

## **Smog: District offers money to help purchase new wood stoves**

By Mark Grossi, FresnoBee.com, Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2009

Now is the time to replace an old, dirty wood-burning device -- with cleaner natural gas, pellet or certified wood-burning stove or insert.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is offering \$750 toward the purchase of a new, cleaner-burning device. For low-income people, \$1,500 is available.

Officials said they have about \$150,000 available. They estimate the money should last about two weeks, so interested folks should approach the district quickly.

Visit the district's web site for a list of retailers and more information. Or call 230-5800.

## **East county community Digest**

### **Bay Area**

By Denis Cuff

Tri-Valley Herald, Wednesday, February 4, 2009

No-BURN ALERT for 24 hours: Bay Area air pollution regulators issued a Spare the Air alert that bans wood fires until noon today because of predictions of unhealthy air.

The ban applies to wood fires in fireplaces, stoves, pellet stoves, and outdoor fire pits in the nine counties in the region.

This is the 10th Spare the Air alert issued this winter by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, which orders the curtailed burning to protect the public from adverse health effects of smoke.

## **Bob Hope Airport to ask FAA for approval of flight curfew**

**If approved, the curfew would prohibit most flights by airlines, cargo operations, couriers and private pilots between 10 p.m. and 6:59 a.m. Opponents fear it would cause problems for other airports.**

By Dan Weikel

L.A. Times, Tuesday, February 3, 2009

Officials who oversee Bob Hope Airport in Burbank decided Monday to seek federal approval of a controversial nighttime ban on flight operations -- restrictions, they assert, that will reduce noise in nearby communities and have little effect on other airports in the region.

The proposed curfew would prohibit flights by airlines, cargo operations, couriers and private pilots between 10 p.m. and 6:59 a.m. with exceptions for emergencies, law enforcement, medical flights and military aircraft. Currently, the airlines operate under a voluntary agreement not to fly between those hours.

"This is a historic day," said Dan Feger, the executive director of the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport Authority, which operates Bob Hope. "No airport has asked for a federal restriction like this. We believe that hundreds of thousands of residents can obtain noise relief while keeping the airport viable."

The proposal, however, has been the focal point of one of the most acrimonious homeowner battles in the San Fernando Valley out of fear that the curfew would shift flights from Bob Hope to Van Nuys Airport, increasing the noise problem there for nearby residents.

The authority's nine-member commission unanimously approved the airport's application to the Federal Aviation Administration as well as an analysis of the proposed curfew that was revised during the last several months.

If approved by the FAA, it would be the first time such restrictions would apply to so-called Stage 3 aircraft, which include the quietest jets. Like several other airports around the country, the

nighttime operations of older, noisier jets, so-called Stage 2 aircraft, have been restricted at Bob Hope since 1981.

Once the application is received, FAA officials will have 180 days to approve or reject the curfew, which could reduce jet noise for more than 180,000 residents in Burbank, Glendale and Los Angeles who live near or under the airport's southwest departure routes.

Victor Gill, an airport spokesman, said the restrictions would primarily affect cargo operations, unscheduled commuter flights, courier services and corporate jets. He added that the airlines already have curtailed their nighttime operations.

Bob Hope, which is home to 15 air carriers as well as an array of private aircraft, served about 5.3 million commercial passengers in 2008, down from about 5.9 million in 2007. The airport had about 120,000 takeoffs and landings last year.

The airport's application to the FAA includes a \$6-million, eight-year study, which states that the curfew would shift roughly 35 flights a night to other airports, such as Van Nuys, Los Angeles International, Ontario International, Long Beach and Whiteman. The change, researchers concluded, would have little effect on noise levels or air pollution in neighborhoods surrounding those airports.

An analysis contained in the study also indicates that between 2008 and 2015, the restrictions would generate about \$67 million in benefits for the public and \$48 million in costs to airlines, passengers, cargo carriers and general aviation.

The benefits of the curfew include increased property values, lower costs for noise abatement programs and a decrease in disturbances for nearby residents.

The costs to passenger and cargo carriers would result from the elimination of night flights, transferring operations to other airports and canceling delayed flights from other airports.

Officials for Los Angeles World Airports, which operates LAX, Van Nuys and Ontario, said they are concerned about the shifting of aircraft from Bob Hope to other facilities, which have been designated noise problem airports by the state. World airports is now studying possible noise and access restrictions for Van Nuys and LAX.

Los Angeles airport officials contend that the study's cost-benefit analysis overstates the benefits because the proposed curfew would simply shift Bob Hope's noise to other airports, adding to their difficulties.

World airports further contends that Bob Hope is skirting its responsibility to accommodate its share of commercial air transportation as part of a current effort to spread the growth of air traffic around the region.

Bob Hope officials say, however, that the restrictions would not prompt airlines to relocate because they are already accustomed to the long-standing voluntary restrictions.

## **NM officials cheer El Paso, Texas smelter's demise**

The Associated Press

Contra Costa Times, Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2009

SANTA FE, N.M.—New Mexico officials are applauding the demise of a Texas smelter they say worsened air quality along the New Mexico-Texas border.

Asarco LLC, a bankrupt Tucson, Ariz., copper company, says it will not reopen its El Paso smelter and plans to demolish the century-old plant.

Gov. Bill Richardson says he's proud of the role New Mexico played to keep the region's air clean.

New Mexico Environment Secretary Ron Curry says the state has fought for years to keep the plant closed.

Curry says New Mexico requested the Environmental Protection Agency review the smelter because they knew Texas' permit cut corners that would have led to worsened air quality on New Mexico's border.

Asarco has long denied that its facility caused pollution or would create more pollution if it reopened.

## **Denver drivers let up on gas and cut emissions**

By Judith Kohler, Associated Press Writer

Washington Post, Modesto Bee and other papers, Wednesday, February 4, 2009

DENVER -- Brittany Lyons and her mother, Sherie Lyons, do their bit to cut pollution by carpooling -- and this past year they went even further. The two participated in a first-of-its-kind experiment to gauge whether motorists can reduce emissions simply by adjusting their driving styles.

Last year, the mother and daughter volunteered for the pilot program "Driving Change," thought to be the first Internet-based system to track greenhouse gases spewed by vehicles.

So far, results from tracking 160 Denver city vehicles and 240 private vehicles show that lightly tapping brakes, reducing rapid accelerations and not letting cars idle show an overall emissions decrease of 10 percent.

"I would say it's very encouraging," Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper said.

Denver, which started testing its vehicles last March, will compile a year's worth of data and review the results before deciding whether to hook up more of its fleet.

Participants could check their results online. That seemed to have a great impact on engine idling: From May through November, idling decreased by more than 35 percent among participating vehicles.

"The gasoline savings amounts to hundreds of thousands of dollars per year for a fleet of 2,000 vehicles, confirming that what's good for the planet is also good for the bottom line," according to Enviance Inc., the company providing the Internet-based software for analyzing driving.

Changing driving habits promises to avoid more than pollution. Hickenlooper said insurance underwriters confirm that drivers who slam the brakes and punch the gas have more accidents.

The city teamed up with San Diego-based Enviance, and Cartasite Inc., which provided the telemetry technology to transmit data from the vehicles over the Internet. EnCana Oil & Gas (USA) financed the project.

Sherie Lyons and her daughter work at the EnCana office in Denver. They were among 30 employees from the company who volunteered to have their driving monitored.

Brittany Lyons, who picks up her mother for the 11-mile commute from the suburbs, admitted to being "an idler" before taking part in the program.

"I would leave my car running when I went in" to her mother's house, Brittany Lyons said.

"That stopped," said Sherie Lyons, making a slashing motion with her hand.

The only visible evidence that the car was different from others in a downtown parking lot was the measuring device -- a black oval with a cord on the bottom of the driver's side windshield. The data is transmitted via a cellular telephone network.

Brittany Lyons said she used a tip from Enviance to ease up on starts and stops. "They said to drive like you have an open cup of coffee in the car," she said.

## **Automakers make technology case at auto show**

By Ken Thomas, Associated Press Writer

Modesto Bee and Tri-Valley Herald, Wednesday, February 4, 2009

WASHINGTON — Displaying green cars, automakers told the Obama administration on Tuesday that they have the technology to help the country reduce its dependence on imported oil and help the struggling industry enter a new era.

Members of President Barack Obama's Cabinet and lawmakers visited the Washington Auto Show, viewing fuel-efficient cars, plug-in hybrids and battery-electric vehicles under development. The cars are part of a shift away from conventional gasoline engines.

"Our industry has been part of the problem," said Stefan Jacoby, Volkswagen AG's top executive in North America. "Now we are determined to be part of the solution."

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, Environmental Protection Administrator Lisa P. Jackson and Carol Browner, Obama's coordinator of energy and climate-related issues, reviewed the latest from General Motors Corp., Ford Motor Co., Toyota Motor Corp. and others. The audience included former Secretary of State Colin Powell.

"The stimulus is going to make all of this even more possible," Browner told a representative with lithium-ion battery manufacturer A123Systems while inspecting a retrofitted plug-in Toyota Prius.

The economic stimulus package before the Senate includes \$2 billion for development of advanced batteries, a key component for plug-in hybrid vehicles.

The entire industry is suffering from the economic recession and a steep decline in auto sales. In sales data released Tuesday, GM's U.S. sales had fallen 49 percent and Toyota's declined 32 percent.

General Motors and Chrysler LLC, meanwhile, have received a combined \$17.4 billion in government loans to keep the struggling companies afloat. The Detroit automakers are expected to submit plans by Feb. 17 that show how they could become profitable in the future.

Despite the gloom, several lawmakers offered positive views of the industry. Rep. Edward Markey, D-Mass., a leading environmentalist in Congress, said he expected GM and Chrysler to show progress in their reports to Congress.

Markey said he hoped lawmakers would "keep the auto industry viable" while ensuring that it "helps with our problem with imported oil and the emission of greenhouse gases."

Automakers expect more stringent fuel-efficiency standards. Obama has asked the EPA to reconsider past denials of applications by California and other states that want to set their own limits on greenhouse gas.

The Obama administration also plans to set new federal fuel economy standards for 2011 model-year autos as part of a 2007 law to force new cars and trucks to reach 35 miles per gallon by 2020, a 40 percent increase.

Automakers oppose California's program and want the government to set a single standard. Mary Nichols, chairwoman of the California Air Resources Board, suggested a potential middle ground, noting her state was anxious to "try to work on something that will help both the auto industry and help the planet."

"We believe the country should have standards for fuel economy and greenhouse gas emissions that work together and we think that California can be a part of that," Nichols said.

## **Boxer pushes clean energy bill as another kind of stimulus**

By Renee Schoof, McClatchy Newspapers  
Modesto Bee, Wednesday, February 4, 2009

WASHINGTON — Sen. Barbara Boxer on Tuesday announced that the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee would draft a new climate bill that would help consumers avoid higher prices and create new jobs in clean energy.

"We all understand the urgent need for action, and this is a great way to reinvigorate the economy," Boxer said as she outlined the principles she wanted included in a bill to limit and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Boxer, a California Democrat, said she aimed to get the bill passed by Congress before international negotiators meet in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December to negotiate the final form of a treaty with binding limits on emissions globally.

The bill's prospects are uncertain. Boxer outlined only general principles and no details, but no Republican members of her committee endorsed them. Some Senate Democrats from coal-dependent states also have raised concerns about plans to put mandatory limits on greenhouse gas emissions.

Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., is drafting a separate climate bill in the House of Representatives, and differences between the two versions eventually would have to be worked out.

Boxer urged the environmentalists and business leaders who support her bill - and who packed a hearing room for her press conference about her basic principles for it - to rally support for it even before it takes shape.

"The message has to be, don't allow talk of an economic recession to stop our work because in fact the surest way to create good jobs in this country is to mobilize for clean energy independence," she said. "If you want to fight this recession, do it by mobilizing to become energy independent with clean energy and really save this planet."

The basic approach is to set a limit on greenhouse gas emissions that would decline each year and require companies to buy tradable permits for the pollution they generate. The system would create incentives for companies to produce non-polluting energy such as wind and solar.

Boxer's principles, endorsed by the other Democrats on her committee but by none of its Republicans, called for reducing emissions to levels guided by scientific research to avoid global climate disruption. She didn't announce specific reduction figures.

She also called for giving an unspecified percentage of funds from the sale of pollution permits to consumers so that they wouldn't suffer economic losses while the nation makes a transition to nonpolluting energy.

Some of the money also would go to investments in clean energy technology and energy efficiency, help for workers and manufacturers in the transition period, support for wildlife and plants threatened by global warming, and aid for developing countries hard hit by climate change.

Boxer said the bill also should create a level playing field by providing incentives and deterrents so that other countries also would reduce emissions.

Melissa Lavinson of California's PG&E Corp., the parent company of Pacific Gas & Electric, said at the briefing that her company was encouraged that the principles included steps to protect consumers, promote advanced technology and "engage the international community." Businesses needed to know these things in order to have certainty about making investments for future energy supplies, she said.

## **Congress in the Driver's Seat Its Clout Waning, the Auto Industry Is Losing Its Ability to Steer Policy**

By Kimberly Kindy and Kendra Marr, Washington Post Staff Writers  
Washington Post Wed., Feb. 4, 2009

Rep. John D. Dingell of Michigan walked onto a stage across from a "green car" exhibit last night at the Washington Auto Show and was honored as a "true champion of the automotive industry."

The Detroit area Democrat was given a trophy with a crystal steering wheel, a gesture that signaled the end of an era -- one in which automakers ruled Congress, easily deflected pressure to build fuel-efficient cars and packed their trademark shows with super-size SUVs perched on fake mountaintops.

The ousting of Dingell late last year from his chairmanship of the House Energy and Commerce Committee by Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D-Calif.) was a public step in what politicians and lobbyists say has been a gradual erosion of the auto industry's clout in Washington and in state legislatures.

President Obama's move last week to support strict California vehicle emission standards was another blow to the industry, already reeling from financial pressures and dismal sales; the Big Three automakers yesterday said that January sales were down -- 55 percent at Chrysler, 49 percent at General Motors and 39 percent at Ford -- compared with a year ago.

For decades, advocates such as Dingell protected the industry from demands for more fuel-efficient vehicles, while sophisticated and expensive lobbying and legal strategies -- some taxpayer-funded -- also helped the carmakers fight off challenges. But that kind of rock-solid support in Congress has worn away, as many members say they have been repeatedly misled by the companies' promises of reform and complaints that new initiatives would spell financial ruin. It was a sentiment voiced last fall, when lawmakers considered whether they should provide as much as \$25 billion to prevent the industry's collapse.

Even after accepting billions of dollars from the federal government, and as they gear up to plead for billions more, automakers are continuing to fight efforts by the Obama administration and congressional Democrats to bolster fuel-efficiency standards.

They responded to Obama's support of the California effort, which 13 other states are poised to follow, by sending more lobbyists into statehouses. They have spent an estimated \$10 million in legal fees to challenge efforts in California, Vermont, Rhode Island and New Mexico, according to Sierra Club lawyer David Bookbinder, who is fighting automakers' actions.

In Washington, the auto industry spent \$65 million last year to lobby Congress, ranking 16th among all industries, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. Its efforts largely focused on developing a national fuel economy and emissions standard weaker than the one proposed by California.

Industry leaders continue to argue that Congress is trying to force them to build cars Americans don't want, at least as long as gas prices remain low.

In an interview, Waxman said, "I voted for money for the bailout because I want them to survive, but this makes me think that they have not yet stopped being controlled by their own self-interest." He added: "They are being shortsighted. This type of conduct has done a great deal of harm to America and the industry."

Until very recently, the relationship between automakers and policymakers went something like this: The industry asserted its position, and leaders in Washington largely acquiesced.

In 1971, that played out in a secret meeting in which then-Ford executive Lee Iacocca asked President Richard M. Nixon for a delay in laws mandating airbags, lest the company have to spend more than \$4 billion. The request, captured on Watergate tapes, was granted.

In the early 1990s, the industry's hold on Washington remained firm as President George H.W. Bush sided with it over a push by environmentalists and some members of Congress to improve fuel economy. Automakers argued that smaller, more fuel-efficient models weren't as safe as large vehicles, and taxpayer money was used to provide evidence: The Transportation Department financed crash tests that pitted small cars against large ones. The first four tests showed small vehicles faring well. Then the department rammed a 4,000-pound Ford Crown Victoria into a 2,300-pound Suzuki Swift, crushing it.

The department provided Congress only footage of the Suzuki's fate. At the same time, the auto industry rolled out an advertising campaign with a voiceover that said, "Fuel economy is important, but safety is vital."

When, despite their efforts, automakers were unable to defeat increases in fuel economy, they promised to develop more fuel-efficient models -- so long as taxpayers footed the bill.

The most expensive effort came in 1993, when Vice President Al Gore asked the Big Three to create a car of the future. More than \$1.25 billion in federal funds went to the project, and each company built a prototype that got 80 miles per gallon. But none of the vehicles made it to the assembly line because the automakers said they would cost too much to mass-produce.

As Congress geared up for another attempt to pass new standards in 1999, automakers went after members in their districts -- placing newspaper ads that showed men in cowboy hats leaning against pickup trucks and warned readers they may lose their ability to own minivans and big trucks. The campaign worked.

Daniel Becker, an environmental lawyer with the Sierra Club at the time, said he decided it was time to work around Congress. "Having been blocked at every step along the way in Washington, we decided to take it to California," he said.

It was a change in tactics that sent automakers into a panic. California regulators had a history of forcing changes on the industry -- they were the first to require catalytic converters, seat belts and unleaded fuel -- that led to nationwide alterations because of the state's large market. California did not have the power to set fuel economy standards, but Becker reasoned that if the state passed more rigorous emissions standards, a move allowed under the Clean Air Act, it could appeal to the Environmental Protection Agency for a waiver to enforce the law. It had already requested and received 55 waivers from federal regulators. Automakers were livid at the ploy, since vehicle emissions can be reduced only if fuel efficiency is improved. "It's like arguing there's a difference between 12 inches and a foot," said Charles Territo, spokesman for the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers.

Becker found a California lawmaker interested in carrying the legislation: Fran Pavley, a Prius-driving former eighth-grade schoolteacher newly elected to the state Assembly. Pavley and her allies turned to Hollywood for help. Paul Newman called female legislators, compelling them to ask Pavley to make sure they were on the list of supporters. Warren Beatty recruited other lawmakers, including Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), who contacted moderate Republicans who might not be swayed by movie stars.

On the other side, automakers recruited car dealers, who lobbied lawmakers and convinced popular Los Angeles radio hosts John Kobylt and Ken Chiampou to join their cause. For months, the "John and Ken Show" told car lovers they would lose their right to buy sport-utility vehicles and other cars if the law passed. Listeners wrote more than 100,000 protest letters to lawmakers and jammed their phone lines. A few days before the bill came up for its first vote, Pavley began receiving death threats. A police detail was assigned to protect her.

The bitter battle ended in 2002 with a victory for Pavley and the environmentalists -- by a single vote. It was the first time in decades that the auto industry had failed to block or water down legislation that would force major changes in fuel economy standards. Carmakers responded by going to court.

"Usually they would send in their engineers to the [California] Air Resources Board. There they'd work it out nerd to nerd," Bookbinder said. "Not this time. They said, 'It's illegal, and we can't do it.' "

Lawyers representing the auto industry declined to comment, citing pending appeals. They have argued in court that fuel economy standards must be set by the federal government, not states, and that California regulators have not accurately portrayed the costs. Automakers' studies place the cost between \$2,000 and \$7,000 per car, compared with California's estimate of between \$1,060 and \$1,500.

As other states followed California's lead and the number of cases grew, auto executives returned to Congress in 2006, after losing their first case in California. They complained that the states were creating a patchwork of laws that would make retooling assembly lines impossible.

If fuel-efficiency standards must be increased, they said, they wanted Congress to handle it. But auto executives soon learned that concerns about a reliance on foreign oil, as well as their tactics, had turned some of their congressional allies against them. At a 2007 Capitol Hill

luncheon, auto chiefs from GM, Ford and Chrysler, who had asked for a national standard, nevertheless told lawmakers they needed to scale back their demands or the industry would be decimated.

Sen. Byron L. Dorgan (D-N.D.), who had faithfully sided with the industry for years, had had enough. "I think this issue is over," Dorgan told the executives. "I think your position is yesterday forever."

Not quite. Dingell stepped in on the industry's behalf and persuaded lawmakers to weaken the bill. The final version called for raising the average fuel economy from 27 to 35 miles per gallon by 2020. The California law requires automobiles to get 43.7 mpg by 2016.

But Dingell's action cost him. To get his way, he crossed House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), and although Pelosi did not later take a public position on the committee leadership battle between Dingell and Waxman, she also did not step in to defend the longtime chairman.

"I have found a fair amount of unhappiness means you are doing your job," Dingell said in an interview about his role as an auto industry advocate. "There are many opinions, but just one set of facts. I went with the facts."

Automakers and their supporters are now pointing their efforts toward a national standard for fuel economy and emissions. They have begun talks with the Obama administration, members of Congress and state leaders in an effort to reach a consensus, although they acknowledge that they're not entirely sure what approach to take in the new administration.

Industry officials said they are asking the EPA, in addition to reviewing California's right to adopt its own standards, to look at the cost of mass-producing vehicles that would meet them.

And they are asking Congress to pass laws that will spur consumers to buy such vehicles. Industry leaders, including Bob Lutz, GM's vice chairman of global product development, said drivers in Europe are willing to own smaller cars because gas costs so much more there. Without such incentives, "it puts us in the industry in the position where we are at war with the customer," Lutz said.

Regardless, some trade groups acknowledge that the landscape has changed, and they are promising to work more cooperatively.

"Has the industry lost its power to say no?" asked Dave McCurdy, president of the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers. "The industry is saying, 'Yes, however. . . . Yes, let's work it out.' It's a different starting point in the discussion. The nature of the industry has changed."

*Research editor Alice Crites and staff researcher Lucy Shackelford contributed to this report.*

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses if California puts the new environmental law into effect, the automotive industry will have to make less polluting vehicles. For more information on this Spanish clip, contact Claudia Encinas at \(559\) 230-5851.](#)

### **Al ejercer su propia ley ambiental, automotrices harían carros menos contaminantes**

Manuel Ocaño, Noticiero Latino  
Radio Bilingüe, Wednesday, February 04, 2009

La administradora nacional de la Agencia federal de Protección Ambiental, Lisa Jackson comentó que en los próximos días llevará a audiencia pública una solicitud del estado de California para poner en práctica sus propias leyes contra la contaminación. Al autorizar a California para ejercer sus propios estándares de control de emisiones, la administración del presidente Barack Obama por extensión permitiría controlar emisiones a otros 13 estados que representan básicamente la mitad de los estadounidenses. La audiencia sería la primera en la que la industria automotriz expondría sus argumentos. De aprobar a California, las armadoras de autos tendrán que diseñar modelos que reduzcan la actual contaminación a la mitad, para el año 2016.