

[Wednesday, January 21, L.A. Times](#)

## **Clean-Air Effort Arrives Early at Bob Hope Airport**

**Southwest Airlines and the Burbank field will start converting diesel equipment to electric.**

By Caitlin Liu, Times Staff Writer

In a move to improve air quality, officials from Burbank's Bob Hope Airport and Southwest Airlines agreed to launch a joint effort, five years ahead of schedule, to convert diesel-powered ground-service equipment to machinery powered by electricity.

Under the deal, approved Tuesday by the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport Authority, the airfield is obligated to provide electricity chargers and wiring at all 14 gates by the end of summer. Southwest, in turn, will replace about 40 diesel-powered baggage-towing vehicles, air stairs, conveyors and aircraft-pushing tractors with new battery-powered equipment by the end of 2005.

"It helps reduce emissions in the air around the airport ... and it shows the commitment of Southwest of being a good corporate citizen," said Charles Lombardo, president of the board that oversees the former Burbank Airport.

An earlier agreement between major airlines and state and federal agencies required that at least 30% of their ground equipment at major Southern California airports be replaced by 2010 with machinery that is electric-powered or produces zero emissions, officials said.

Tuesday's agreement, which is more expansive, will convert nearly 100% of the equipment used by Southwest, which operates about two-thirds of Bob Hope Airport's ground equipment.

Larry Laney, director of ground support for Southwest, praised the airport for its willingness to pay for the chargers, which the authority estimates will cost \$500,000 to buy and install. He added that he hoped this action would inspire other airports to "work harder to absorb some of the costs for the carriers, to make it easier to convert" equipment.

Ground-service equipment accounts for 6% to 15% of airport emissions, according to the South Coast Air Quality Management District. Retiring old equipment and reducing diesel emissions will help decrease cancer risks for people at the airport as well as in surrounding areas, said Henry Hogo, assistant deputy executive officer for AQMD

[Wednesday, January 21, The Stockton Record](#)

## **Hydrogen fueling stations coming**

(Author not listed)

SACRAMENTO -- The first in what is envisioned to be a statewide system of hydrogen fueling stations is expected to be up and running later this year, the head of the state's Environmental Protection Agency said Tuesday. Terry Tamminen, secretary of CalEPA, said he's working to make good on Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's campaign promise to create the hydrogen-fueling infrastructure needed to support more clean-burning cars and trucks.

Hydrogen gas can be used in special combustion engines, as well as in fuel cells, to power pollution-free cars. Vehicles running on hydrogen could be a major boon to the San Joaquin Valley, where the majority of air pollution is caused by vehicle emissions.

But finding hydrogen-fueling stations can be difficult. Only a handful exist in the state.

Schwarzenegger envisions by 2010 the state will have a network of hydrogen stations located every 20 miles on major highways. He said the stations would be funded by a combination of

government dollars and investments by private companies. One station could cost up to \$500,000.

Many companies have already expressed interest in helping to build the stations, Tamminen said.

"It's like a big puzzle and we just need to put all the pieces together," he said.

Tamminen's comments came during an informal meeting with reporters at CalEPA's Sacramento headquarters Tuesday.

Tamminen's office also oversees the State Water Resources Control Board, which on Thursday is expected to finalize a program to regulate water pollution caused by farms. That plan requires farmers to monitor water pollution that may be caused when tainted rainwater or irrigation water drains from fields.

Such runoff pollution has been shown to cause elevated levels of bacteria and pesticides in waterways. The proposed regulation would require farmers to monitor waterways to determine the extent of the pollution. That data will help regulators and farmers find better ways of preventing pollution, Tamminen said.

[Monday, January 19, The Modesto Bee](#)

## **Burning deadline puts ag in bind**

[By JENNIFER M. FITZENBERGER and MARK GROSSI](#)

The clock is ticking for growers who rely on cheap open-field burning to dispose of prunings and uprooted orchards from millions of acres in the San Joaquin Valley.

The state will phase out agricultural waste burning beginning in June 2005 under a new law designed to help clean valley air, among the most lung-damaging in the nation.

But the cost of getting rid of farm waste likely will more than double for the valley's \$14 billion agriculture industry. Nearly 2 million tons of prunings, orchard removals and crop waste pile up every year between Stockton and Bakersfield.

The dilemma comes at a time when farmers already are suffering economic distress from slumping markets and rising costs of doing business, said grower John Kalender, who works 1,400 acres of citrus on the valley's east side, in the Dinuba area.

"I don't want to burn," Kalender said. "I don't want to dirty the air. I just don't know what I'm going to do when burning is stopped."

Legislators in Sacramento are wringing their hands, too.

Lawmakers passed a bill last year to phase out farm burning. Now they have about a year and a half to find affordable alternatives.

Without a solution, waste piles will litter many of the valley's 28,000 farms. So far, no one agrees on an answer.

"There will be a huge stink if there is no alternative," said Cynthia Cory, director of environmental affairs for the California Farm Bureau Federation. Mounting piles of ag waste are ripe for fire, attract vermin and tend to become dumping sites.

"It just can't pile up," she said, "it's a health hazard."

State legislators last week shot down a plan to compensate farmers who take their waste to clean-burning biomass power plants. The failed hearing left lawmakers frustrated but determined to find a way to make biomass burning more affordable.

But it is worth the effort to get farm waste to biomass plants. Such plants burn the waste from agriculture, forests, factories and construction sites and produce electricity. The carefully filtered burning does produce pollution, but it's more than 95 percent cleaner than open-field burning.

The biggest obstacle: Chipping crop waste and trucking it from the farm to a biomass plant is far more expensive and complicated than it might seem.

Another option to open-field burning would be working the farm waste back into the soil, but that appears more expensive than hauling it to biomass plants.

The law to phase out open-field burning was part of a series of fiercely debated clean-air measures by Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter.

Senate Bill 705 phases out the burning over five years, ending in June 2010 with old vineyards and almond, walnut and pecan tree prunings.

That's no small task in the valley. In 2002, farmers here burned about 1.1 million tons of agriculture waste, most of which was wood in the form of prunings or old trees.

### **Some burning-ban exemptions**

Emissions from this burning were a small but significant part of the air problem in the San Joaquin Valley, which ranks as the second-most polluted place in the country behind Los Angeles. Farm burning on average accounts for almost 10 tons of particle pollution daily and about 12 tons of smog-making gases.

By comparison, rangeland management fires and prescribed burning in forests account for about 29 tons of particle pollution daily. Those categories of fires also contribute 16 tons of smog-making gases each day.

The burning could continue under an addition to SB 705, said Florez.

The law says the local air district can lift the burning ban if a farm meets certain criteria, including falling within air-quality standards and lacking an affordable alternative.

"If you really, really, really can't do it, you can opt out of it," Florez said.

Florez plans a bond measure, possibly in 2006, that would create "massive amounts of funding" for biomass plants, but details have yet to be worked out.

The end of field burning comes at a time when lagging markets and rising costs squeeze farmers.

For instance, acres of Valencia orange orchards have been removed in the last few years because the fruit isn't selling well. Some growers have lost money for several years on Valencias.

Many eastside growers say their costs for wood disposal would rise from about \$150 an acre for burning to \$400 for grinding and removal to a biomass energy plant.

Phil Reese, chairman of the California Biomass Energy Alliance and owner of a Riverside County plant, said biomass plant owners would love to accept more agricultural waste if it made more economic sense. Because he sells his electricity at a fixed price, he has to be careful how much he pays for fuel.

"The biomass industry is very interested and willing to become the alternative to open-field burning, but we can't do it at our expense," Reese said.

### **Cogdill proposed issuing credits**

Assemblyman Dave Cogdill, R-Modesto, tried to help by writing Assembly Bill 1672, which would have allowed emission reduction credits for farmers who choose biomass over burning. The bill died Jan. 12 in the Assembly Natural Resources Committee.

Businesses earn these credits by reducing pollution through cleaner technology, phasing out older equipment or other means. The credits then can be sold to new or expanding businesses, which must buy more than a ton of credits for each ton of pollution they produce in the valley.

Cogdill said his bill would have established a market-based incentive for farmers to convert their waste to biomass energy. In other words, farmers could recoup some costs if they got credits.

"This is a win-win situation if we can just figure out a way to put it together to everybody's liking," Cogdill said.

Clean-air advocates and air-quality officials like the idea of reducing farm burning, but they opposed the bill.

They feared new farm credits would flood the current market and devalue all the existing credits and, ultimately, hamper air cleanup efforts.

They also said it makes no sense to reward a decrease in open-field burning when it eventually will be phased out anyway.

"The mechanism in the bill before you is one we believe has actually negative air-quality implications," Tom Addison, a legislative analyst with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, told Natural Resource Committee members.

Cogdill said he realizes there might be a better way to solve the problem, though he's not sure how. For now, he plans to forge ahead on creating credits for farmers. His staff will re-evaluate the bill and make changes.

Cogdill also is toying with the idea of asking a Democrat to carry a version of his bill next year. It might be easier for a Democrat to push such a measure through the Democratically controlled Legislature.

[Saturday, January 17, The Stockton Record](#)

## **Seminar looks at saving money by saving the environment**

### **Presentation set to take place four times Wednesday**

In his State of the State address, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said that "economic growth and the environment can coexist."

Ag Expo 2004 follows the governor's lead and presents a seminar for farmers showing how emissions controls and solar energy can save farmers money while reducing California's air pollution and dependency on foreign oil.

Greg Gilbert, Autumn Wind Associates emissions consultant, and Dean Marks, Premier Power president, will present a joint, one-hour seminar four times (10 and 11 a.m., 1 and 2 p.m.) on Wednesday in Building 3.

Gilbert will discuss projects which qualify for a share of \$100 million in funding available from air and energy agencies for California low-emission vehicle and agricultural irrigation engine projects. He will present ways to apply for incentives to use propane vehicles, equipment retrofitting and other methods of emission control.

Dean Marks will join the discussion with ways to use solar energy to operate irrigation pumps at no energy cost with zero emissions. Marks will introduce tax credits covering up to 60 percent of an installed solar system and steps necessary to qualify for government rebates.

[Monday, January 19, Modesto Bee Editorial](#)

## **Court holds air quality in its hands**

The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments Wednesday in a case that could have a major impact on efforts to clean the valley's awful air.

At issue is whether the South Coast Air Quality Management District can order owners of large fleets of vehicles to use low-emission or alternative-fuel vehicles to reduce toxic emissions.

The district covers a large part of the Los Angeles Basin, which had long been known to have the nation's dirtiest air. The only air that compares is the air we breathe in the valley.

This case begs the question: How serious is the Bush administration about cleaning the air? There is plenty of reason for skepticism. Down south, the air district has tried to meet federal Environmental Protection Agency standards by ordering the retrofit -- over time and with many exceptions -- of large public and private sector vehicle fleets. Yet the Bush administration led the arguments on behalf of business interests who oppose the new rules.

The administration has tried to gut the Clean Air Act and sought changes that would let heavy polluters in the energy business continue polluting.

Vehicle exhaust accounts for 70 percent of the carcinogenic toxins in the air above Los Angeles. The figure is about 60 percent here in the valley. If the court agrees with the Bush administration, then one of the most potent tools for fighting this type of pollution will be lost.

Cleaning our air is not going to be easy even with all the tools at hand. If we lose those tools, it just gets harder.