

## **Study ranks Kings County 31st healthiest in California**

By Seth Nidever

Hanford Sentinel, Thursday, Feb. 18, 2010

Kings County ranks as the 31st healthiest county in California, according to a first-of-its-kind nationwide study released today by the University of Wisconsin and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The ranking was a measurement of both how long people live and how sick they are.

A separate ranking designed to point to future trends, however, gave Kings a lower ranking: 45th among the 56 California counties included in the study.

Alpine and Sierra counties were left out of the study for unknown reasons.

The separate ranking included health behaviors like obesity and smoking, quality of health care, access, poverty issues and environmental factors.

"I think by looking at and addressing some of the issues, it could help ensure that [a county's] health outcome keeps going in the right direction," said Clare O'Connor, a researcher involved in the study.

The study was based on 2000-2008 numbers provided mostly by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, O'Connor said.

The health of Kings County residents was highest among the San Joaquin Valley counties, including Mariposa, San Joaquin, Merced, Fresno, Stanislaus, Tulare and Kern.

Fresno County ranked 41st, with Tulare County 49th and Kern County 51st.

The wealthy enclave of Marin County, located across the Golden Gate Bridge north of San Francisco, came in first. Worst in overall health was Del Norte County at the extreme northwestern tip of the state.

Among the things that could drag Kings County down in the future is the quality of clinical care and access to treatment, the study found. Kings ranked 51st in that category. Kings also rated poorly on social factors like high school graduation rate (49 percent), number of college graduates (12 percent) and unemployment.

Kings did better in the category of physical environment, ranking 27th. [Air pollution](#), access to healthy food and density of liquor stores were included in that measurement.

### **Valley rankings by county**

- 31. Kings
- 34. Mariposa
- 38. San Joaquin
- 40. Merced
- 41. Fresno
- 43. Stanislaus
- 49. Tulare
- 51. Kern

## **Strictly Business feature: Three Thoughts on sound environmental practices**

Bakersfield Californian, Friday, Feb. 19, 2010

There's what passes for environmental responsibility, and then there's what makes sense in the business world. These are often separate considerations.

But not always. As attendees were told at this week's Energy & Clean Air Business Exposition, hosted by the Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce, doing the right thing sometimes saves money. (Again, not always.)

### **Our question: How can sound environmental practices help business?**

At State Farm, we recognize that strong environmental values are a key to business success in the modern marketplace. Effective environmental programs help reduce operating costs and the impact

businesses have on local waste streams. Costs saved through energy savings and recycling programs enable us to lower the price of our products for our customers. These programs also allow us to give back to the community. For example, proceeds from recycling plastic bottles and aluminum cans are donated to local charities.

We are also heavily involved in promoting safe driving practices as a way to reduce the impact of carbon monoxide emissions on the environment. Studies show a few seconds of rapid acceleration can produce significantly more pollution than the vehicle would normally produce over several minutes at a steady cruising speed.

Environmental issues are important to State Farm and its policyholders. We are committed to having a safe and green planet for generations to come.

-- *Wayne Lepine, administrative services manager, State Farm*

Greening your company and its operations is not only good for the environment, it's smart business. Implementing green initiatives can reduce your company's environmental impact; boost employee productivity and health; lower your operating costs, which brings more money to your bottom line as well as improve your company's image; and serve as a communication tool to connect with clients and customers regarding your green efforts.

What companies do not realize is that 60 percent of your energy costs are in your daily operations. You should understand where all of your materials come from, where every single kilowatt of your company's energy is used, how your supply and distribution chain operates and precisely what materials comprise your waste stream. With this knowledge you will find ways to do things better, more efficiently, more effectively and with dramatically less waste and energy -- while in most cases saving money all at the same time!

-- *Jennifer Jordan, principal consultant, Green Living Consulting, a division of Greenshops.com Inc.*

First, what is a sound environmental practice? "Cap & Trade" that lets the government take money from business and redistribute it to others is not a sound environmental practice, but conservation and sustainable building are. They benefit business regardless of public policy.

Conservation reduces our use of energy and resources that would otherwise be wasted. Some simple ways to conserve are:

1. Turn off unneeded lights and reduce lighting in rooms being used (most offices have double switching).
2. Use the sunshine (from north and south windows). The daylight can reduce lighting costs and help people's physical and mental health.
3. Control the thermostat and use natural ventilation when possible.
4. Run double-sided copies whenever possible to save on paper.
5. Recycle waste: BARC can pick up waste paper for free. Sustainability: Properly designed and maintained buildings will have a longer life, use less energy, use less water and reduce waste. They can also support the health and productivity of the occupants. All of this contributes to a better bottom line for business.

-- *Timothy R. Stormont, architect, BFGC-IBI Group Architecture Planning*

## **Residents fight to clean up Calif. chicken waste**

By Jason Dearan, Associated Press Writer

In the S.F. Chronicle, N.Y. Times and other papers, Friday, Feb. 19, 2010

French Camp, Calif. (AP) -- At the end of a remote road lined by houses, children play in yards just a short distance from a stagnant, 16.5-acre lagoon filled with the waste sludge of a factory egg farm.

Flies hover over the pond as chicken urine and feces get pumped daily through white pipes connected from Olivera Egg Ranch's huge laying facilities, which can house more than 700,000 caged chickens.

Residents of this town 80 miles east of San Francisco say they've complained for years to local air and environmental regulators about the waste lagoon, saying the stench and eye-burning fumes give them headaches and nausea. They say nothing changed.

Now, after the Humane Society of the United States petitioned state air regulators for an investigation last month, Olivera Egg Ranch is facing six violations for expanding and operating its facilities without proper permits.

The Humane Society has also filed a lawsuit on behalf of 10 area residents, accusing Olivera of failing for years to report its air emissions to federal and state agencies.

On Thursday, a federal judge found that Olivera had "spoiled evidence" by dredging the manure lagoon prior to a site visit by society scientists.

"I don't necessarily think the lawsuit is fair or on any solid basis," said Edward Olivera, the farm's owner. Olivera would not comment on the violations, and referred further questions to his lawyer.

The lawyer, Jared Mueller, did not return calls seeking comment but in court papers denied the suit's allegations.

The [San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District](#) referred odor complaints over the years to the county Board of Health.

Robert McClellon, a program coordinator for the board, said Olivera had been cited for violating manure management practices and unacceptable fly breeding. But he said his agency does not regulate ammonia or handle odor complaints.

Although some of the egg farm's neighbors moved out of the area since it was founded in late 1990s, others stayed on, farming and raising families.

"My husband and I farmed from sunrise to sunset, we're out there exposed to the smell and whatever else was out there coming from the Olivera farm," said Lita Galicinao, 79, whose late husband Sam built their home when they bought land after relocating from the Philippines in 1954.

"So it was really hard to work in the heat plus with the smell, a lot of times you feel nauseated, but that's our livelihood. We have to go out there and work."

Prompted by a Humane Society petition for an investigation, the air pollution control district issued a string of violations Feb. 5 to the Olivera farm for failing to file a number of permits required by state law.

The permits, if filed, would have spurred regular inspections over the years and could have led to changes.

"Based on our investigation to this point we feel they were in violation of our rules and regulations," said Morgan Lambert, director of compliance for the air district.

Citing the ongoing investigation, he declined to comment further.

Upon completion of the investigation, the company could be subject to fines of up to \$10,000 a day for each of the six violations.

The lawsuit, which seeks a cleanup and unspecified damages, alleges that "Olivera has systematically and continuously released unlawful levels of ammonia from the hen houses and manure lagoon into the local community without reporting them as required by (federal law) since at least 2004."

Such suits against waste lagoons can be difficult for complainants. Just before leaving office, the Bush administration issued a regulation exempting farms from reporting to federal regulators the releases of air pollution from animal waste. The regulation is being challenged by environmental groups in federal court.

Meanwhile, the people who live near the lagoon here say the recent regulatory action gives them hope.

Janice Magaoay, 55, who along with her husband is a plaintiff, said she tired of complaining about the lagoon.

"We're all people and we all deserve to be treated with respect and our children are here and we want to live here," she said. "We shouldn't have to leave because of (the stench) and it shouldn't be legal."

## **Vehicle Tests on Emissions Were Faked**

By Mireya Navarro, staff writer  
N.Y. Times, Thursday, Feb. 18, 2010

Dozens of auto repair shops and service stations in New York City, Long Island and Westchester County faked the results of emissions tests, giving nearly 21,000 cars and light trucks passing grades, state environmental officials said Thursday.

Officials with the State Dept. of Environmental Conservation said they had issued citations to 40 of about 3,500 inspection sites in the region for granting inspection certificates for vehicles that were not tested.

To pass the annual state emissions inspection, a car or truck is connected to a machine that checks the vehicle's computerized emissions control system and sends the information to the State Dept. of Motor Vehicles. But the repair shops and service stations that were cited attached the inspection equipment to an electronic device that simulated the test.

"New York State does this program because we want clean air and because we need to comply with the federal Clean Air Act," said Steven E. Flint, a director with the Environmental Conservation Dept.'s air resources division. "When people start cheating the system," Mr. Flint said, "it deprives air quality of that benefit."

The emissions testing is part of a program instituted in 2005 that seeks to keep tailpipe gases and other pollution within regulated standards by checking that a vehicle's emissions monitoring computer system is in good working order. State officials said this was the first time they had encountered electronic devices simulating the inspections since the program, for vehicles manufactured in 1996 or later, started. Earlier testing monitored emissions directly from the tailpipe.

Although the emissions testing costs \$37, repairs to vehicles that fail the test can cost much more.

Investigators for the Department of Motor Vehicles flagged 20,773 cases of fraudulent inspections from March 2008 to September 2009 at 27 sites in the Bronx, 4 in Manhattan, 4 in Suffolk County, 3 in Nassau County and 1 each in Westchester County and Brooklyn. The stations face potential fines of \$375 to \$15,000 for the first offense and up to \$22,500 for each ensuing offense.

## **Summary of 2010 legislative session**

By The Associated Press  
Contra Costa Times & Tri-Valley Herald, Friday, Feb. 19, 2010

A summary of developments in the Legislature's 30-day session, which ended Thursday. Gov. Bill Richardson has until March 10 to sign or veto bills passed during the final stretch of the session.

### **BUDGET-FINANCES**

Passed: Replenish state reserves by canceling capital improvements to free up \$150 million; earmark a portion of yearly state bond financing for tribal infrastructure projects; save the state \$18 million by delaying higher employer contributions to the educational retirement fund.

Failed: \$5.5 billion budget to finance public schools and government programs next year; \$175 million in property-tax backed general obligation bonds to finance senior citizen centers, higher education buildings, library acquisitions and other capital projects; allocate \$42 million in severance tax-based bonds for new capital improvement projects; state bonds purchased by New Mexico's permanent funds to help finance government operations.

### **TAXES**

Passed: Raise nearly \$16 million with expanded withholding requirements on partnerships and others to improve tax compliance on out-of-state residents.

Failed: Reinstate gross receipts tax on certain foods, including white flour tortillas; \$1-a-pack cigarette tax; surtax on upper-income taxpayers; one-half cent gross receipts tax increase; boost taxes on multistate corporations with new reporting requirements; repeal of film product tax credit; stop property tax lightning by limiting increases when a home changes ownership.

## EDUCATION

Passed: Hispanic Education Act to improve student achievement and increase graduation rates for Hispanics; provide schools with flexibility to adjust staffing and subject areas to ease budget problems; allow financial literacy class to fulfill part of math requirements for graduation; delay requirements for 180 instructional day school year; require health education course for high school graduation.

Failed: Allow students at tribal colleges to receive state lottery-financed scholarships; increase payouts from a state permanent fund for schools; require at least weekly fine arts classes in kindergarten through grade six.

## ETHICS

Passed: Protect public employee whistleblowers from retaliation if they disclose governmental misconduct; overhaul the State Investment Council, lessening the governor's influence through his powers to appoint members.

Failed: Establish independent ethics commission to investigate allegations of misconduct by public officials; ban campaign contributions by lobbyists, state contractors and those seeking targeted taxpayer-subsidies; require government contractors to make online disclosures of campaign contributions; public financing of campaigns for legislative and statewide office candidates.

## DWI-ALCOHOL

Passed: Increase fee on drunken drivers by \$20 to help pay laboratory costs of alcohol testing.

Failed: Increase penalties for drunken driving, including mandatory jail time for first conviction; prohibit a plea in drunken driving cases to lower charge by those refuse a chemical breath test; provide extra money for fund to help low-income drivers obtain alcohol-sensing ignition interlocks.

## CRIME

Passed: Eliminate plea of guilty but mentally ill; allow concealed handguns in restaurants serving wine and beer; allow people subject to identify theft to correct bad information in credit reports.

Failed: Make it a crime to recruit people for street gangs; restrict domestic violence offenders from serving as police officers.

## ENERGY-ENVIRONMENT

Passed: Allow certain small renewable energy producers to sell electricity without being regulated as a utility; oil tax increase for remediating a brine well that could collapse in Carlsbad; encourage installation of solar energy systems by not having them added to property taxes until a change in home ownership; [tax credit for transporting agricultural waste from feedlots and dairies to biomass energy plants.](#)

Failed: Crack down on polluters with a track record of [air quality violations](#); give state regulators the power to prepare the state for a cap-and-trade program; establish ownership rights of underground pore spaces where carbon dioxide might be stored.

## ELECTIONS

Passed: Allow 16- and 17-year-olds to serve on precinct boards; require the secretary of state to maintain records of paper ballot voting systems purchased in 2006.

Failed: Same-day registration at early voting sites; allow unused ballots from early voting as Election Day backups; prohibit government officials running for election from appearing in taxpayer-financed public service announcements.

## HEALTH CARE-MEDICAL

Passed: Limit how much health insurance companies spend on administrative costs; expand authority of a state high-risk medical insurance pool to help in qualifying for federal funding; consumer protections for people living in continuing care communities; stop insurance companies from using gender as a factor in setting rates for medical coverage.

Failed: Clarify that physician companies are covered by a medical malpractice cap.

## BUSINESS

Passed: Shore up state's unemployment program with higher taxes on businesses; provide financial protections to New Mexico automobile dealers if a car manufacturer ends their franchise.

Failed: Direct more state funds to be invested in community banks.

## GOVERNMENT-OTHER

Passed: Stop governmental retirees from double dipping by suspending their pensions if they return to work starting in July; establish a "sunshine portal" Web site providing state government information; allow issuance of tax-exempt bonds for a downtown redevelopment in Las Cruces.

Failed: Allow domestic partnerships for same-sex couples; define marriage as between a man and woman; several proposals to consolidate state agencies, four-day work week for government agencies and public schools.

## TRANSPORTATION

Passed: Protect New Mexico's spaceport from liability for space flight hazards; allow for renewal of driver's licenses online or by telephone.

Failed: Prohibit drivers from using hand-held cell phones for talking or texting; increase tax on vehicle sales to provide money for road construction and state budget.

## GAME-ANIMALS

Passed: Allow military personnel to buy a general hunting and fishing license at a discounted fee; waive fee for a small game and fishing license for New Mexico military personnel on leave in the state; expand Game and Fish authority to control invasive aquatic species.

Failed: Revise wildlife depredation law by making it illegal for ranchers and other landowners to kill elk and big game that damage crops.

## GAMBLING

Passed: Allow local voters to approve tax break to keep the Ruidoso Downs racetrack from moving to another city.

Failed: Reduce tax on smallest horse track casinos.

## WATER

Passed: Create a new regional water utility district in eastern New Mexico; provide matching money to qualify for \$13 million in federal aid for drinking water projects.

Failed: Designate San Juan River special management area requiring anglers to buy a permit to finance improvements.

## **Beleaguered US to blow up its chemical stockpiles**

By Jeffrey McMurray, Associated Press Writer

Contra Costa Times & Tri-Valley Herald, Friday, Feb. 19, 2010

RICHMOND, Ky.—Under the gun to destroy the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile—and now all but certain to miss their deadline—Army officials have a plan to hasten the process: Blow some of them up.

The Army would use explosives to destroy some of the Cold War-era weapons, which contain some of the nastiest compounds ever made, in two communities in Kentucky and Colorado that fought down another combustion-based plan years ago.

Some who live near the two installations worry it's a face-saving measure, driven by pressure from U.S. adversaries, that puts the safety of citizens below the politics of diplomacy and won't help the U.S. meet an already-blown deadline.

The residents' sensitivity is understandable.

A concrete guard tower with dark windows looms over a double row of fences deep inside the Army's Pueblo Chemical Depot some 120 miles south of Denver, and a sign in red letters warns, "Use of deadly force authorized."

Inside bunkers, locked behind the fences, the slender gray shells are stacked on pallets or stored in boxes. Though many of the shells are more than 50 years old, they look new. The bunkers, called igloos, are made of 12- to 18-inch-thick reinforced concrete covered with a deep mound of earth.

Only 500 to 1,000 of the weapons are believed to be leaking or in need of immediate attention. Still, the Army wants to use explosives to destroy all 125,000 of them.

"I'm not in favor of that," said Marcello Soto, a retired depot worker who lives in Avondale, just south of the Pueblo depot. He worries the chemicals "would get up in the atmosphere or the air, and do some damage."

Environmentalists who years ago successfully blocked a plan to burn weapons containing mustard agent at the Pueblo depot and another in Richmond, Ky., just south of Lexington, say blowing up some of the weapons in a detonation chamber would be worse than burning them.

They argue the plan violates the Army's promise to dispose of the mustard agent at the two sites by neutralizing it—a process that involves mixing it with water and either bacteria or a combination of fuel and superheated air—and taking it to a hazardous waste dump. That takes longer than simply destroying the weapons by explosion.

"It's taking a bad technology we fought for a decade and a half to get them to abandon here and telling us now they want to put in something worse," said Ross Vincent of the Sierra Club in Colorado.

In Richmond, word about the plan to use explosives hasn't generated nearly the reaction as when the Army pushed for incineration some 25 years ago. Even some residents who were active then hadn't heard of the Army's latest proposal.

"It's so scary—just the unknown," said Elise Melrood, an art teacher who lives about four miles from Blue Grass Army Depot. "I'm not sure I'd trust what is going to happen when they do this."

Richmond has far fewer chemical weapons than Pueblo but a wider variety, including the deadly nerve gases sarin and VX. Of the 15,500 mustard rounds housed at the Kentucky depot, as many as 9,300 could be corroded and therefore considered a risk to workers if they leaked and required emergency repairs.

Chemical weapons have horrified the world since they blinded and crippled thousands of soldiers in World War I. Mustard gas can disable an opposing army by causing severe, painful but nonfatal blistering. It can also cause cancer, and even low levels of exposure may threaten workers and the public.

Scientists developed even deadlier chemical bombs during and after World War II. All of them were supposed to have been destroyed in the U.S. by 1994 under a directive from Congress. In 1997, the Chemical Weapons Convention enacted an international deadline of 2012. The U.S. now acknowledges it will certainly miss that too.

There were once nine U.S. chemical stockpiles. Three have been eliminated through incineration or neutralization. Four incinerators remain active, which means 90 percent of the American arsenal is either gone or being destroyed.

The storage sites in Richmond and Pueblo are the only two yet to begin eliminating their chemical weapons and won't even start until the treaty's 2012 deadline passes. Blue Grass is now scheduled to be the nation's last chemical weapons stockpile to be destroyed, beginning in 2018 and finishing in 2021.

Those two communities had feverishly lobbied the U.S. government to deal with their stockpiles using neutralization treatment facilities believed capable of doing the job while causing less [air and water pollution](#).

Neutralization will be used for most of the weapons. But the Army surprised citizen groups late last year with a plan to supplement those efforts by exploding some mustard weapons both places, and possibly even some nerve agent in Kentucky.

While Vincent and others worry about the environmental impact of exploding the weapons, they also question the government's justification and timing for the change of plans.

The State Department acknowledges foreign pressure to show progress played a role. By using explosives, officials say, the nation can continue destroying weapons during some periods when all the U.S. sites otherwise would have been idle.

The department denies, however, that criticism from Iran, Cuba and other U.S. adversaries at a December conference directly prompted the policy shift announced a few weeks later. It's a matter of showing the world the U.S. takes its treaty obligations seriously, said Robert Mikulak, the U.S. representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

"We report every quarter on what we have destroyed, and it is very difficult to explain to others that we are working as hard as possible if that column shows zero for several years at a time," he said.

The Army acknowledges that exploding chemical weapons in Pueblo and Richmond will at best shave a few months off the completion date and still come nowhere close to complying with the treaty.

"I wouldn't say it provides much acceleration," Kevin Flamm, the Army's program manager for neutralization operations at the two sites, said during briefings in December. "What it does is give us increased confidence we'll be able to achieve the dates we announced."

Flamm said using explosives wasn't his first choice either.

"We're not trying to pull the wool over anybody's eyes," he said. "Frankly there isn't any other technologies we've found that can eliminate these weapons safely and environmentally friendly in the time frame we're looking at."

Irene Kornelly, chairwoman of a citizens advisory panel for the weapons site in Pueblo, remains concerned that the plan is being driven not by local safety but by diplomats who have sent orders down the chain of command until they ended up on the doorstep of the storage sites in Pueblo and Richmond.

"Let them come out and explain to us why folks in Kentucky and Colorado are the ones who have to bear the burden for the entire country under our diplomatic situation," she said.

[Letter to the Merced Sun-Star, Friday, Feb. 19, 2010:](#)

### **Letter: Cut oil dependence**

Editor: Every single day, the United States sends a billion dollars in oil money to nations with ties to terrorism.

Much of that money is funneled to the very same terrorist groups that are killing our troops and targeting America. Further, the issue of climate change has significant impact on our security as well.

The days of pretending that climate change is a fallacy are over; it is real and it is happening now.

In fact, the Department of Defense in its quadrennial defense review says that "climate change will have significant geopolitical impacts around the world, contributing to poverty ... and weakening fragile governments."

Weak governments and failed states are often the safe havens and breeding grounds of terrorist organizations like al-Qaida and the Taliban. As a result massive climate change has the potential to create many more terrorists.

There is a bill in Congress that would cut our oil dependence in half, while limiting carbon emissions that contribute to climate change. As a veteran of the Air Force (1981-1987), I believe there is nothing more

important to America. That is why I believe the Congress must pass the Clean Energy bill and have President Obama sign it.

*John Petrone, Merced*

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses Al Gore reaffirms that climate change is not a theory. For more information on this or other Spanish clips, contact Claudia Encinas at \(559\) 230-5851.](#)

### **El cambio climático no es una teoría, afirma Al Gore**

La Opinión, Friday, February 19, 2010

MADRID España (EFE).- El cambio climático es "un hecho científico y no una teoría a discutir" defiende el ex vicepresidente estadounidense Al Gore en su nuevo libro, que bajo el título "Nuestra elección" fue publicado en España.

Esta es la idea central del texto junto con la tesis de que "se pueden discutir las predicciones, pero no los hechos".

La obra aparece después de que Al Gore publicase en 2006 "Una verdad incómoda, la crisis planetaria del calentamiento global y cómo afrontarla" o "La tierra en la balanza, la ecología y el espíritu humano", en 1992.

El Premio Nobel de la Paz explica en su nueva obra que los argumentos "engañosos y cínicos" contra el cambio climático se pueden organizar en términos "de etapas de negación".

Al comienzo, dice Al Gore, su mensaje (el de los negacionistas) era que el calentamiento global "no era algo real, que no existía" y "ridiculizaban" el consenso científico y "escogían sólo aquellos fragmentos de información que podían utilizar para atacarlo".

Pero cuando sus argumentos fueron "meticulosamente refutados, rehusaron reconocer los hechos y continuaron con sus afirmaciones, sin hacer caso a nada", según el ex vicepresidente estadounidense.

Al Gore va incluso más lejos y asevera que se llegó a pagar a "científicos" poco conocidos y "escasamente acreditados" para producir "pseudoinvestigaciones" diseñadas con la finalidad deliberada de "suscitar dudas" acerca de prácticamente todos los aspectos del emergente consenso científico.

El libro, además, hace referencia a cómo las alternativas "necesarias" para salvar el clima "tendrían que ser también" los "cimientos" de las políticas internacionales dirigidas a la creación de nuevos puestos de trabajo y a la "estimulación" del progreso económico sostenible.

Y es que, según Gore, pese a que muchos esperaban que la actual crisis económica demorara aún más las acciones con respecto al cambio climático, la verdad es que la expectativa de millones de nuevos empleos "verdes" ha conducido a progresos en el tratamiento simultáneo de ambos desafíos.

Por último, el ex vicepresidente plantea que ante el cambio climático "nuestra elección" es que la sociedad tiene que cambiar "algo más que nuestras bombillas".

"Debemos cambiar nuestras leyes y nuestras formas de actuar. Los individuos que anhelan formar parte de la solución tienen que convertirse en ciudadanos activos", subraya Gore.

Pero también cree que la humanidad debe hacerse responsable de las fuentes de energía, de los bosques y del crecimiento de la población.

Tal y como hizo con "Una verdad incómoda", el ex vicepresidente Gore tiene previsto donar el cien por cien de los ingresos del libro al grupo "Alliance for Climate Protection" ("Alianza para la protección climática"), un grupo sin fines lucrativos dedicado a la divulgación del conocimiento sobre la crisis climática y sus soluciones.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses Repower America, a citizen's campaign is asking the senate for climate change laws.](#)

### **Campaña de ciudadanos e pide a senadores leyes contra el cambio climático**

Manuel Ocaño, Noticiero Latino

Radio Bilingüe, Thursday, February 18, 2010

El grupo, Repower America inició una campaña en la que los ciudadanos promedio envían a los senadores federales opiniones breves y filmadas sobre las ventajas de tener una ley nacional para impulsar la energía limpia y medidas contra el cambio climático. La mayoría de las opiniones coinciden en que la energía llamada verde crearía empleos y apuntalaría la economía que se necesitan, además de cuidar las comunidades en las que ahora hay contaminación. El grupo informó que aunque el Senado se encuentra en receso, se trata de que los comentarios lleguen a los correos electrónicos de los legisladores para cuando estos se reincorporen a sus trabajos. Las personas interesadas en sumarse a la campaña por escrito, o en video pueden ingresar a la página de Repower America punto org en la red mundial ([repoweramerica.org](http://repoweramerica.org)).

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses the cost of pollution to large industry surpasses 2.2 billion dollars.](#)

## **El costo de la contaminación de las grandes empresas supera los 2.2 billones**

El Periodico de Mexico, Friday, February 19, 2010

Londres, (EFE).- El costo total de la contaminación y otros daños medioambientales atribuibles a las mayores empresas del mundo supera los 2.2 billones de dólares al año, según un estudio encargado por las Naciones Unidas.

Los autores del estudio, llevado a cabo por la consultoría Trucost y que se publicará este verano, calculan que en 2008 estos daños superaron en valor al de las economías nacionales de todos los países del mundo menos siete.

El informe, citado hoy por el diario The Guardian, incide en la preocupación creciente del mundo ante el hecho de que no se hace a nadie responsable de los abusos contra el medioambiente.

El Programa de Medio Ambiente de las Naciones Unidas y la iniciativa bautizada Principios para Inversiones Responsables, apoyada también por la ONU, encargaron un estudio de las actividades de las 3,000 mayores empresas del mundo.

Según sus conclusiones, los daños medioambientales de esas compañías equivalían a entre un 6 y un 7 por ciento de su producción total o a un tercio como media de sus beneficios.

El mayor impacto fue el de las emisiones de gases invernadero, que representan más del 50 por ciento del total de daños.

El sector más "dañino" con mucho resultó ser el de las compañías de servicios, como las proveedoras de gas, electricidad o agua, que contribuyeron con 400,000 millones de dólares al "costo" total.

Los cuatro sectores de menor impacto fueron las telecomunicaciones, sanidad, la tecnología y los servicios financieros, a cada uno de los cuales se atribuyen daños por un total de 25,000 millones de dólares.

Después de las citadas compañías de servicios, los dos sectores con mayor impacto negativo en el medio ambiente fueron la minería, la explotación forestal y la químico-farmacéutica, con "costos" de algo más de 300,000 millones de dólares.

Los "costos" medioambientales de las industrias de bienes de consumo, desde los automóviles hasta los juguetes, pasando por la alimentación y la bebida, fueron de poco menos de 300,000 millones de dólares.

Los daños de unos y otros sectores son de naturaleza distinta: la minería y otras industrias similares contribuyeron significativamente a las emisiones de gases invernadero.

En el caso de los productores de bienes de consumo, sobre todo bebidas y alimentos, el daño principal viene de su uso exagerado de las reservas de agua, seguido de los gases invernadero y la contaminación por el uso de fertilizantes y pesticidas.

"Los mercados dirán que las compañías terminarán adaptándose. Pero no es sostenible la posición de que vamos a hacer de momento la vista gorda y esperar a que los gobiernos se ocupen de ello", critica Richard Martison, director de Trucost, la empresa que llevó a cabo el estudio y analizó los datos.