

Too close to LLNL

By Gail Rieger

Tracy Press, Friday, November 12, 2021

The Tracy City Council just approved construction of more than 1400 new homes in Phase 2 of Tracy Hills. This phase will bring homes even closer to Lawrence Livermore Lab's Site 300, an open-air high explosives testing facility just down the road on Corral Hollow.

In 1990, the EPA placed Site 300 on its Superfund list as one of the most toxic sites in America. In 2018, Site 300 requested a permit to increase the size of its open-air bomb tests, from 100 pounds to 1,000 pounds per blast.

These detonations will contain more than 100 toxic pollutants. Prevailing winds will blow the contamination over Tracy and the Central Valley, with no pollution controls.

We are still waiting for a permit decision from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. If they approve the permit, the Superfund cleanup of radioactive and toxic materials that have already polluted Site 300's soil and groundwater will stop at the firing table where these explosions are slated to happen. The Air District is expected to hold hearings on the effects of the bomb blasts.

It is imperative that Tracy Hills and Tracy residents take a major role in stopping these open-air bomb blasts, as there is an enclosed bomb blasting facility in Nevada that can accommodate these tests. Nevada is where these blasts are done now. They should not be moved to Tracy.

Tri-Valley CAREs, a group organized by parents who lived next to the Lab and the pollution created around their homes, is the only watchdog of the Lab and its decisions that affect the health of our community.

I've lived in Tracy for years and joined Tri-Valley CAREs 10 years ago. For more information about Site 300 and its plans that will affect your family, go to trivalleycares.org.

Stagnant conditions, colder weather and residential wood burning leading to deteriorating air quality

The West Side Index & Gustine Press Standard, Thursday, November 11, 2021

Current poor dispersion conditions and a stable atmosphere across the Valley has led to an increase in PM2.5 (particulate matter 2.5 microns and smaller) concentrations across the region, which is more common during the cooler weather of the fall and winter seasons.

Lingering smoke from wildfires in the region and residential wood burning activity in the cooler weather are also contributing to the current elevated air quality conditions. Valley residents are encouraged to take actions to reduce emissions where possible.

Nov. 1 marked the beginning of the Valley Air District's residential wood burning reduction program, reminding Valley residents that their cooperation is essential in protecting public health and improving wintertime air quality.

The District urges all Valley residents to help reduce harmful PM2.5 emissions and heat their homes by means other than burning wood whenever possible. Residential wood burning is one of the Valley's largest sources of wintertime PM 2.5 emissions and is shown to have a direct effect on neighborhood air quality. In addition, nitrogen oxide (NOx) from tailpipes can add the wintertime pollution problem.

"Less frequent winter storms and an increase in wildfires in recent years has led to significant challenges in reducing particulate matter pollution in the San Joaquin Valley," said District Executive Director and Air Pollution Control Officer, Samir Sheikh. "Choosing not to use your wood burning fireplace or fire pit this winter is critical in our pollution reduction efforts and key to public health."

The winter season residential wood burning reduction program runs from November 1 through the end of February every year, reducing PM 2.5 emissions from wood burning devices such as fireplaces, wood stoves, outdoor fire pits and chimeneas. During that time, the District releases a daily, county-by-county

wood burning declaration based on the air quality forecast. Burning trash or yard refuse is always prohibited.

Daily burn information is available by visiting www.valleyair.org/burnstatus, by calling 1-800-SMOG INFO (766-4463), or by downloading the free "Valley Air" app on your mobile device. In addition, residents are invited to sign up for daily email wood-burning notifications by clicking [here](#). There are three declaration levels: No Burning for All; No Burning Unless Registered; and Burning Discouraged.

Mandatory curtailments do not apply to natural gas devices. Residences in areas with no natural gas service or where wood burning is the sole source of heat are exempt. Rural, mountain and foothill areas where propane tanks are used are considered to be without natural gas service. Outdoor wood burning devices at all residences are still subject to daily restrictions, regardless of exemption status.

Valley residents are encouraged to participate in the Burn Cleaner incentive program and receive as much as \$3,000 to upgrade from older, higher-polluting wood stoves and open-hearth fireplaces to natural gas devices. To participate in this program please visit www.valleyair.org/burncleaner.

Residents with EPA Certified wood and pellet-fueled devices may register them with the Valley Air District in order to use them when the declaration is "No Burning Unless Registered". Find out how to register by visiting: www.valleyair.org/CBYBregistration.