

**San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
News Release**

For Immediate Release
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**Air District targets vehicle emissions
*\$1 fee to fund emission-reduction programs***

A new, \$1 per vehicle fee will fund stepped-up emission-reduction programs in the ongoing campaign to clean up the San Joaquin Valley's dirty air.

The board of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District today approved the fee, which goes into effect Jan. 1, 2004. The fee will apply to all vehicles registered in the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, which encompasses eight counties from San Joaquin to Kern.

"In order to continue our work to reduce the serious vehicle-emissions problem in the Valley, this fee was absolutely necessary, especially in light of state funding uncertainty for motor vehicle emission-reduction programs," said Dave Crow, the Valley's air pollution control officer.

The District does not have the authority to regulate emissions from motor vehicles. However, since the early 1990s, the state DMV has awarded air districts a surcharge for emission-reduction projects. Since 1993, the Air District has invested \$41 million from motor-vehicle surcharge fees into incentive programs that provided cities, counties and private organizations funds for emission-reduction projects. The fee has enabled the District to:

- Provide start-up subsidies in 1997 to promote of the Altamont Commuter Express between the Valley and portions of the Bay Area;
- Become a major donor to the Sugar Pine Bicycle Trail between Fresno and Clovis, in 1997-98;
- Provide a pre-purchase incentive for Valley residents to buy gasoline-electric hybrid cars from 2001-2003;
- Provide grants to convert tractors, buses, street sweepers and other on- and off-road vehicles to cleaner fuels; and
- Allocate funds to refurbish a rail line connecting Huron and Visalia.

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Page 2

The ongoing state budget crisis and recent changes in the state's administration, however, could jeopardize funding for these types of programs.

"A fee of \$1 per vehicle, per year, is an exceptionally low-cost investment that Valley residents can make now for a tremendous return of blue skies and clean air in our future," Crow said.