Michelle Hatfield, The Modesto Bee

In the Merced Sun-Star, Thursday, Dec. 4, 2008

MERCED -- Overwhelming support was expressed Tuesday night for the expansion of UC Merced and the development of a neighboring village.

The statements came during a public hearing on a draft environmental impact report, which enumerates the effect of both projects on the surrounding environment, such as agricultural land, traffic, air pollution and noise.

When development will lead to a significant negative impact, officials must show how they will minimize those effects to acceptable levels.

About three dozen people attended the Tuesday night meeting on campus. Officials presented plans for the maturing 815-acre campus and a 2,000-acre neighboring community of homes, parks, schools and shopping. UC Merced and the adjoining community are years in the making.

The public hearing is a requirement of such projects, providing residents a chance to give input. People who were unable to attend Tuesday's meeting can comment via mail or e-mail through Jan. 5.

All of Tuesday's 12 speakers supported the plans and urged their approval during 45 minutes of comments. They highlighted the educational, economic and other benefits of UC Merced's expansion, and said university officials have made many concessions to reduce the amount of harm to agriculture or wetlands.

Speakers also were hopeful that proposals to build high-density housing would be a model for Merced and other Central Valley communities.

Many of the speakers represented area groups and politicians who lobby on behalf of UC Merced, such as the economic development agency and the county office of education.

The Army Corps of Engineers must approve UC Merced's expansion because the campus sits on federally protected wetlands. In the next several decades, the campus could enroll 25,000 students.

Today, UC Merced has 2,700 students in its fourth year.

The current development outline is much more satisfactory to the Corps.

"We've taken a lot and they've given a lot," said Nancy Haley, project director with the corps, about UC system officials.

To view the draft EIR, go to <http://lrdp.ucmerced.edu>. To find out how to comment on plans, e-mail [bsamuelson@ucmerced.edu](mailto:bsamuelson@ucmerced.edu) or [ucmerced@usace.army.mil](mailto:ucmerced@usace.army.mil); or visit [www.spk.usace.army.mil/organizations/cespk-co/regulatory/PNs](http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/organizations/cespk-co/regulatory/PNs).

## **Greenhouse gas emissions increase in US**

By H. Josef Hebert, The Associated Press  
in the S.F. Chronicle, Washington Post, Wed., Dec. 3, 2008

WASHINGTON -- The amount of U.S. greenhouse gases flowing into the atmosphere, mainly carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels, increased last year by 1.4 percent after a decline in 2006, the Energy Department reported Wednesday.

The report said carbon dioxide, the leading pollution linked to global warming, rose by 1.3 percent in 2007 as people used more coal, oil and natural gas because of a colder winter and more electricity during a warmer summer. Half of the country's electricity is generated by coal-burning power plants.

A shortage of hydropower also contributed to an increase in the demand for fossil fuels, said the department's Energy Information Administration.

The EIA said that in 2007 the United States produced 8 billion tons (7.28 billion metric tons) of greenhouse gases, compared to 7.9 billion (7.18 billion metric tons) in 2006. The tonnage, presented in terms of "carbon dioxide equivalent" also includes methane, nitrous oxides and a number of lesser greenhouse gases, although carbon dioxide accounted for nearly 83 percent of the releases.

Despite a growing concern about the accumulation of heat-trapping pollution that scientists say is changing the world's climate, the flow of greenhouse gases continue to increase not only in the United States, but worldwide.

U.S. greenhouse gases have increased 16.7 percent since 1990, or an average of 0.9 percent a year, the EIA report. Carbon dioxide emissions have increased an average of 1.1 percent a year since 1990.

Globally the increases have been even more dramatic, according to separate findings by scientists at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. They showed carbon dioxide output worldwide increased by 3 percent from 2006 to 2007 with a 7.5 percent increase in China, according to data released earlier this year.

"We have not been able to turn our emissions around. We still are increasing our emissions overall," said Brenda Ekwurzel, a climate scientist at the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Last year, President Bush touted the 2006 reduction in U.S. greenhouse gas emissions as evidence that his largely voluntary efforts to address climate change was making headway as carbon dioxide releases dropped 1.3 percent between 2005 and 2006. And Bush also noted the continued drop in "carbon intensity" \_ carbon dioxide emission increases as related to economic growth \_ which has declined steadily since 1990.

But the EIA noted the reductions in 2006 simply reflected the year's warmer than normal winter which cut demand for fuel oil and natural gas, and a moderate summer that reduced demand for coal-generated electricity for air conditioners.

Likewise, said the EIA, the 2007 increase in emissions "resulted primarily from two factors: unfavorable weather conditions, which increase demand for heating and cooling in buildings, and a drop in hydropower availability that led to greater reliance on fossil energy sources (coal and natural gas) for electricity generation."

U.S. carbon intensity barely declined in 2007, falling by a meager 0.6 percent, compared to an annual average decline of 1.9 percent since 1990 and 2.1 percent since 2002, said the report.

In addition to the 6.6 billion tons (6 billion metric tons) of carbon dioxide, there were emissions in 2007 of 772 million tons (700 million metric tons) of methane and 422 tons (384 million metric tons) of nitrous oxides, both increasing about 2 percent, and 195 million tons (177 million metric tons) of other greenhouse gases, an increase of 3 percent. All numbers are carbon equivalent.

## **Burden of multiple pollutants new focus of regulators**

By Suzanne Bohan

Contra Costa Times, Wed. Dec. 3, 2008

The health burden of the cumulative effects of environmental pollutants takes center stage at a community forum sponsored this evening by the Contra Costa County Hazardous Materials Commission.

The gathering reflects the growing momentum by regulators to factor in the combined effect of various pollutants in their decision-making process, rather than just consider one at time.

"Right now, we are still regulating and managing pollutants mostly one at a time, without thinking too much about what happens when these things are close together or near vulnerable populations," said Amy Kyle, an associate adjunct professor at the University of California, Berkeley's School of Public Health, who will join the forum's panel.

Many pollutants, she explained, affect the same or similar biological pathways. By considering only one at time, the real health effects of the combined chemical cocktail can be missed. As an example, Kyle cited endocrine disrupters found in pesticides, plastics and other products and pollutants. These can act like hormones in the body, causing a cascading effect on multiple systems and organs.

In addition, Kyle said researchers have realized that "many environmental contaminants have effects at far lower doses than we thought before, especially for susceptible populations like infants and children, or the elderly."

Joining Kyle at the forum will be two experts with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and a representative of the Western States Petroleum Association. All will make presentations, followed by a question-and-answer period with the audience.

"We're trying to stimulate discussion of the topic and stimulate understanding in the importance of it," said Michael Kent, executive assistant to the county's Hazardous Materials Commission.

The push toward analyzing the collective effects of pollutants arises from state and federal efforts to address environmental justice concerns raised by activists and others over the decades, which hold that residents in poorer neighborhoods are exposed to a disproportionate amount of chemical contaminants due to their proximity to industrial plants, freeways and other sources of environmental contaminants.

In California, residents are supposed to receive protection from bearing such a disproportionate load, Kyle added, but actual practice is far from achieving that.

The panel dovetails with a statewide initiative launched by the California Environmental Protection Agency in January 2008 to find ways to relieve these burdened neighborhoods from

environmental pollutants, among other goals. In August, a working group will present a report to Cal EPA with their findings and recommendations for addressing the issue.

While Kyle stressed that it's too soon to spell out recommendations, options include changing laws regarding the approval of permits and regulations, or issuing guidelines for regulators to consult. And addressing the cumulative effects of pollutants doesn't require gathering reams of new data, Kyle said, but rather analyzing existing data in new ways.

Currently, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency offers guidelines for assessing cumulative pollution risks, and has also convened a National Environmental Justice Advisory Council to address the issue.

The Western States Petroleum Association wants to stay engaged in the process of addressing cumulative pollution impacts to ensure that any regulatory changes don't hinder current operators, said Tupper Hall, a spokesman for the association, which represents 28 companies involved in producing, refining and marketing crude oil.

These firms already operate under among the most stringent environmental laws worldwide, he added, so are already mandated with reducing the effects of their operations on nearby communities.

"From our perspective, the challenge is to find a way to address cumulative impacts in a way that doesn't penalize current operators and their needs to keep their facilities up to date, and to expand them to ensure we have an adequate supply of transportation fuel," Hall said.

## **Polluters to spend record sum to fix violations**

By Dina Cappiello, Associated Press Writer  
Contra Costa Times, Thursday, Dec. 4, 2008

WASHINGTON—Companies violating environmental laws will spend a record \$11.8 billion to reduce pollution and they paid more in penalties over the last year than they have since the first year of the Bush administration, according to the latest government statistics.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that when the upgrades are made, releases of pollutants into the environment will be reduced by an estimated 3.9 billion pounds per year.

Granta Nakayama, the agency's top enforcement official, said in an interview with The Associated Press that the latest data shows enforcement at the agency is at an all-time high.

"Overall our enforcement program is the healthiest it has been in many years," Nakayama said.

The data, released Thursday, represents the final look at environmental enforcement under the Bush administration, which has decreased the emphasis on civil penalties and criminal enforcement, for an approach that encourages companies to comply with the law.

In fiscal year 2008, companies spent more than ever to install pollution controls to bring their facilities into compliance with environmental regulations. Polluters also paid \$127 million in fines, the largest amount since fiscal year 2004.

But some environmentalists said many of those investments would not have occurred under changes the Bush administration is trying to complete before leaving office that would alter how air pollution increases are calculated at power plants.

If that rule were in effect, a \$4.6 billion settlement with American Electric Power that accounts for 40 percent of the record-setting total would likely not have happened, according to Eric Schaeffer, a former top EPA enforcement official who now heads the Environmental Integrity Project, a watchdog group.

"The bottom line is that these numbers reflect a good year," Schaeffer said. But there "is some irony there, as these are the requirements that the Bush administration is still trying to eliminate before they leave town."

The data shows a continued reduction in the number of criminal cases pursued by the administration. Fewer defendants were charged years of incarceration for environmental crimes, and the value of court-ordered environmental projects were the lowest they have been in the last five years.

Nakayama says those reductions don't reflect the big cases the agency has pursued and the environmental benefits.

"We have been enforcing the heck out of the law," Nakayama said. "People may or may not agree with different environmental policies, but we have been very committed to getting compliance."

### **Smog regulators: Court ruling could hurt business Judge's order to stop issuing smog credits could halt construction of power plants, air district says.**

By Pat Brennan

The Orange County Register, Thursday, Dec. 4, 2008

A recent court ruling on air pollution could harm the Southern California economy and prevent new power plants from being built, perhaps even setting the region up for power shortages next summer, the region's smog agency says.

The ruling, the South Coast Air Quality Management District says, could affect as many as 1,000 businesses a year in the Los Angeles air basin – perhaps hundreds in Orange County, including a "peaker" plant proposed by the city of Anaheim. The district filed an appeal of the ruling last week.

But environmental groups whose lawsuit led to the ruling say the air district's claims are overblown, and that the court ruling could prevent millions of tons of additional pollution from being released.

"I think that's over-exaggerated, and that makes it very unhelpful," said Angela Johnson Meszaros, an attorney for the environmental group California Communities Against Toxics.

On Nov. 3, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Ann I. Jones ordered the air district to stop issuing air pollution credits to businesses; the credits allow them to increase their emissions.

Without such credits, or similar offsets for future pollution increases, the district says it cannot legally issue permits for the new power plants and other businesses under the federal Clean Air Act. And while in theory those businesses could purchase credits on the open market, prices are so high that they would be beyond the means of many, said air district spokesman Sam Atwood.

For one category of pollutant, he said, "limited supply drives up the price to the point now where the average price of credits is sky high – \$200,000 per pound, per day."

The focus of the court fight is the district's "priority reserve" pollution credit bank, a repository of spare credits originally set up for businesses that provide essential public services: sewage treatment plants, large schools, hospitals, landfills.

The credits, essential for any business expansion that would result in additional air pollution, were provided to these businesses at no cost. The credits allow businesses that possess them to increase their emissions of air pollution with a kind of guarantee of corresponding cuts in pollution somewhere else.

For example, a business that had installed high-tech smog control equipment might cut its emissions beyond the district's requirements and have credits to sell. Another, just starting up a power plant, would purchase those credits. At least in theory, the transaction would lead to no net increase in pollution.

Several environmental groups, including the one represented by Meszaros, remain skeptical that such pollution credit programs bring about real reductions in smog.

In 2006 and 2007, the air district amended its rules to allow proposed power plants to draw from this bank of credits at what would now be a below-market price – for example, \$92,000 per credit for a pound of fine particle pollution.

The district also recalculated the amount of credits available to be placed in the bank, adding credits that had been available, but were not banked, in years past – for example, when area power plants shut down and no longer needed their credits.

The Natural Resources Defense Council, Communities for a Better Environment and California Communities Against Toxics sued. Activists contended that issuing the new credits to power plants would increase the amount of actual pollution in the air by millions of tons.

That assertion is also denied by the district.

The activists note that the district might have collected millions in fees from new or expanding businesses as a result of the rule changes, although Meszaros said she was not accusing the district of making the changes for financial gain.

All the money from fees, the district says, would be channeled into other smog-reduction programs.

The activists contended in court that the air district had not conducted a proper environmental review of the effects of issuing such credits under the California Environmental Quality Act.

The judge agreed. Now, the air district says, proposed power plants, as well as other businesses seeking to expand in ways that might increase some forms of pollution, might have to postpone or cancel projects because they cannot get the proper permits.

Two landfill projects in Orange County offer an example, Atwood said. The projects, in Irvine and in Brea, would increase the collection methane released by decomposition of waste to produce energy.

While that would lead to small increases in some pollutants, it would vastly reduce emission of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, as well as ground-level ozone, a lung irritant. But under the judge's ruling, the companies proposing the projects would be unable to obtain pollution credits from the district to offset the small pollution increases, and so would not be able to obtain permits to operate.

"This is a very green project," said Julie Chay, spokeswoman for OC Waste and Recycling. "All of the gas to energy projects we have allow for beneficial reuse, so that the landfill gases can be put to good use."

A similar project in Riverside County might be hampered by the pollution credit ruling. The Riverside County Waste Management Department applied for a permit to power an engine with methane waste gas from the Badlands Landfill to create electricity, while at the same time burning excess gas in a flare.

But the halt on issuing credits from the district's reserve might mean the landfill will have to choose one or the other – most likely opting to use only the flare, and cease using methane to create energy, said Hans Kernkamp, general manager for Riverside County Waste Management Department.

Buying credits on the open market is not really an option, he said. The cost of the flare project is about \$200,000. Purchasing enough credits to cover it would cost about \$13 million – far beyond the agency's means, he said.

"Even if we had the money, it wouldn't make economic sense to spend it there," he said.

So at the moment, he said, the project is "in limbo."

The Anaheim peaker plant, proposed for 2010, would use natural gas turbines to provide supplemental energy at times of peak demand.

At the moment, though aware of the court ruling, Anaheim Public Utilities does not believe it will disrupt the schedule for the plant, said spokeswoman Margie Otto.

The air district says the judge's ruling also could cause Southern California to come up short on electricity if new power plants cannot be built, and if next summer is one of high heat and high energy demand.

The district rushed its appeal of the ruling to the state Court of Appeal, so that at least businesses that provide essential services can still receive the credits they need, said the air district's general counsel, Kurt Wiese.

Conducting the environmental review and reworking its rules to meet the judge's requirements could take a year, the district says.

### **Solar car completes 1st ever round-the-world trip**

By Vanessa Gera, Associated Press Writer

In the Modesto Bee, Thurs., Dec. 4, 2008

POZNAN, Poland — The first solar-powered car to travel around the world ended its journey at the U.N. climate talks Thursday, arriving with the message that clean technologies are available now to stop global warming.

The small two-seater - made from aluminum and fiberglass - hauled a trailer of solar cells and U.N. climate chief Yvo de Boer up to a building in Poznan where delegates from some 190 nations are working toward a new treaty to control climate change.

"This is the first time in history that a solar-powered car has traveled all the way around the world without using a single drop of petrol," said Louis Palmer, the 36-year-old Swiss schoolteacher and adventurer who made the trip.

"These new technologies are ready," he said. "It's ecological, it's economical, it is absolutely reliable. We can stop global warming."

The car travels up to 55 mph (90 kph) and covers 185 miles (300 kilometers) on a fully charged battery.

Palmer's appearance at the conference came after a 32,000-mile (52,000-kilometer) journey that began 17 months ago in Lucerne, Switzerland, and took him through 38 countries.

He calls the vehicle, developed by scientists from Swiss universities, a "solar taxi" because he has given rides to some 1,000 people to convince them of the technology's viability. Passengers have included New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

On Thursday, he took an Associated Press reporter for a short drive to demonstrate how similar the vehicle is to a regular gas-powered car.

Designed like a race car, it can hold two people comfortably but, fittingly, it lacks climate control.

Palmer flipped a switch to activate the battery-powered electric engine, which produced a soft hum, and then guided it smoothly down a street.

Featuring all the standard safety features - headlights, brakes, blinkers - the car is fully "road worthy," Palmer said. He lost only two days to breakdowns during the entire world journey.

"This car runs like a Swiss clock," he said.

Palmer said the prototype would have to be improved before it could be mass-produced, but his point was to show that a pollution-free car could be a reality.

Delegates in Poznan are seeking an ambitious new climate treaty that would replace the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012 and has required that 37 countries slash emissions of heat-trapping gases by an average 5 percent from 1990 levels.

The goal is for the new treaty to be finalized at the next U.N. climate meeting in December 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

"Here at the conference, we are talking about reducing emissions by 10 or 20 percent," Palmer said. "I want to show that we can reduce emissions by 100 percent - and that's what we need for the future."

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses a plan submitted by Coalition for Clean Air to the California Air Resources Board for clean air. For more information, please call Maricela Velásquez \(559\) 230-5849.](#)

## **Un plan para el aire limpio**

### **Soluciones para comunidades más afectadas por el calentamiento**

Jorge Morales Almada

La Opinión, Thursday, December 4, 2008

Proteger a las comunidades más afectadas por el calentamiento global es la prioridad de una serie de recomendaciones que la Coalition for Clean Air (CCA) ha enviado a la California Air Resources Board (CARB) para que junto con una estrategia ecológica se puedan reducir los gases de efecto invernadero y que en 2020 se tengan niveles de contaminación similares a los que había en 1990.

Tim Carmichael, director de políticas de la CCA, indicó que también se deben identificar cuáles son las comunidades más vulnerables y establecer un sistema de límites en sus emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero para las industrias más contaminantes.

Las recomendaciones de la CCA están consideradas dentro de la discusión que el próximo 11 de diciembre tendrá la CARB para establecer un plan final que cumpla con la Ley de Soluciones para el Calentamiento Global (Global Warming Solutions Act), la AB 32, firmada desde 2006 por el gobernador Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Carmichael enfatizó que los ingresos que el gobierno obtenga por concepto de cuotas a las industrias contaminantes, los cuales serían multimillonarios, se deberán invertir en las mismas comunidades que sean identificadas como las más afectadas.

Los gobiernos municipales, dijo, serían quienes administrarían esos recursos.

Aunque no están oficialmente detectadas las áreas más afectadas por el calentamiento global, existen estudios preliminares como el del Departamento de Salud Pública de California que presenta un mapa de los focos rojos donde se han registrado más muertes por calor excesivo.

Se trata de un conteo de las muertes y de las visitas a las salas de emergencias durante el verano de 2006 que ubican al valle central como la zona de más decesos, y a la costa, desde San Francisco hasta Los Ángeles, como la región con el índice más alto de pacientes atendidos por insolación.

Al crear un sistema de límite a las industrias, el llamado cap-and-trade obliga a no exceder cierto número de emisiones de contaminantes y exige la reducción de las mismas, explicó el representante de la CCA.

El estado estaría subastando permisos (a manera de puntaje o créditos) a las industrias que no puedan cumplir con los límites, pero las industrias que contaminen menos, podrán vender o intercambiar los créditos o puntos que no utilicen.

La CARB, que dirige Mary Nichols, tiene ocho días para presentar un plan final y empezar a implementar la AB 32.

De acuerdo con la CCA, California es el único lugar en el mundo donde se está llevando a cabo una discusión legislativa para combatir el calentamiento global, lo que ofrece una oportunidad de crear un modelo a escala mundial.