

Residents sound off, get answers on fireplace rules

By SARAH RUBY, Californian staff writer
Bakersfield Californian, Thursday, March 3, 2005

State Sen. Dean Florez cleared the air in Bakersfield Wednesday regarding fireplace burning restrictions set by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

Florez, D-Shafter, took air officials and upset residents through their arguments for and against the fireplace rule, which prohibits burning on the worst air quality days of the year.

Looking up to Florez while seated at Bakersfield's City Council dais, air district planner Tom Jordan told of the rule's success, calling it "quite possibly the most important rule we have to control particulate matter in the valley."

But some residents didn't buy it. They didn't like that their household fires are regulated while IKEA is allowed legions of diesel trucks. They also questioned whether household burning really causes 12 percent to 21 percent of Bakersfield's notorious particulate pollution, which can cause asthma and other lung diseases.

"I want clean air, I have two children in this town," said Bud Beurmann, a Bakersfield resident who didn't get a burn citation, but is still upset. "And you guys want to take my four or five little logs away? Go do some real work and really correct the air problem."

But what really rankles, according to Beurmann and others, is that while the district is sometimes wrong in its air quality forecasts, it still upholds burn citations given that day.

"Some people have said it's kind of like getting a red light ticket (in the mail) and finding out the machine wasn't working," Florez told Jordan.

Not true, Jordan countered. It's like running a stop sign -- one can still get a ticket even if running the sign wouldn't have caused an accident.

He said the district is following orders from the Environmental Protection Agency. A major particulate in the valley is carbon, which comes from wood burning, he said.

This season the district announced two no-burn days in Fresno, Kern and Tulare counties, respectively. It gave out 10 tickets to people who lit their fireplaces anyway, and waived additional citations because the inspector didn't actually see smoke.

Air quality on Nov. 20, the first no-burn day in Kern, turned out to be much less dire than the district predicted. A storm came in early, clearing the pollution.

Officials didn't cancel that day's tickets, but they have decided to do so if such a big change happens next season.

Tickets come with a \$50 fine or a 90-minute air quality class modeled on traffic school.

Supervisors say no to compost plant: City leaders happy, but say it is only round 1

By Doug Keeler, Midway Driller City Editor
Taft Midway Driller, Thursday, March 3, 2005

Voices of protest from the West Side apparently made a difference in Bakersfield.

After Taft residents and elected officials voiced their opposition to a composting plant to be built on South Lake Road East of Taft, the Kern County Board of Supervisors voted 5-0 Tuesday afternoon that the plant would have no public benefit and therefore should not qualify for tax-exempt bonds to pay for construction.

Four Taft City councilmen, backed by city staff and other members of the community attended the supervisors meeting to tell the county not to approve the funding.

Councilman Paul Linder told the supervisors that they voted for the funding, they ought to vote to change the county's seal and add a "Port-a-Potty and a pile of manure to it."

But that decision won't stop Synagro Technologies from building a composting plant to treat biosolids - sewage - trucked in from the metropolitan areas of Southern California and local agricultural waste products.

Project Manager Liz Ostoich said Monday that construction on the plant will begin in May and it will start treating 500 tons of waste per day in a year no matter how Tuesday's vote went.

But opponents of the plant are encouraged sentiments from the Kern County Board of Supervisors to take another look at the conditional use permit issued in October 2002 for the plant.

In fact, the city looked at Tuesday's actions as just the first step in an ongoing effort to prevent the importing of sewage and other waste into Kern County.

"Now we have to watch this very carefully and see if we can go after their CUP," said Linder.

:"It was great that we won this first round, but we've got a lot of work ahead of us," Councilman Craig Noble said.

Mayor Cliff Thompson said supervisors Michael Rubio and Don McQuiston said they are questioning the conditional use permit and wondering about its effects on the air and water.

Thompson told the supervisors that the project could hurt the city's economic recovery if it goes through.

The West Side Development Company LLC is trying to put the finishing touches on a land purchase that could open large areas east of Taft to residential development.

"How are we supposed to develop Taft with this cesspool seven miles from Taft?" he asked the supervisors.

Taft residents weren't alone in their opposition to the plan.

"What really impressed me was there were representatives from Lost Hills, Delano and Bakersfield. This wasn't just Taft against Bakersfield."

Ag News

Valley Voice Newspaper
March 3, 2005

EPA has set a meeting with dairy producers in Tulare March 7 to discuss a consent agreement on air quality at the UC Cooperative Extension from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. The agreement covers animal operations on how they will be charged to cover the cost of a 2 year monitoring program on air emissions. EPA plans to select 28 farms in swine, poultry, and dairy as part of the study.

Port Clean-Air Plan Nearly Set Experts ready proposals for pushing pollution back to 2001 levels with strict rules, growth cap.

By Deborah Schoch
Los Angeles Times, March 3, 2005

A road map to cleaner air in and around the Port of Los Angeles could be crafted today as a high-powered panel of experts wrestles with how to roll back air pollution to 2001 levels at the country's largest seaport.

Officials overseeing the effort said Wednesday evening that they are increasingly optimistic that the panel will move ahead today to approve a preliminary plan to slash pollution from ships, trains, trucks and yard equipment over the next 20 years.

The push to create the first-in-the-nation clean-air plan for a seaport comes amid mounting public concern that the fast-growing Los Angeles-Long Beach port complex has become the region's worst air polluter.

Diesel fumes and other contaminants created by moving cargo through the ports are fouling the air, not only in the Harbor area, but along freeways and railroad lines east to the warehouses of Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

Measures being weighed include stringent regulations and voluntary steps, but one little-noticed proposal, known as "03" - on Page 104 of the draft plan - would impose a growth cap if pollution grew above certain levels.

"That's the ultimate backstop," said port environmental expert Christopher Patton. He is helping lead the task force appointed last summer by Mayor James K. Hahn with orders to determine how to reduce pollution to 2001 levels.

But the panelists learned Wednesday that even the barrage of more than 60 cutting-edge measures in their plan would take five years or longer to roll back pollution to 2001 levels.

For the first time, they also saw charts showing how two major types of contaminants - particulate matter and nitrogen oxides - would continue to mount until 2010 or later, despite the ambitious curbs, some of which would require new laws or still-to-be-perfected technology.

Hahn's effort to create a clean-air plan gained momentum when three major agencies that regulate Southern California air quality - the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the state Air Resources Board and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - dispatched some of their top technical staff to work with port experts and consultants on a working group advising the larger task force.

They have devised the preliminary plan now being reviewed by task force members at a marathon two-day session at the Sheraton in San Pedro. Those members include representatives of the railroad and shipping industry, community and environmental groups, and unions.

Several members said they were encouraged by the convivial atmosphere of the Wednesday meeting. "We got consensus on most issues," said Port Commissioner Thomas Warren, co-chairman of the group.

Gail Ruderman Feuer, senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council, said she was "very encouraged. I'm optimistic that this task force will deliver to the mayor a strong plan that will achieve no net increase."

But a controversial measure to rein in pollution from railroad locomotives will be discussed this morning, and a representative from Union Pacific railroad expressed concerns Wednesday that a railroad representative had not been included in the working group.

Some members voiced disappointment that the adjacent Port of Long Beach, the nation's second-largest port, did not accept an invitation from rival Los Angeles to join the task force deliberations that began last fall.

Richard Steinke, executive director of the Port of Long Beach, confirmed Wednesday that his port received an invitation, but he said the port's harbor commissioners chose to develop their own "green port" plan adopted in January.

Los Angeles task force members said that is not enough.

"There needs to be a level playing field. It's unfair to do it in Los Angeles and not in Long Beach,"

Feuer said.

Hahn is seeking to fulfill his 2001 vow to hold the line on emissions at the city-owned port.

[Letter to the Editor, Madera Tribune, March 3, 2005](#)

Biodiesel sounds like a good idea, and so does diesel car

Biodiesel fuel lends new meaning to “Freedom” french fries. The FuelMeiser could free up my pocketbook, after the initial investment of purchasing the FuelMeiser, and scrounging for used deep fryer oil.

Sure beats paying over \$2 a gallon at the pump for gasoline.

I may be seeing a FuelMeister in my future, if possible. My husband always wanted a new diesel car.

Mary Ash
Ridgecrest