

News Release



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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District files lawsuit against EPA

Fresno – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s failure to grant a request by California to set its own greenhouse-gas emission regulations has spurred the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to file a lawsuit against the federal government.

The suit was filed this week in the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. The state of California filed a similar lawsuit against the EPA last week.

At issue is California’s request for a waiver of federal preemption for Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions regulations for passenger cars, light-duty trucks and medium-duty passenger vehicles beginning with the 2009 model year. Under the Federal Clean Air Act, California has the right to set its own vehicle emission standards, and other states have the right to adopt California’s standards as their own, after a waiver is granted by the EPA.

“The San Joaquin Valley’s challenge in meeting the state and federal clean-air standards is unmatched by any other region in the state,” said Seyed Sadredin, Executive Director of the Valley Air District. “Action by EPA on this matter will yield much-needed reductions in greenhouse gases, as well as smog-causing pollutants, which are a major public-health concern for the Valley.”

In June, the District sent a letter to EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson, urging the EPA to grant California’s waiver request, noting that GHG emissions cause a significant air-pollution problem in the Valley.

In the letter, the District stated: “Our support of California’s request for waiver of preemption is based on our belief that the proposed programs will not only help reduce GHG emissions, but that they are also essential to our efforts to meet the health-based standards for the criteria pollutants,” pollutants that contribute to the Valley’s air-pollution problems. “Mobile sources emit GHGs as well as criteria pollutants and their precursors, and efforts to reduce mobile source GHG emissions could also reduce emissions related to criteria pollutants. Since mobile source emission control is largely under the authority of state and federal agencies, the SJVAPCD strongly supports new measures that reduce mobile source emissions.”

In the Valley, mobile source emissions contribute more than half the total air pollution. The Valley fails to meet federal health standards for ozone (smog) and particulate matter.

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“In addition to the long-term consequences of climate change, the District is concerned with the potential ramifications of more moderate but imminent changes in weather patterns. The Valley depends heavily on agriculture for its economy and has developed agricultural practices based on the last several decades of weather patterns. Unanticipated and large fluctuations in these patterns could have a devastating effect on the Valley's economy,” said Sadredin.

For more information, visit www.valleyair.org or call the nearest District office: Modesto (209) 557-6400; Fresno (559) 230-6000; or Bakersfield (661) 326-6900.