

News Release



>>City and assignment editors<<

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Air District leads Valley coalition to Washington *Group seeks Federal funding for clean air project*

April 12, 2007 – A broad-based coalition of representatives from health and environmental organizations, state and local agencies and industry travels to Washington, D.C. April 17-19 to secure \$100 million in Federal funding crucial to executing Valley air cleanup plans.

“We are urging Congress to allocate the San Joaquin Valley its fair share of funds to address our serious air-quality problem,” said Seyed Sadredin, Executive Director/Air Pollution Control Officer for the Valley Air District, which is leading the mission.

The group is meeting with key members of Congress, regulatory officials, and White House staff, including:

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Stephen Johnson;
- USDA Secretary Mike Johannas;
- U.S. Dept. of Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman;
- U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein;
- U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer;
- U.S. Reps. Costa, Cardoza, Nunes, Radanovich, and Waxman;
- The Head of Council on Environmental Quality; and
- Domestic policy representatives handling agriculture, energy and the environment.

At issue is funding for four major air-quality initiatives critical to meeting health-based air quality standards in the eight-county Air District. The District is currently undergoing a public process to adopt an 8 hour ozone plan, the first plan of its kind in the nation. The regulatory measures from mobile and stationary sources contained in the proposed plan will achieve 85 percent of emission reductions necessary to meet the standard. However, regulations alone cannot achieve all of the necessary reductions, and funding is necessary to reduce emissions from those sources outside of the regulatory authority of the local government. Significant funding is needed to expedite fleet turnover and retrofit on-road and off-road diesel engines operating in the Valley.

In order to reach the additional reductions, the Valley coalition proposes:

- Establishing an Air Quality Empowerment Zone, which would serve as an umbrella program for federal funding and tax incentives;
- Earmarking \$100 million in funding from an EPA Appropriations subcommittee;
- Full funding of the Diesel Emission Reduction Account at \$200 million; and
- Supporting the Air Quality Agricultural Task Force recommendation for \$300 million in new funding for USDA Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP).

“We believe that our funding request, although ambitious, is well justified, given the Valley’s severe air quality and economic challenges,” stated Sadredin. “The Valley is united on this issue, and with this broad coalition working together, we feel confident that the Valley will be heard.”

The Valley Air District covers eight counties including San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the valley portion of Kern. For assistance, contact the nearest District office in Modesto at (209) 557-6440, Fresno (559) 230-6000 or Bakersfield (661) 326-6900.