

Going 'green' in the backyard

Easy ways to save money, environment

By Paul Bianchina

Lodi News Sentinel, Monday, May 18, 2009

Everyone loves the oasis of calm and beauty that's created by a nice green yard. But what about a yard that's "green" at the same time? There are a number of steps you can take to reduce noise, pollution, waste and water usage in your backyard, and save yourself some time and money at the same time. Simple changes all add up, and the following are a few tips to get you started.

Reduce your lawn area: The easiest way to reduce the impact of lawn mowing is to simply reduce the lawn in the first place. Instead, consider planting all or part of your lawn area with lush, green, low-growing ground covers -- you'll get much the same look with a lot less water and a big reduction in maintenance.

Use drought-resistant plants: In non-lawn areas, look for plants that are stingy water users. Depending on where you live, there are any number of beautiful backyard plants that require a minimal amount of watering.

Add mulch or bark to planter areas: The addition of a layer of mulch or decorative bark material not only looks nice and reduces weed growth, it also keeps plants cooler and reduces the evaporation of moisture from the soil, both of which help reduce water consumption.

Cut down on water usage: Instead of the standard rotating or sprayer-type sprinkler nozzles, switch to an irrigation system that uses less water. Soaker hoses, low-flow sprinkler heads, and drip irrigation are all good options for reducing water usage. Also, rather than allow your sprinklers to run until you remember to go out and shut off the faucet, consider the use of sprinkler timers. These can range from sophisticated timers for underground systems to simple hose timers.

Grow some of your own food: Planting a vegetable garden or adding some fruit trees to your yard will have a number of positive benefits. In addition to taking a little strain off your food budget, garden plants help cool the yard and absorb carbon dioxide, and fruit trees can add privacy and shade.

Watch your fertilizers: Talk with local garden and landscape experts to see what the best type of fertilizer and plant food is for your particular region and the types of plants you have. You can save money and reduce pollution by selecting the proper lawn and plant treatments, and using only as much of them as necessary.

Don't burn in the backyard: Get rid of your burn barrel and fill in the burn pit. Backyard burning has been shown by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to create a number of unhealthy conditions, including the release of dioxins, carbon monoxide and particulate matter that increases [air pollution](#), and fine ash that can aggravate breathing problems. Instead, recycle wood, cardboard, paper, plastics and other materials, and properly dispose of the remaining waste by taking it to your local landfill.

Maintain your lawn and garden equipment: Gasoline-powered mowers and other yard maintenance equipment need to be treated in much the same manner as your car. Change spark plugs and oil regularly, have tune-ups performed at recommended times, and clean or replace air filters as needed. This will keep your equipment running smoothly with fewer emissions, and will save you money in fuel costs as well.

Use care when filling gas equipment: Take care not to overfill the tanks or spill any fuel. Spilled gasoline is both a pollutant and a waste of money. Look for approved fuel cans with a flexible spout to simplify filling, and use a funnel whenever necessary to prevent spills. Keep gas cans tightly sealed between fuelings.

Switch from gas-powered equipment: Last but far from least, when it comes time to buy or replace lawn maintenance equipment, give some serious thought to switching from gas-powered

equipment to electric or, better yet, equipment that's powered by rechargeable batteries. Great strides have been made in battery technology in recent years, leading to equipment that is powerful, quiet, and much, much cleaner.

For example, Black & Decker recently introduced a battery-powered, 36-volt string trimmer (Model NST2036, \$249.99) that can go head to head with gas-powered trimmers. It has plenty of power and a long run time, all without gas, oil, fumes or noise. Also from Black & Decker is the Rechargeable Alligator Lopper (Model NLP1800, \$139.99). A cross between a traditional chain saw and a traditional pair of lopping shears, the Alligator uses a chain saw blade and tough metal jaws to saw through logs and branches up to 4 inches in diameter -- once again, without all the hassles, pollution or noise of a conventional gas chain saw.

Remodeling and repair questions? E-mail Paul at paulbianchina@inman.com.

Environmentalists happy with Obama; industry less so

Les Blumentha, McClatchy Newspapers
Merced Sun-Star, Sunday, May. 17, 2009

WASHINGTON — Interior Secretary Ken Salazar was defiant as an aide slipped him a note during his testimony before the House interior appropriations subcommittee. Led by two Republican senators upset by the Obama administration's decision to cancel oil and gas leases near two national parks in southern Utah's Red Rock Canyon region, the Senate had just blocked the White House nominee for the No. 2 slot at the Interior Department.

Dismissing the vote as "bitter obstructionism," Salazar said he wasn't about to second-guess his decision on the Utah leases. "I have no regrets," he told the subcommittee last week.

In the nearly four months since taking office, the Obama administration has moved quickly, relentlessly and without apology to roll back the natural resource and public lands policies of its predecessor. Though they have yet to lay out their own vision in detail, Salazar and other administration officials have left no doubt that they consider the Bush approach misguided and unfairly weighted toward timber, mining, oil and other interests.

"We have had some rough years," Forest Service chief Gail Kimbell, a holdover from the Bush administration and a "green suiter" who came up through the ranks of her agency, said in earlier testimony before the interior appropriations subcommittee.

During the past 120 days, the Obama administration has put on hold or reversed Bush administration plans for oil and gas drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf and for the northern spotted owl, endangered Pacific salmon and mountaintop mining in the Appalachians. It's signed a bill protecting 2 million acres of wilderness, moved to bolster the budgets of the major federal lands agencies, appointed scientists to top policy posts and provided another \$55 million to speed the largest dam removal in U.S. history on Washington state's Elwha River.

The White House also shut down an end run around the Endangered Species Act that would have allowed the Forest Service to sell timber, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to build levees and dredge rivers, and other federal agencies to take action without consulting those responsible for administering the act.

"There has been a remarkable shift in priorities by this administration," said Rep. Norm Dicks, D-Wash., the chairman of the House interior appropriations subcommittee.

There also have been controversies for environmentalists.

The administration's plan to eliminate \$80 million in funding for mostly small river and stream projects to restore salmon habitat stunned Dicks and others West Coast lawmakers. He and some other lawmakers also were uneasy over the administration's plan to reopen the Statute of Liberty despite safety and security concerns.

Environmentalists were unhappy with the decision to remove federal protections for wolves in the northern Rockies and to continue the Bush administration policy of barring the consideration of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change while developing a plan to protect endangered

polar bears. The new administration also has yet to wade into the dispute over the fate of 60 million acres of federal lands that are de facto wilderness and free of roads.

"It's not that everything is perfect, but when you step back it's a pretty impressive start," said Bill Arthur, a deputy national field director for the Sierra Club who's based in Seattle.

Some in industry are taking a wait-and-see attitude. Others are already critical.

Given that the administration has extended the public comment period on offshore drilling for another six months, oil and gas industry officials are skeptical.

"They have said oil and gas is important in the future, but all the decisions have been delay, delay, delay," said Denise McCourt, the industry relations director for the American Petroleum Institute. "Because of their strong focus on alternative fuel, there is a sense of no more oil and gas. We are in a wait and see."

The number of catastrophic fires is growing and the fire season is now year-round, in part because of global warming. Nearly 50 percent of the Forest Service's budget has been spent on fighting fires, and the agency's accounts for such things as reforestation have been raided to help pay for it. The administration's recent budget plan would increase funding to fight fires by more than \$400 million, to \$1.4 billion. However, Dicks said funding remained flat for reducing hazardous fuels on federal lands and other so-called healthy forest initiatives.

Even so, Tom Partin of the American Forest Resource Council in Portland, Ore., said it remained to be seen where the administration would come down when it came to managing the forests.

"I think they understand there is a problem in the forests and they need to do something soon," Partin said. "We are cautiously optimistic."

One way to track what the administration's plans are is by following the money for such agencies as the Forest Service, the Interior Department and the Environmental Protection Agency. During the Bush administration, Dicks said, Forest Service funding was down 35 percent, EPA funding down 29 percent and Interior Department funding down 18 percent.

Under the budget Obama recently sent to Congress, Dicks said, funding for the Forest Service is up 3 percent, Interior is up 9 percent and the EPA is up 29 percent.

"We are still not back to where we should be had we received appropriate support from the previous administration," Dicks said. "Although there are some holes, the new budget requests are better than what we have been accustomed to."

Some environmentalists greeted Salazar's appointment as interior secretary with concern. Though he was from a Western state, Colorado, they considered him too close to business interests, and viewed his support for protecting public lands as suspect.

"The jury is still out on Salazar," said Bob Irvin, the senior vice president for conservation programs at Defenders of Wildlife. "We are certainly encouraged by some of the decisions, but let's see how they are doing in six months."

Environmentalists have praised other appointments as the administration seeks to restore science as a primary factor in making decisions on natural resources and public lands. The new head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which oversees federal ocean and fisheries policies and will play a crucial role in developing climate change policies, is Jane Lubchenco, a marine ecologist and a professor at Oregon State University.

"The most fundamental thing he (Obama) has done is bring science out of the closet, or better yet out of jail and taken off the handcuffs," said Arthur, of the Sierra Club. "This guy has moved further and faster than any president I have seen."

Texas company, opponents to battle over refinery

By Dirk Lammers, AP Energy Writer

In the Contra Costa Times, Tri-Valley Herald and other papers, Sunday, May 17, 2009

SIOUX FALLS, S.D.—A Texas company looking to build a \$10 billion oil refinery in southeastern South Dakota and opponents who say it will emit too many pollutants will face off in Pierre this coming week.

At stake is an air quality permit that Hyperion Refining Vice President Preston Phillips has called a "critical hurdle" that would allow the Dallas company to finalize supply and marketing contracts, shore up agreements with pipeline construction companies, pursue financing and hire construction companies.

The state Department of Environment and Natural Resources issued a draft permit in September, and both sides will get a chance to make their formal arguments to Board of Minerals and Environment members during a contested case hearing set to begin Tuesday.

If constructed, the 3,300-acre tract of farmland north of Elk Point would become the first new site for an oil refinery since 1976. The Hyperion Energy Center would process 400,000 barrels of Canadian tar sands crude oil each day into low-sulfur gasoline and diesel.

Total demand for gasoline and distillate in South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa in 2006 was almost 300,000 barrels per day, Hyperion said, yet there are no refineries in the tri-state area.

Company officials have said the refinery will rank among the cleanest and most environmentally friendly in the world.

Opponents, which include the Sierra Club and local groups Citizens Opposed to Oil Pollution and Save Union County, say the energy center would pollute the air, and water needs and wastewater discharges from the refinery and generating plant will adversely impact neighboring waters.

They argue that Hyperion should have been required to submit a full Environmental Impact Statement before seeking an air quality permit from state environmental officials.

"If there were ever a project in South Dakota requiring an environmental impact statement, this is it," the groups wrote in their comments on the draft permit.

Members of the Board of Minerals and Environment listened to two days of public comment on the refinery last month in Elk Point. Phillips also took board members on a bus tour of site to give a better sense of the project and where the refinery and storage tanks would sit on the property.

Hyperion, with the help of South Dakota economic development officials, spent about a year courting support from city, county and business leaders as it sought to have Union County rezone land for its facility.

Realizing an oil refinery would face strong "not in my backyard" opposition from the rural precincts around the site, proponents touted the promise of 1,800 permanent jobs for the region. Union County voters approved the rezoning ordinance last June.

House introduces clean energy bill

By Dina Cappiello, Associated Press

In the N.Y Times, S.F. Chronicle and other papers, Saturday, May 16, 2009

Washington - -- The House Democrats' bill to limit gases blamed for global warming would generate a fraction of the money President Obama wanted to get from it to pay for a middle-class tax credit.

Leaders of the House Energy Committee officially introduced the 932-page legislation on Friday, revealing critical details in advance of the panel taking a vote on the measure by the end of next week. The bill - the American Clean Energy and Security Act - would for the first time mandate reductions in the heat-trapping gases linked to global warming, and also shift the country toward cleaner energy.

The bill would cap emissions at a certain level, and distribute permits to companies to meet increasingly lower pollution targets.

In his budget, Obama called for auctioning all the pollution permits, a strategy that would have raised nearly \$650 billion over the next decade. Most of the money would have paid for a tax credit to offset higher energy prices expected to be passed down from industries as they reduce the pollution that causes global warming.

But House Democrats said Friday they plan to auction only 15 percent of the allowances to help lower- and middle-income families pay for higher energy bills. The remainder will be given away to a variety of industries and states to ease costs and to help pay for improvements in energy efficiency and investments in clean-energy technology.

A White House spokeswoman on Friday said the bill shields consumers in other ways.

"The summary released today ... indicates there are a number of mechanisms in place that are aimed at protecting consumers, and we're glad to see that Congress is taking this issue seriously," said Christine Glunz with the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

The measures are the latest concessions to come out of weeks of negotiations aimed at winning over the committee's moderate Democrats who expressed concern about the cost the legislation would place on industry and electricity customers in their districts.

Reps. Henry Waxman, D-Los Angeles, and Rep. Ed Markey, D-Mass., already have agreed to lower targets for renewable energy, to require a smaller reduction by 2020 in the emissions blamed for global warming, and to give away valuable pollution permits to electricity distribution companies and auto manufacturers.

But how the legislation would handle the distribution of permits in a program that caps and puts a price on greenhouse gases was a central piece that has been missing from the bill since its unveiling in March.

Industry is warming up to Obama's climate plan Companies want to help shape global warming legislation in Congress, figuring the right plan could boost profits.

By Jim Tankersley, staff writer
L.A. Times, Monday, May 18, 2009

Reporting from Washington -- Sprawling across about 9,000 acres of rolling farmland in southwestern Indiana is one of the world's biggest aluminum smelters, operated by Alcoa Inc. The maze of rectangular buildings and giant smokestacks consumes enough electricity to supply a city of 200,000 -- power generated by burning more than 2 million tons of coal a year.

So it may be surprising that company executives are pushing Congress to pass a version of President Obama's plan for combating global warming. After all, Obama wants to slap hefty fees on facilities like Alcoa's that pump millions of tons of carbon dioxide and other pollutants into the air. Those fees could raise costs for the company and leave it vulnerable to foreign competitors. But a growing number of coal users have come to believe that, with the right tweaks, Obama's plan would not only help the environment but boost their profits.

"If we act wisely and swiftly," Alcoa global issues director Meg McDonald told a House committee last month, climate legislation "will assist in restoring growth and provide the means for America to be the global leader in low-carbon technology."

Politically, the decision to get behind the broad outlines of climate legislation mirrors the push by

insurers and pharmaceutical companies to remake the nation's healthcare system: In both cases, corporate strategists concluded that some government action was likely, and they might fare better at the table than on the sidelines.

"Many leaders in both areas are willing to break out of what has been conventional wisdom, and as a result we've been able to build coalitions of CEOs," said Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), a top Democrat on the Energy and Commerce Committee who co-wrote the House version of Obama's climate plan.

Companies such as Alcoa and Duke Energy, the nation's largest producer of electricity generated by burning coal, have been marshaling votes on Capitol Hill, working behind the scenes with committee negotiators and providing what House leaders call a blueprint for compromise.

Alcoa is a charter member of the United States Climate Action Partnership, a collection of large environmental groups, utilities, manufacturers and other big businesses. Two coalition members - the Environmental Defense Fund and Duke Energy -- last week launched a television advertising blitz in support of warming legislation.

"Their support is indispensable," Markey said of the companies.

Not everyone in the business world is on board -- the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, for instance, is not. And some environmentalists have objected to concessions lawmakers have made to industry.

But without a large dose of corporate support, leading Democrats say, Obama has little chance of attracting enough votes to get his plan through Congress. The swing votes belong to senators and representatives from manufacturing and coal- and oil-producing states that almost certainly would face higher costs under the "cap and trade" system Obama wants to create.

The president is proposing nationwide limits on greenhouse emissions that become more stringent over time. Companies would have to obtain government permits to cover their excess emissions.

"There are two issues to get the bill passed," said Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio). "One is, the states that are heavily dependent on coal need some relief if their energy bills spike, which they will.

"The other is, how do you deal with manufacturing?"

Alcoa's aluminum operations across the U.S. generated 23 million metric tons of greenhouse gas in 2007. The cost per ton of emissions permits hasn't been determined yet, but if it starts at \$20 -- a number that falls in the middle of recent Environmental Protection Agency projections -- then cap and trade might add \$460 million a year to Alcoa's annual operating costs.

Under an approach favored by industry, the government could soften the blow by giving companies like Alcoa nearly enough free permits in the early years of cap and trade to cover emissions.

The aluminum manufacturer has already cut emissions by a third from 1990 levels. If it continued to reduce emissions -- through such measures as replacing petroleum lubricants in its rolling mills with advanced vegetable oils -- while keeping its full quota of free permits, it would have surplus permits that it could sell to other emitters. Those profits could help pay for greener technology.

In effect, a cap and trade system designed that way would stimulate the drive to reduce emissions, advocates say.

And Alcoa officials see another benefit: Government pressure for cleaner air would increase consumer demand for lightweight cars and more efficient buildings -- boosting the market for aluminum.

The White House has signaled a willingness to provide financial offsets and other relief to the states and companies that would be hit hardest by new cap and trade rules.

At the moment, Obama's budget calls for selling all the emissions permits, a position backed by many environmentalists. The proceeds would fund research on renewable energy and a middle-class tax cut of \$400 per person.

Many large manufacturers worry that the system could drive the energy-intensive production of steel, glass, cement and other goods overseas.

"We've lost 5 million manufacturing jobs in this country," said Alan McCoy, a spokesman for Ohio-based AK Steel. "This kind of legislation, poorly crafted, would eliminate the rest of them."

The House version of the legislation would initially hand out more than a third of the permits to utilities, another 3% to automakers and 15% to companies such as Alcoa that consume vast amounts of energy and are exposed to foreign competition. In all, 30% of permits would be sold at the start.

As for "how that pie ends up sliced at the end of the day," said Heather Zichal, deputy assistant to the president in the Office of Energy and Climate Change, "I think we're open to discussions."

From a Theory to a Consensus on Emissions

By John M. Broder, staff writer
N.Y. Times, Sat., May 16, 2009

WASHINGTON — As Congress weighs imposing a mandatory limit on climate-altering gases — an outcome still far from certain — it is likely to turn to a system that sets a government ceiling on total emissions and allows polluting industries to buy and sell permits to meet it.

That approach, known as cap and trade, has been embraced by President Obama, Democratic leaders in Congress, mainstream environmental groups and a growing number of business interests, including energy-consuming industries like autos, steel and aluminum.

But not long ago, many of today's supporters dismissed the idea of tradable emissions permits as an industry-inspired Republican scheme to avoid the real costs of cutting air pollution. The right answer, they said, was strict government regulation, state-of-the-art technology and a federal tax on every ton of harmful emissions.

How did cap and trade, hatched as an academic theory in obscure economic journals half a century ago, become the policy of choice in the debate over how to slow the heating of the planet? And how did it come to eclipse the idea of simply slapping a tax on energy consumption that befouls the public square or leaves the nation hostage to foreign oil producers?

The answer is not to be found in the study of economics or environmental science, but in the realm where most policy debates are ultimately settled: politics.

Many members of Congress remember the painful political lesson of 1993, when President Bill Clinton proposed a tax on all forms of energy, a plan that went down to defeat and helped take the Democratic majority in Congress down with it a year later.

Cap and trade, by contrast, is almost perfectly designed for the buying and selling of political support through the granting of valuable emissions permits to favor specific industries and even specific Congressional districts. That is precisely what is taking place now in the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which has used such concessions to patch together a Democratic majority to pass a far-reaching bill to regulate carbon emissions through a cap-and-trade plan.

The bill is poised to win committee approval this week, although with virtually no support from Republicans. If there was a single moment when cap and trade crossed the threshold from relatively untested economic concept to prevailing government policy, it came in May 1989 in the West Wing office of C. Boyden Gray, counsel to President George H.W. Bush. Mr. Gray had gathered a number of Mr. Bush's economic and environmental advisers to try to come up with a politically palatable plan to break a decade-long deadlock on the problem of acid rain, caused by sulfur dioxide emissions from coal-burning power plants in the Midwest.

Mr. Gray and the other Bush advisers knew that the power companies — and their allies in Congress — would vigorously oppose a tax on sulfur emissions or stringent new regulations to control them. But the environmental costs of the problem were too big to ignore.

One of Mr. Bush's outside advisers, Daniel J. Dudek, an economist with the Environmental Defense Fund, recalled that after years of unsuccessfully trying to sell the idea of setting a national limit on such emissions and letting companies trade permits or allowances to pollute, he finally came up with an analogy that broke the ice.

"I told Boyden: 'Imagine you just fired up the government printing presses and dumped an endless stream of money into the system. You'd have no way of controlling the money supply,' " Mr. Dudek said. "He understood totally and intuitively the importance of maintaining the cap, the key ingredient in our acid rain policy."

A month later, the Bush White House sent Congress a cap-and-trade plan for sulfur dioxide emissions that 18 months later became the linchpin of the 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act, considered by many to be the most successful domestic environmental legislation ever enacted.

But the proposal came under ferocious political assault during those months. The final bill reflected a series of compromises needed to keep the coalition supporting it together. But the sulfur dioxide cap, a roughly 50 percent reduction in emissions over the next decade, held. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that compliance with the program is close to 100 percent.

"Our proposal was at first ridiculed by environmentalists as little more than a license to pollute," said Representative Jim Cooper, a moderate Democrat from Tennessee and an early supporter of tradable permits. "But today, few dispute it is one of the government's most successful regulatory programs ever."

Representative Henry A. Waxman, a California Democrat and chairman of the energy committee, and his allies are marshaling many of the same arguments for the cap-and-trade approach as they used two decades ago for acid rain. A cap-and-trade program brings support from industries that prefer it to a top-down federal regulatory scheme, they say.

Many regard it as the lowest-cost solution to a global pollution problem and a means of producing clean-energy breakthroughs. And it is a much easier political sell than a tax on fossil fuels. A measure of the political appeal of the final compromise on the 1990 cap-and-trade plan can be seen in the final votes: 401 to 25 in the House and 89 to 10 in the Senate

But despite its success in the relatively contained problem of acid rain in the United States, cap and trade has proved less useful in other environmental problems and has gotten off to a troubled start in Europe.

Even some early devotees of a system of tradable emissions permits believe that it will not work for carbon dioxide, by definition a planetary problem. A straightforward tax on each ton of carbon dioxide emitted by any source, they say, would provide more a more predictable price and a simpler system to police.

"If a philosopher king could design a system, he or should might pick a taxation system," said Robert Hahn, a White House economist under Mr. Bush who backed the acid rain program but is skeptical that it will work for the much more pervasive problem of carbon dioxide.

Former Vice President Al Gore has long supported a carbon tax. "Tax what you burn, not what you earn," he says, as a way of both attacking global warming and remedying some of the inequities in the income tax.

But Mr. Gore also says a domestic cap-and-trade system would be easier to coordinate with other countries' carbon control programs.

Cap and trade evolved from an academic debate that began in the early 1960s when Ronald H. Coase, then a professor at the University of Chicago Law School, wrote an influential paper, "The Problem of Social Cost," that examined when government should intervene in cases where a private entity causes public harm.

In 1971, W. David Montgomery, a Harvard graduate student in economics, fleshed out the idea of emissions trading in his doctoral thesis and has spent much of the last three decades trying to figure out how the marketplace can deal with environmental problems that are caused by relatively few actors but have consequences felt globally.

He supported the acid rain trading program, but said it was based on "unique historical and economic circumstances" that did not apply to the much more difficult problem of carbon dioxide emissions.

Mr. Montgomery, now a vice president at Charles River Associates International, a consulting firm, said Mr. Waxman's proposal would ultimately act like a tax on carbon-producing industries, disguised by a complex cap-and-trade system.

"It is a steel fist of regulation covered by a velvet glove of emission trading," Mr. Montgomery said. "Why not just impose a carbon tax?"

Putting U.S. Trucking on a Diet

By Erica Gies, staff writer
N.Y. Times, Monday, May 18, 2009

SAN FRANCISCO — The backbone of U.S. commerce, given America's vast distances and reliance upon highway transportation, is the combined fleet of 500,000 U.S. long-haul trucks. And to many Americans, the macho trucking life holds a certain romance. It has, to be sure, its drawbacks, not least the pollution from all those rumbling diesels. But new technologies are emerging that should at least mitigate some of that.

A U.S. safety law requires truckers to rest for 10 hours after 11 of work, and most sleep in their cabs rather than paying for a motel. Traditionally truckers have idled their rigs while sleeping, keeping the engine going to provide heating or climate control and other creature comforts. This

practice, along with workday idling, uses more than two billion gallons, or 7.6 billion liters, of diesel fuel a year, according to research at the Argonne National Laboratory, part of the U.S. Department of Energy.

Idling diesel engines are noisy and emit nitrogen oxide, volatile organic compounds, carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide.

As a response to increasing fuel prices and anti-idling regulations introduced by some cities and states, the industry has been exploring various alternatives. These include electrified parking spaces; auxiliary power units, or A.P.U.'s, for trucks, and detached heater or air-conditioner units.

"We are very much in favor of idle reduction," said Clayton Boyce, a spokesman for the American Trucking Associations, which represents trucking companies, their suppliers and private fleets. "Not running that main diesel engine for extended periods saves fuel and reduces carbon output and other emissions."

Electrified parking spaces, with plug-in electrical hookups for truckers, have increased in number over the past couple of years, sometimes with support from the sale of carbon offsets or government initiatives. They can provide truckers with heat, air-conditioning, electricity, even access to the Internet and satellite TV.

Two forms exist: single-system electrification and shore-based power. Single system requires no investment from the trucker aside from a \$10 plastic window adapter. IdleAire, the industry leader, uses this format.

Shore-based power requires the trucker to install some equipment: detached heater and air-conditioning units, professionally installed inside the truck, can cost around \$2,500. A less-costly approach is to buy a portable air-conditioner or heater powered by an extension cord run through the window. One company, Shorepower Technologies, sells a \$199 kit that includes a portable heater, an extension cord, a truck inlet, a junction box and wiring for the cab.

With electrified parking spaces, truckers do not have to pay high upfront costs, and truck-stop owners can benefit from a revenue-sharing model: but there are approximately 5,000 truck stops across the United States and IdleAire has spaces at only 129 of them in 34 states. Shorepower has even fewer.

In fact, there are not enough regular parking spaces at truck stops for the number of truckers on the road, let alone electrified ones, says Lamont Byrd, director for safety and health for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, a union that represents truckers. The result is that truckers frequently just pull off by the side of the road to rest.

"My nightmare is I'm driving across Nebraska in January," said Linda L. Gaines, a transportation systems analyst with the Argonne laboratory who has a doctorate in physics. There's an electrified stop "100 miles up the road, and I even know there's a spot available for me," she said. But if it is snowing and it is slippery, "I'm going to pull off the road and rest here. And I'd better have something onboard the truck."

"Something" could be an auxiliary unit. But A.P.U.'s weigh around 400 pounds, or 180 kilograms, and cost up to \$10,000: and they burn fuel, though more efficiently than truck engines.

Firing up an A.P.U. generates electricity to power the heater and air-conditioner contained in the unit. A less-costly onboard option is a direct-fired heater, which costs about \$1,200 and burns fuel to transmit heat directly to the air or to the engine's coolant system. That can be paired with a separate air-conditioning unit for about \$4,000. Options include electrical battery and thermal energy storage. Both supplemental heating and cooling can also provide electricity for other appliances.

In the future, truckers may not have to choose between stationary and mobile technologies. Many new trucks and A.P.U.'s incorporate heat and air units that can run on either fixed or mobile power sources. IdleAire and Shorepower hope to capitalize on this development.

Trucks burn about a gallon an hour while idling, making the price per gallon of diesel fuel — around \$2.22, or 59 cents a liter, in early May — roughly the hourly rate to beat.

IdleAire has a basic service rate of \$2.89 an hour, with extra charges for games, satellite TV, movies, Internet and phone options. The price reflects the expense of building its parking spaces, which cost an average of \$15,000, according to Wray Williams, its director of sales and marketing.

An over-rapid expansion from 2006 to 2008, coupled with the recession, sent the company into bankruptcy protection in May 2008, but it has since been purchased and refloated by new investors.

A Shorepower pedestal, meanwhile, costs about \$8,000, according to Joseph Licari, the company's director for eastern operations. Shorepower charges \$1 to plug in and \$1 an hour.

Still, neither model competes on an hourly basis with A.P.U.'s, which burn about one-quarter gallon an hour, or detached heater and air-conditioners, which use even less. "If I'm a trucker and I've got an A.P.U. on my truck, to operate that overnight, that's a couple of gallons, or \$4 to \$5," Dr. Gaines said. "Whereas to check into an IdleAire location, it's \$2.89 an hour, so it costs you \$30."

But price is not the only factor. "We had 17 million hours of service in 2008," Mr. Wray of IdleAire said. "That's 200,000 unique users."

The extra amenities appeal to truckers, said Terry M. Levinson, a senior project manager at Argonne who has been researching idling reduction for about 20 years. "If you're going to be competitive and you're a stationary source, you've got to find a way to convince a trucker that you offer more than the cost of fuel."

There are no data about market share for these idling-reduction technologies, but an internal estimate from the Environmental Protection Agency showed more than 25,000 A.P.U.'s sold in 2007, and more than 83,000 direct-fired heaters. IdleAire's usage data indicates that 40 percent of long-haul truckers have tried the company's stops, according to Dr. Gaines. Yet each averaged just nine visits in a year in which they were probably on the road more than 200 nights. The company averaged 23 percent occupancy for its spots.

Major interstate intersections would be the target markets for IdleAire's future expansion, Mr. Williams said. Still, Dr. Gaines said she doubted whether truck-stop electrification would ever reach a critical mass:

"There are so many places trucks drive that are so unpopulated that economically it would never be likely to pay," she said.

While the cost to truckers and feasibility will determine which technology succeeds commercially, reducing environmental and human health damage is their primary purpose: and determining which one does that best is not simple.

A.P.U.'s, which burn diesel, generally cause more emissions than electrified parking spaces or a detached heater and air-conditioner, but newer trucks emit less to run battery and thermal storage units, which are charged while driving.

Of all the technologies, electrified parking offers the sharpest reduction in nitrogen oxides, an ingredient in smog that causes asthma and other lung problems. A.P.U.'s release one-quarter the carbon dioxide emissions of idling, and electrified parking releases one-sixth. Separate heaters and air-conditioners release one-eighth, Dr. Gaines said.

Particle pollution attributable to the electricity used in electrified parking spaces, however, can be higher in some areas than the pollution because of other technologies. Inhalation of microscopic particulate matter — comprised of nitrates, sulfates, organic chemicals, metals, soil and dust — can cause damage to the heart and lungs.

“If you’re in a location where a lot of the electricity is generated by coal, then there are a lot of particulate emissions from the coal-fired power plants and also the mining, processing and transportation of the coal,” Dr. Gaines said. “On the other hand, in California, most of the electricity is developed from clean hydro and natural gas. And so the emissions are considerably lower.”

Still, all of these methods are an improvement over idling, and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 has allocated \$378 million to the Department of Energy to reduce transportation emissions as part of its effort to clean the environment while stimulating the economy.

Of that, \$10 million to \$75 million will go to idling-reduction technologies. The Environmental Protection Agency has also directed \$300 million in Recovery Act money toward a campaign to reduce emissions from diesel engines.

An E.P.A. program called the SmartWay Transport Partnership offers low-cost loans for truckers to buy wide tires, aerodynamic fairings, diesel oxidation catalysts, diesel particulate filters and A.P.U.'s.

If fuel prices rise again — and stay high — demand for long-haul trucking may wane as economies grow more local, less global. Meanwhile, idling-reduction technologies can help truckers provide cleaner service, while maintaining their allegiance to the open road.

Synthetic turf fields kicking up safety concerns

By Phuong Le - The Associated Press

In the Washington Post, Sunday, May 17, 2009

SEATTLE -- Soccer dad Mike Miller prefers the smooth, cushioned surface of synthetic turf because his 13-year-old daughter can play year-round, even in the long rainy season that closes Seattle's grass fields.

But as Katy Miller and her teammates dribble, pass and shoot, their cleats kick up tiny bits of the ground-up rubber tires that are used as filler between the blades of artificial grass.

That has some health experts, activists and parents from Seattle to Chicago to Stamford, Mass. worried that children may be exposed to chemicals if they inhale or swallow the rubber granules, known as crumb rubber. Some are calling for a moratorium until the issue is more fully studied.

"Rubber tires are made with chemicals that are known carcinogens. The question remains, does that raise the risk for cancer for children? We don't know that," said Dr. Susan Buchanan, associate director of Great Lakes Center for Children's Environmental Health and an assistant professor of public health at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Artificial turf is often made of fake blades of grass with sand or ground tires used as fill to provide a springy cushion. About 25 million used auto tires are recycled into turf each year, according to Synthetic Turf Council, the Atlanta-based trade group. About 4,500 synthetic turf fields are in use throughout the country.

Supporters say the artificial turf encourages increased outdoor play, reduces water and herbicide use and provides an even, predictable surface that's more cushioned than old-style AstroTurf.

Playing fields with artificial turf "drain well. They don't get as muddy. The ball bounces a little higher, goes a little faster," Miller said.

But potential health concerns have led Connecticut and California to conduct their own studies on the health effects of turf. New York City health officials recently commissioned a study to evaluate [air quality](#) above synthetic turf and found it didn't show appreciable effects from contaminants in the rubber.

"The crumb rubber that's used in many fills are safe," said Shira Miller, a spokeswoman for the Synthetic Turf Council.

But Dr. Philip Landrigan, professor and chairman of community and preventive medicine at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York, still wants a moratorium until more thorough studies are done.

Some studies in the U.S. and Europe have assessed potential exposure and health risks for people using turf and concluded that health effects are unlikely.

But Landrigan said he's aware of no studies that have evaluated how the chemicals affect actual children who play on turf field containing crumb rubber.

"All those toxins are very available to kids, if kids are playing and running," he said. "All this chemical soup is going to get on their skins and their fingers."

Recycled tires contain metals such as zinc, plus toxic chemicals such as benzene and butadiene and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, which also are contained in exhaust, smoke and soot.

Crumb rubber also is used for solid playground and track surfaces, but because it's in the form of a mat, there's less concern the rubber can get into kids, Landrigan said.

Heat also is a concern, raising the possibility of heat stress or heat stroke; temperatures on artificial turf fields have been recorded at 130 to 140 degrees, Landrigan said.

Last year, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission investigated lead in artificial turf after New Jersey health officials found high lead content in some fields. The CPSC said none of the fields tested at levels that would be harmful to children, but it called for voluntary standards to eliminate lead in future products.

Seattle is adding six new synthetic turf fields in the next year after reviewing current research on health or environmental risks.

The fields cost more to install than grass _ about \$800,000 each _ but save in maintenance costs and reduced herbicide and fertilizer use, said Dewey Potter, a Seattle parks spokeswoman.

Sports boosters say artificial turf allows more games to be played in the months when Seattle's trademark rain closes grass fields and pushes sports onto hated dirt and sand fields.

"We love natural grass, but it doesn't work for year-round and really intensive use," said Bill Farmer, a board member of Seattle's Friends of Athletic Fields.

The health concerns also have become part of a larger debate over whether the fields are a good idea in general. Some object to spending taxpayer money, and others simply prefer natural open space.

"Why have parks if you're going to pave them? They should be grass fields," said Chris Van Dyk, who led an unsuccessful attempt to block artificial turf fields on Washington's Bainbridge Island, just west of Seattle. He said he doesn't want his sons playing on it.

In San Francisco last summer, health officials reviewed the available literature and found there wasn't enough evidence of risks from lead, bacteria or crumb rubber to warrant tearing up and

replacing existing fields. But they said that where possible the city should consider alternatives such as turf that uses cork or coconut husks as fill.

On the sidelines of a Seattle scrimmage, soccer mom Beatriz Salgado said her daughter prefers grass because the artificial turf can get too hot during the summer.

"In the summer, you can really smell it. It smells like tar," she said. "I would like to know more about what's in it."

EPA urged to act on climate, not wait for Congress

By Dina Cappiello - The Associated Press

In the Washington Post, SF Chronicle and others, Monday, May 18, 2009

ARLINGTON, Va. -- The Environmental Protection Agency should not wait for Congress before taking steps to control the gases blamed for global warming, supporters of federal greenhouse-gas regulation said Monday.

The EPA hearing is the first of two public forums on the agency's April finding that concentrations of carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere pose dangers to human health and welfare _ and that emissions from new motor vehicles and engines are contributing to the problem.

The proposal could eventually lead to regulation of greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act, starting with emissions standards for motor vehicles.

"We must reduce greenhouse gas emissions now without further delay and without waiting for a perfect solution," said Navis Bermudez, speaking on behalf of New York Gov. David A. Paterson.

"While we also hope that Congress enacts comprehensive federal climate change legislation, we believe EPA can act now under the existing Clean Air Act without waiting for such legislation."

The House Energy and Commerce Committee planned to begin work later on Monday on legislation that, for the first time, would limit the emissions blamed for global warming from large industrial sources.

The EPA proposal has put pressure on Capitol Hill to take action.

"It is clear that the choice is no longer between doing something and doing nothing to curb greenhouse gas pollution. It is a choice between regulation and legislation," said Rep. Edward Markey, D-Mass. "We believe that the bill we have crafted in the Energy and Commerce Committee ... protects consumers and provides businesses with the certainty they need to adapt to our clean energy future."

Which proposal will ultimately win out depends mostly on Congress. The House bill would largely pre-empt the EPA from forcing industries to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions under the Clean Air Act. Instead, it writes a new chapter that would put a price on each ton of pollution and allow industry to decide how to meet increasingly more stringent targets.

President Barack Obama has made it clear that he prefers new legislation to cope with the problem.

In his weekly radio address Saturday, the president called the bill "a plan that will finally reduce our dangerous dependence on foreign oil and cap the carbon pollution that threatens our health and our climate."

The agency was compelled to weigh in on the threat posed by greenhouse gases after a 2007 Supreme Court ruling found them to be air pollutants.

Industry groups and Republicans quickly sounded the alarm saying the finding could eventually prompt the EPA to regulate pollution from a whole suite of sources and burden an already troubled economy.

That view was reiterated Monday by Bryan Brendle, director of energy and resources policy for the National Association of Manufacturers.

Brendle told EPA officials the Clean Air Act was ill-suited to deal with the global problem of climate change and would "pre-empt ongoing congressional debate on an issue that would impact all sectors of a struggling economy."

Supporters tried to head off those criticisms Monday.

"We are concerned that other commenters have used hyperbole to describe the consequences of potential endangerment finding claiming it will wreak havoc ... we disagree strongly," said Nancy Kruger, deputy director of the National Association of Clean Air Agencies, which represents state and local air pollution control agencies.

More than a hundred people are signed up to testify at the EPA hearing, including environmentalists, scientists, religious leaders and climate change skeptics.

The House Energy committee intends to complete work and vote on the climate and energy bill by the end of the week. But Republicans concerned that the 932-page proposal will drive up energy prices and harm the economy are expected to drag out the proceedings by offering hundreds of amendments.

The bill is H.R. 2454.

Constellation supports House climate change bill

The Associated Press

Merced Sun-Star, Sunday, May. 17, 2009

BALTIMORE -- Constellation Energy says it supports the climate change bill introduced Friday by the House Energy Committee.

Constellation Energy Group Inc. Chairman, President and Chief Executive Mayo Shattuck said in a statement Sunday that the bill outlines needed steps to [cut greenhouse gas emissions](#), improve energy security, and usher in new low-emission power generation.

Shattuck noted that renewable, nuclear and efficiency technologies that can cut emissions already exist. A national policy is needed that will allow for rapid, large-scale deployment of these technologies, he said.

The bill would cap emissions and distribute permits for those emissions. However, it would not auction off only 15 percent of the permits, with the rest distributed to a variety of industries, including power producers.

SKoreans designing 'online' electric vehicles

By JEAN H. LEE - Associated Press Writer

Merced Sun-Star, Monday, May. 18, 2009

SEOUL, South Korea -- Urban visionaries in London and Seoul, two of the world's busiest capital cities, foresee buses gliding through their streets with speed, ease and efficiency - without emitting the exhaust fumes that scientists say are contributing to global warming.

Under Mayor Boris Johnson's vision, London's iconic red double-decker Routemaster buses would be back on the streets - but powered by electricity, not gasoline.

Engineers at South Korea's top-ranked KAIST university are meanwhile working on a novel prototype for an electric vehicle system: one that provides power on the go through induction strips laid into the roadway.

Cities - which house 75 percent of the world's population and generate 80 percent of its pollution - must take leadership in tackling the problem of polluting emissions, Johnson said Monday in Seoul on the eve of the third C40 Large Cities Climate Summit.

"I think as a collective of cities, what we should be doing here in Seoul is agreeing that we are going to stop the endless addiction of mankind to the internal combustion engine," he told reporters. "It's time that we moved away from fossil fuels. It's time that we went for low-carbon vehicles."

"Cars form many problems that we see in Korea as well as other countries. We use hydrocarbon organic fuels, mostly petroleum, and that, in turn, creates environmental problems - and Seoul is notorious," said Suh Nam-pyo, president of KAIST in Daejeon, south of the South Korean capital.

Seoul, population 10 million, is getting warmer three times faster than the world average, the National Meteorological Administration said Monday.

The obvious solution, Suh said, is to "replace all these vehicles with vehicles that do not pollute the air and do not use oil."

Back in March, Johnson zipped down a British highway in a U.S.-made electric car that he wrote marked "the beginning of a long-overdue revolution."

He rhapsodized in a Telegraph newspaper editorial that the Tesla has no exhaust pipe, carburetor or fuel tank, and "while every other car on that motorway was a-parping and a-puttering, filling the air with fumes and particulates, this car was producing no more noxious vapours than a dandelion in an alpine meadow."

Last month, he launched an ambitious plan to get 100,000 electric cars onto the streets of London by 2015. He pushed for the creation of 25,000 charging stations and vowed to convert some 1,000 city vehicles to make London the "electric car capital of Europe."

"The age of the [diesel-emitting bus](#) has got to be over in London," Johnson said.

He has promised electric motorists an exemption from the congestion charge imposed on drivers in central London, an annual saving of up to 1,700 pounds (about \$2,600).

But that discount would barely make a dent in the eye-popping price tag of electric cars now on the market; the sleek Tesla that Johnson took for a spin costs more than \$100,000.

And scientists are still grappling with the massive, sensitive, costly and fast-depleting batteries that take the place of internal combustion engines and gasoline. Electric cars run between 40 and 120 miles (60 to 200 kilometers) on one charge, and it takes anywhere from two to seven hours to fully recharge, said Christian Mueller of the IHS Global Insight consulting firm.

"Everybody is frantically working on coming up with a viable electric car," he said from Frankfurt, Germany.

Batteries "aren't yet at a state where we can say they are cheap, they're reliable and they're easy to come by. They all still have their technical drawbacks," said Mueller, who specializes in electrics and electronics.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses President Obama expresses his enthusiasm for alternative energy. The nation that leads in the 21st Century in clean energy will also be the nation that leads and dominates the global economy. For more information on this or other Spanish clips, contact Claudia Encinas at \(559\) 230-5851.](#)

Expresa el presidente Obama entusiasmo por la energía alternativa

Manuel Ocaño

Noticiero Latino

Radio Bilingüe, Monday, May 18, 2009

El presidente Barack Obama expresó el fin de semana su entusiasmo porque antiguos oponentes al tema de la energía alternativa en el país ahora se perfilan como listos para alcanzar acuerdos. El mandatario dijo que por primera vez las corporaciones energéticas y sus ejecutivos apoyan en lugar de oponerse a los dirigentes ambientalistas y laborales para crear un nuevo sistema de iniciativas de energía limpia.

"La nación que encabece en el siglo 21 la energía limpia, es la nación que dirigirá el en siglo 21 la economía global; Estados Unidos puede y debe ser esa nación", dijo el presidente.

El mandatario elogió una iniciativa del presidente del comité de Energía del Congreso, el californiano Henry Waxman, que esta semana comenzó a alcanzar un consenso interpartidista para promover la energía limpia y la creación de millones de empleos en el sector, al imponer límites a la contaminación del aire.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses President Obama supports renewable energy.](#)

Obama promueve la energía renovable

EFE

La Opinión, Saturday, May 16, 2009

WASHINGTON (EFE).- El presidente de EE.UU., Barack Obama, afirmó hoy que los progresos que hace el país en el fomento de la energía renovable y la reforma del sistema sanitario permitirán sentar nuevos cimientos para ésta y próximas generaciones.

En su tradicional discurso radiofónico de los sábados, el mandatario recordó que en los últimos meses, al poner en marcha un plan de recuperación económica, ha reiterado la necesidad de sentar nuevos cimientos para la prosperidad duradera del país.

Obama señaló que esos nuevos fundamentos se basan en dos pilares- la energía limpia y el sistema sanitario.

El presidente reconoció que aún "queda mucho trabajo arduo por hacer", pero se mostró alentado por la voluntad mostrada esta semana por personas con diferentes puntos de vista e intereses de unirse en torno a objetivos comunes y asumir un sentido de responsabilidad compartido en estas dos materias.

Esta semana, el presidente del Comité de Energía y de Comercio de la Cámara de Representantes, Henry Waxman, se reunió con representantes de todos los sectores económicos para forjar un acuerdo histórico sobre la energía, señaló Obama.

"Por primera vez, las empresas de servicios públicos y líderes empresariales se están uniendo, no oponiéndose, a defensores del medio ambiente y líderes sindicales para crear un nuevo sistema de incentivos para la energía limpia que ayude a desencadenar una nueva era de crecimiento y prosperidad", agregó.

El plan que negocia el Congreso reducirá la "peligrosa dependencia de EE.UU. del petróleo extranjero y limitará la contaminación con carbono que amenaza nuestra salud y nuestro clima" y generará millones de nuevos empleos, dijo Obama.

El presidente subrayó que, no obstante, las familias y la economía estadounidenses "no tendrán éxito en el siglo XXI si seguimos agobiados por la carga del creciente coste del cuidado de salud y un defectuoso sistema de atención médica".

Por ello, Obama se reunió esta semana con representantes de compañías aseguradoras y farmacéuticas, médicos y hospitales, y sindicatos que han prometido contribuir para reducir los costes.

En concreto, han prometido hacer lo propio para reducir en 1,5 puntos porcentuales la tasa del aumento en el gasto del cuidado de salud, algo que, junto con la reforma integral, podría generar ahorros de más de 2 mil millones de dólares en los próximos diez años y de 2,500 dólares para todas las familias.

Obama también se entrevistó con la presidenta de la Cámara de Representantes, Nancy Pelosi; el líder de la mayoría demócrata, Steny Hoyer, y con otros líderes del Congreso, para hablar sobre la reforma integral de salud.

La Cámara de Representantes está tratando de aprobar un proyecto de ley para finales de julio.

Obama subrayó que el hecho de que las partes antes enfrentadas hayan comenzado a poner de lado sus diferencias y comenzado a conversar indica que "estamos viendo que la forma de hacer las cosas en Washington ha comenzado a cambiar".

"Es así como siempre se han alcanzado los objetivos. Es así que se construirán nuevos cimientos (...) que no solo propiciarán la prosperidad para esta generación, sino también para las generaciones futuras", concluyó.

Por otra parte, el republicano Charles Boustany afirmó en el discurso radiofónico de los sábados de su partido que "los republicanos quieren trabajar con el presidente Obama y otros demócratas para asegurar el acceso de todo estadounidense a un seguro médico de alta calidad y de bajo coste".

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses energy consumption from Electronic devices put at risk the ecological system.](#)

Consumo de energía de aparatos electrónicos amenaza la ecología

BY GREG KELLER / AP

Paris

El Nuevo Herald, Monday, May 18, 2009

Si ahora decidiera recargar su iPod, ¿esto mataría a un oso polar?

Una organización internacional hizo un llamado de alarma por la amenaza al ambiente que representa el creciente consumo de electricidad de reproductores de MP3, celulares y televisores de pantalla plana, ya que estima que los nuevos dispositivos electrónicos triplicarán su consumo de energía para el 2030.

La Agencia Internacional de Energía, con sede en París, calcula que estos aparatos consumirán unos 1,700 teravatios por hora en el 2030, una cantidad de energía equivalente a la suma de los consumos de electricidad de Japón y Estados Unidos.

El mundo necesitaría construir 200 nuevas plantas de energía nuclear sólo para abastecer todos los televisores, iPods, computadoras personales y otros dispositivos que se espera estarán enchufados para ese año.

La cuenta de consumo eléctrico global llegará entonces a \$200,000 millones por año, declaró la IEA (por sus siglas en inglés).

Los artículos electrónicos de uso personal son "el sector que crece más rápido y el sector con menos regulaciones" para controlar la eficiencia energética, dijo Paul Waide, analista de políticas públicas de la agencia.

Este tipo de aparatos ya consumen cerca del 15 por ciento de la electricidad hogareña y ese porcentaje está creciendo con velocidad a medida que el número de productos se multiplica. El mundo gastó el año pasado \$80,000 millones en electricidad para darles energía, según la agencia.

La mayor parte del aumento será en los países en desarrollo, donde el crecimiento económico es el más veloz y la tasa de posesión de estos aparatos es la más baja, dijo Waide.

"Esto pondrá en riesgo los esfuerzos para aumentar la seguridad energética y reducir la emisión de gases que generan el efecto invernadero", considerados una causa del calentamiento global, señaló la IEA.

Hay tecnologías que podrían reducir el consumo de energía de los aparatos en más de 30 por ciento sin costo o en más de 50 por ciento por un costo bajo, según la IEA. Esto significa que las emisiones totales de gases nocivos para dar energía a estos aparatos se podrían mantener estables en unas 500 millones de toneladas de dióxido de carbono por año.

Si no se hace nada, esa cifra se duplicaría para el 2030, precisó la IEA.

Waide aseguró que los televisores son un sector en que se puede mejorar mucho. La agencia calcula que el mundo pronto tendrá en uso 2,000 millones de televisores. Además, éstos tienen pantallas cada vez más grandes y quedan encendidos por más tiempo cada día.

Medidas simples, como permitir a los usuarios regular el consumo de energía de los aparatos de acuerdo con el uso que les dan, servirían para contrarrestar el aumento.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses Governor from Utah is appointed as Ambassador in China.](#)

Nombrado embajador en China el gobernador del estado de Utah

BY DARLENE SUPERVILLE / AP

Washington

El Nuevo Herald, Monday, May 18, 2009

El presidente Barack Obama cruzó ayer la brecha política y nombró como embajador en China al gobernador del estado de Utah, un potencial candidato presidencial republicano en 2012.

John Huntsman, que habla mandarín con fluidez desde sus días como misionero en Taiwán, fungió como gobernador durante los dos gobiernos de George W. Bush y fue codirector de la campaña presidencial de John McCain. Huntsman ha impulsado un temario moderado en uno de los estados más conservadores del país.

En declaraciones breves en el Salón Diplomático de la Casa Blanca, con Huntsman junto a él, Obama dijo que lo nombró "consciente de su extraordinario significado".

"Dada la amplitud de los asuntos en juego en nuestras relaciones con China, este puesto es tan importante como cualquiera en el mundo, porque Estados Unidos podrá lidiar mejor con los retos globales del siglo XXI en colaboración con China", agregó.

Huntsman ocupó recientemente los titulares por alentar al Partido Republicano a adoptar una dirección más moderada si deseaba recuperarse de la derrota sufrida en los comicios de 2008, lo que enfureció a conservadores en el partido.

Las posiciones de Huntsman sobre el ambiente y otros temas han hecho que algunos le consideren un posible candidato presidencial en 2012.

El gobernador de Utah firmó una iniciativa que establecería límites de emisiones para reducir el calentamiento global. En un discurso en 2006 en la Universidad Normal en Shanghai, Huntsman habló de la necesidad de que China y Estados Unidos colaborasen en asuntos del ambiente.

"Estados Unidos y China deben ser buenos ejemplos y guías en la Tierra. Debemos igualar el avance económico con liderazgo ambiental".

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses Fresno promotes proper Vehicle maintenance as a measure against air pollution.](#)

Promueven en Fresno mantenimiento de vehículos como medida contra la contaminación

Manuel Ocaño

Noticiero Latino, San Diego, CA

Radio Bilingüe, Friday, May 15, 2009

La oficina de Reparaciones vehiculares del estado de California llevará a cabo este sábado en Fresno una feria para conductores en la que proporcionará información gratuita sobre programas de ayuda a los consumidores, y rifará bicicletas cada 60 minutos, entre otras actividades a realizar.

La oficina estatal insta a los conductores a dar mantenimiento a sus vehículos como medida para reducir la contaminación del aire en el Valle de San Joaquín.

Arcelia Mora es una organizadora del programa, y dijo que la institución puede ayudar a conductores que requieran reparaciones pero carezcan de recursos.

Esa y otras informaciones estarán disponibles en la feria que se llevará a cabo de las 11 de la mañana a las 3 de la tarde en un centro comercial cerca del centro de la ciudad en Fresno.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses consumers are become ecologist. The world is beginning to take care of the environment.](#)

Los consumidores son más ecológicos

El mundo está cuidando más del ambiente

AFP

Univision, Friday, May 15, 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Los consumidores del planeta prestan más atención actualmente al impacto de su modo de vida sobre el medio ambiente, una toma de conciencia estimulada por la crisis económica que obliga a revisar sus gastos en energía, según un amplio sondeo difundido el miércoles India, Brasil y China los más ecológicos

La revista National Geographic y el instituto de sondeos Globescan realizaron por segundo año consecutivo una investigación en internet con 17 mil consumidores de 17 países, evaluando su comportamiento en cuatro terrenos: vivienda, transporte, alimentación y productos de consumo.

India, Brasil y China son los que tienen los mejores puntajes en el estudio, que creó un índice global bautizado "Greendex" 2009 ("Índice Verde").

Los estadounidenses y los canadienses son la alerta roja de la clasificación en términos de impacto de su modo de vida y de consumo sobre el medio ambiente, mientras que los españoles, alemanes y franceses realizan progresos. En Rusia y México, la situación se deterioró un poco en relación al año pasado.

La recesión económica jugó un gran papel en la modificación de los comportamientos en la mayoría de los países, observaron los autores de la investigación.

La crisis benefició al ambiente

"La crisis económica parece haber sido una buena noticia para el medio ambiente", dijo Terry Garcia, vicepresidente de National Geographic, en una conferencia de prensa en Washington.

"¿Pero estos cambios positivos en los comportamientos seguirán tras la recuperación económica? Esperamos que las actitudes ecológicas que los consumidores adopten para ahorrar se conviertan en parte integrante de su modo de vida", añadió.

El 80 por ciento de las personas consultadas explicó que la principal razón que los llevó a reducir su consumo de energía fueron los costos.

Una gran mayoría (55 por ciento) se manifestó "muy preocupado por los problemas ecológicos", mientras que al 14 por ciento no le importaban en absoluto. Seis de cada 10 consumidores creen que se debe consumir menos para preservar el medio ambiente para las generaciones futuras.

Usan menos energía y automóvil

Es en el terreno de la vivienda donde se observaron las mayores mejoras: indios, chinos, mexicanos, españoles y franceses avanzaron en cuanto al ahorro de energía en sus hogares. Los brasileños lideran en este sector: son quienes usan más a menudo energías renovables para la electricidad.

En el transporte son los chinos los que se llevan las palmas: el 85 por ciento de ellos explica haber usado más su bicicleta o caminado debido al incremento de los precios de los combustibles.

El estudio observa que los consumidores de los países en desarrollo gastan de todas formas menos en la vivienda o el transporte, porque "generalmente tienen residencias más pequeñas" o "caminan más, usan más la bicicleta o los transportes públicos".

En el transporte son los estadounidenses quienes están últimos, aunque redujeron fuertemente la cantidad de kilómetros que recorren en automóvil, mientras que los brasileños (séptimos) son aficionados a compartir el automóvil.

En materia de alimentación, los estadounidenses realizaron grandes avances, al reducir su consumo de botellas de agua y aumentando sus compras de productos locales.

En cuanto a los productos de consumo, se observa una caída general de las compras para la casa. El reciclaje mejoró en Australia, Canadá, Francia y Alemania, mientras que en Estados Unidos apareció una nueva tendencia: la de reparar los objetos rotos.

La encuesta consultó a un millar de personas en Alemania, Argentina, Australia, Brasil, Canadá, China, Corea del Sur, España, Estados Unidos, Francia, Gran Bretaña, Hungría, India, Japón, México, Rusia y Suecia.