

## **Clear savings in smog report**

By Eric Louie

Contra Costa Times, Friday, April 22, 2005

A report released a week before the state considers tougher smog standards says adopting those standards would save \$6.4 million a year in emergency room visits, hospital admissions, minor activity restrictions on adults and missed school days in Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

The report from the Environmental Working Group, with an office in Oakland, also shows how many times smog levels at individual schools exceeded the current and proposed standards between 2000 and 2003. Although those numbers were relatively low in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, in some areas -- Livermore, in particular -- they are an issue.

The state's smog standard is 0.09 parts per million as measured during one hour, and already is the strictest in the country, said Gennet Paauwe, spokeswoman for the state Air Resources Board. That board's staff proposes adding an additional daily standard of 0.07 ppm. The federal government's standard is 0.12 ppm measured during one hour, and 0.08 ppm during a day, she said.

The proposed change is a result of 1999's Senate Bill 25, known as the Children's Environmental Health Act. That bill directs the state to create new allowable pollution standards that account for children, as they are affected by air pollution more than are adults, she said.

"Everything we're doing here is to protect the most vulnerable people," Paauwe said. She said the new standards are opposed by automobile organizations and other industries.

Altogether, the report says the state loses \$521 million a year to smog, with most of those losses traced to Southern California and the Central Valley.

The report said Alameda County could save \$3.9 million a year under the new standard, while Contra Costa County could save \$2.5 million. In 2003, Alameda County schools averaged 2.4 days when smog in the surrounding air surpassed the hourly standard, while the average Contra Costa County school recorded 2.9 days. Comparatively, Los Angeles County schools averaged 13 such days in 2003; during the same time, the air in Livermore -- and at its schools -- surpassed the standard on 10 days.

Scott Vernoy, principal of Smith Elementary in Livermore, said when ozone levels are high, the school limits physical activity.

"We'll encourage four-square or tether ball instead of football or other field activities," Vernoy said.

Authors of the study say that should not have to happen.

"Keeping our kids indoors on bad air days is a wise precaution, but it's not a workable long-term solution to protect their health," author Sonya Lunder said in a news release. "Educators and parents must make smart choices about kids' activity on severe pollution days, but the state must do its part by adopting tougher standards and making it a top priority to continue reducing smog."

In general, smog is a combination of chemicals, like those emitted from vehicles, and heat, said Bill Walker, vice president of the Environmental Working Group.

## **Concern for environment drives church members**

By Doug Hoagland / The Fresno Bee

Friday, April 22, 2005

Biologist Richard Haas helped focus Fresno's attention to environmental concerns on the first Earth Day in 1970 and he's still steering the ecological cause. Literally steering, that is. Haas and a bunch of other folks at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno drive high-mileage, low-polluting Toyota Priuses.

The Unitarian Universalist movement embraces what it terms "respect for the environment," a sentiment that Americans define in different ways, and today observe on Earth Day 2005.

Haas said he and 22 other people at the church drive Toyota hybrids powered by an electric motor and gasoline engine.

A couple more parishioners own the Honda hybrid, and the church's minister motors around in a vehicle powered by natural gas, which is less polluting than gasoline, Haas said. That's about 10% of the church's family units choosing low-emission cars in the perennially polluted Valley.

Haas is a retired biology professor at California State University, Fresno, and says he organized Earth Day activities on the campus 35 years ago.

Former Sen. Gaylord Nelson, D-Wis., started Earth Day as "a nationwide grass-roots demonstration on behalf of the environment," according to a statement on the Internet.

The Prius buying spree at the Unitarian church was pretty grass roots, too. It wasn't a group decision, Haas explained. "We don't do that kind of thing generally."

However, the church believes strongly "in the interconnectedness of life on the planet," Haas said. "We are part of the whole thing, so that gives us certain responsibilities. We're very attentive to the needs of our children and their health and well being."

Cars contribute to the production of smog which can affect the lungs, skin and eyes and can trigger asthma attacks and other breathing disorders. Smog and other pollutants cause the San Joaquin Valley to rank as one of the dirtiest air basins in the country. "Most of the people in the church try to walk their talk," Haas said. "And if we talk about the need for children to breathe fresh air and you drive a SUV, that would be pretty hypocritical."

Haas and his wife, Vickie, got a Prius in February 2004. It replaced a Saturn. Haas said he paid about \$22,000 for the car, which included side air bags that aren't standard, and that his Prius gets 43-45 miles per gallon in town. He got 49.5 on a recent freeway trip.

Priuses went on sale in the United States in the summer of 2000, and 142,735 have been sold through the end of March, according to Toyota. American sales are the highest in California, especially in the San Francisco Bay Area and Southern California. Fresno-Visalia ranked 33rd out of 200 sales regions for Prius sales in 2002-04. About 120 were sold in each of those years in the Fresno-Visalia region.

Two other church members, Shirley and Robert Valett, drive a 2003 Prius that replaced a pre-Hybrid Toyota, model year 1980. Shirley Valett said they got the Prius to make an environmental statement about the need to conserve gasoline and look at alternative energy sources.

Valett said the Prius is economical in the long run because it goes farther on a tank of gas and is less polluting. She added with a chuckle, "You don't have to plug it in."

Recently, 16 of the Prius-loving Unitarians parked their cars in front of property in northeast Fresno where they plan to build a new church soon. They took a photo and want to see whether Toyota would be interested in it, Haas said.

The new church will be a "green" building, meaning its positioning on the property and the materials used to build it will promote the conservation of energy, Haas said.

He plans to observe Earth Day 2005 by staying home and taking solace that people today better recognize "the changes that must occur if we want to leave a fairly green place for children to grow into."

## **Environmentalists Mull Future of Movement**

By TERENCE CHEA - Associated Press Writer

Published in the SF Chronicle, Stockton Record and Bakersfield Californian

Friday, April 22, 2005

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) -- As the world marks the 35th anniversary of Earth Day on Friday, environmentalists are debating the future of a movement that seems to be losing the battle for public opinion.

President Bush's re-election, the failure to slow global warming and the large number of Americans who dismiss them as tree-hugging extremists have environmental leaders looking for new approaches.

And while polls show most Americans want clean air, clean water and wildlife protection, environmental issues rank low on their list of priorities - behind jobs, health care, education and national security.

"There's this paradox where Americans hold these views, but when it comes time to take action, there are many, many issues that trump environmental concerns," said Peter Teague, environmental programs director at the Nathan Cummings Foundation.

Some think it's a message problem - that environmental groups simply need to improve their communication with the voting public. Others are calling for more fundamental changes in how the groups operate.

The challenge goes beyond the environmental movement, said George Lakoff, a University of California, Berkeley linguistics professor who has written about how language colors political discourse.

Lakoff argues that the entire public agenda has been seized by what he calls a "right-wing ideological political movement that's extremely powerful and well-funded."

The Bush administration's environmental philosophy has centered on the idea that most environmental decisions are better made by the marketplace, landowners and state and local governments.

And certain proposals that the Bush administration has floated - such as changes to the Clean Air Act - would lead to weaker regulations than required by laws already in place, many environmentalists argue.

Many green leaders say they deserve some of the blame for the situation.

Bush "was re-elected in a campaign in which neither candidate talked much about the environment," said Buck Parker, executive director of Earthjustice, who chairs a coalition of 30 national environmental organizations called the "Green Group."

It wasn't always this way.

In the decade after Sen. Gaylord Nelson, D-Wis., started the first Earth Day with a series of teach-ins on April 22, 1970, environmental activists achieved some of their biggest victories - the passage of the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act and Environmental Policy Act.

Lately, environmental groups have been fighting to hold on to the gains of the 1970s and 1980s, but the battles have not been resonating with the voting public.

To win public support, leaders say they are trying to present the problems and potential solutions in language that connects to people's lives.

"We haven't done a good job communicating about the solutions," said Carl Pope, who heads the Sierra Club.

Many environmental groups are also finding new allies outside their old political coalitions.

The Sierra Club has paired up with ranchers and hunters against increased oil and gas development in some Western states. The environmental law firm Earthjustice is working with Hispanic groups and public health advocates to fight air pollution in California's Central Valley, with American Indians to restore salmon runs in the Pacific Northwest, and with native Hawaiians to protect wildlife in Hawaii.

"We're building bridges and finding how you can work with other organizations that don't define themselves as environmentalists," said Earthjustice's Parker.

Others believe more fundamental changes are necessary. Last fall, pollster Ted Nordhaus and public relations consultant Michael Shellenberger prompted a heated debate with their paper called "The Death of Environmentalism."

"What the environmental movement has failed to do is give Americans a compelling sense of what's in a post-global-warming world for them," Nordhaus said. "We live in an aspirational culture. Gloom and doom narratives don't work. We need to give Americans a vision of the world that is optimistic and hopeful."

On the Net:

Strategic Values Project, Death of Environmentalism paper: <http://thebreakthrough.org/>

## **Earth Day at 35: Is it still relevant? Heyday was in 1970s; today it's an institution**

By Miguel Llanos, Reporter  
MSNBC on MSNBC.com  
April 21, 2005

We've all heard of Earth Day, and some of us might have actually done volunteer work to commemorate it. But is environmentalism's unofficial holiday, this Friday, still having the same impact it had during its heyday in the 1970s?

The short, but not complete, answer is: No.

On the 35th anniversary of Earth Day, tens of thousands of volunteers will clean up parks, pick up litter and restore trails. The first Earth Day was as much a day for tending the environment as it was a political event.

Earth Day was founded in 1970 by then Sen. Gaylord Nelson, whose "goal was to put the environment on the nation's political agenda in a prominent, permanent way," says Bill Christofferson, author of "The Man From Clear Lake," a new biography about Nelson.

"The first Earth Day was magical," Christofferson says. "Twenty million people — 10 percent of the U.S. population at the time — participated," many by joining sit-ins and marches.

Nearly half of those 20 million were students from 2,000 colleges and 10,000 grade schools.

Tens of thousands of New Yorkers who jammed Fifth Avenue in a march that made the front page of the next day's New York Times. At the Washington Monument in the nation's capital, 10,000 people gathered to hear folk music from Pete Seeger and a speech by Sen. Edmund Muskie.

Earth Day inspired a wave of environmental activism that led to the creation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of cornerstone environmental laws: the Clean Air, Clean Water and Endangered Species acts.

"The 1970s were the Environmental Decade, with 23 major pieces of environmental legislation being passed by Congress," Christofferson notes.

### **A different impact**

Earth Day doesn't have the same influence today, but it has become an American institution.

"Because schools at all levels, from elementary through universities, are involved, Earth Day happens every year with no real need for a national organization to push it or make it happen," Christofferson says.

Today, the Earth Day Network, which includes 5,000 groups in more than 184 countries, uses the Internet to connect individuals with volunteer opportunities on Earth Day.

But the lack of a visible leader also makes it impossible for the Earth Day Network to speak in a single voice. Few grass-roots groups, for example, have adopted or even know that the Earth Day Network has an actual theme for 2005 — "Protect Our Children and Our Future."

Christofferson believes that's less important than Nelson's other goal: nurturing an environmental ethic in young people.

Nelson loves to tell of his encounter with a third-grader as an example of how children today are more knowledgeable about the environment than college students in 1970. The girl told Nelson how she made her mom "go back to the grocery store and exchange a can of tuna, because the first one mom bought did not have a 'dolphin-free' label," Christofferson says. "It is that kind of awareness that sustains the environmental movement now."

### **End run around environmentalism?**

But the direction of the movement is the subject of debate after [two activists wrote a controversial essay](#) in October titled "The Death of Environmentalism."

In their mind, Earth Day will falter if it becomes tied to traditional environmental groups, which they see as lacking inspiration.

"Earth Day should not belong to environmentalists," says Michael Shellenberger, one of the essay authors and co-founder of the New Apollo Project, a coalition promoting renewable sources of energy to reduce emissions tied to global warming as well as America's dependence on oil.

"I can't think of a single example when enviros have been inspirational on global warming," he says.

"We co-founded the New Apollo Project as a vision for investing in the clean energy industries of the future, just as we invested in the highways, microchip and the Internet, which would create millions of good new jobs in the U.S.," Shellenberger says. "That's an inspirational vision that Americans can get behind — far more strategic than narrow, literal-minded efforts to 'stop global warming.'"

Inspiring people, especially youth, to connect with the Earth as opposed to environmental groups is what Earth Day should be about, he says: "We don't think that Earth Day is limited to advancing environmentalism; it can be much more."

### **Grass-roots activism**

The debate won't be settled any time soon, but neither will it deter hundreds of groups from wrapping themselves around the Earth Day banner for events designed to attract volunteers.

One of them is the Washington Trails Association, a nonprofit group that maintains hiking trails in Washington state.

"I haven't seen the enthusiasm for Earth Day drop off at all," says spokeswoman Lauren Braden, who has worked in the environmental community for 10 years.

This year, she expects up to 30 volunteers for its Earth Day trail maintenance — double the normal number for the weekend projects to repair hiking trails.

Earth Day's call to action is particularly strong at universities, where Earth Clubs are strong, and groups like the Washington Trails association are invited to set up booths on Earth Day, she says.

Such events have led Braden to value the unofficial holiday just as Gaylord Nelson and Michael Shellenberger do. "Earth Day," she says, "is one of the most important ways to attract youth."

## **Earth Day emphasis on electronic waste Cell phones, music players seen as toxic trouble**

The Associated Press, posted on MSNBC.com  
April 21, 2005

SAN FRANCISCO - When Earth Day dawned in 1970, optimistic environmentalists predicted emerging technologies would help reduce the nation's reliance on coal, oil, insecticides and other pollutants.

But 35 years later, a big part of the problem appears to be technology itself.

Tons of computers, monitors, televisions and other electronic gizmos that contain hazardous chemicals, or "e-waste," may be poisoning people and ground water. Activists say the nation's biggest environmental problem may be the smallest devices, and this week they're launching campaigns to increase awareness about recycling cell phones, music players, handheld gaming consoles and other electronics.

Frequently, smaller portable gadgets have batteries that are prohibitively expensive to replace. So consumers in affluent countries simply toss them in the trash.

### **Disposable but not environmental**

"They're small and lightweight, and the electronics industry markets them as disposable. Whenever you upgrade your (wireless) service, you can get a new flip phone for \$50 and they never tell you to recycle the old one," said Kimberlee Dinn, campaign director for Washington, D.C.-based Earthworks, a nonprofit that studies the environmental impact of mining, digging and drilling natural resources.

Environmentalists are particularly bothered by the recycling and reuse policies of cell phone manufacturers and distributors and of Apple Computer Inc., maker of the iPod digital music player.

The biggest offenders are cell phones, said Dinn, because they pose a hazardous "double whammy" to the environment.

To build them, gold and other metals must be extracted from mines in western states, in Peru, Turkey, Tanzania and other countries. The Environmental Protection Agency ranks hard-rock mining as the nation's leading toxic polluter.

Then, at the end of their life cycles, many phones end up in landfills, where they may leak lead and other heavy metals that could pollute nearby ground water.

### **Low recycling rate for cell phones**

Americans have about 500 million obsolete, broken or otherwise unused cell phones, and about 130 million more are added each year — the equivalent of 65,000 tons of waste, according to the EPA.

Less than 2 percent are recycled — usually refurbished and resold to consumers in Latin America and Asia, or disassembled for gold and other parts, according to Earthworks.

It's unclear what happens to the remaining 98 percent or more of cell phones, said Dinn, whose organization is launching a recycling campaign to coincide with Friday's Earth Day activities in Washington, Philadelphia, Seattle, New Orleans and other cities.

Activists are asking consumers to download and print postage-paid labels and send unused phones to the Atlanta-based recycling organization CollectiveGood. The goal is to collect at least 1 million cell phones this year.

"We think a majority of those phones are waiting around in people's desk drawers," said Dinn, who came up with 30 unused cell phones in a recent sweep of the group's eight-person office.

Environmentalists are encouraged by legislation passed by the European Union. Starting in July 2006, new cell phones sold in any EU country may not contain lead or several other toxins. Also in July 2006, California will require all cell phone retailers to have an in-store recycling program.

But cell phone initiatives may not be enough to stem overall e-waste.

U.S. consumers retire or replace roughly 133,000 personal computers per day, according to research firm Gartner Inc. According to a study commissioned by San Jose-based Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition, roughly half of all U.S. households have working but unused consumer electronics products.

### **Apple latest target**

After a campaign that resulted in significant improvements to the recycling program of Dell Inc., many e-waste activists are focusing on Apple.

Environmentalists planned a news conference Thursday near Apple's Cupertino headquarters to coincide with the company's annual shareholder meeting.

CEO Steve Jobs and Apple board members, including former Vice President Al Gore Jr., have each received at least 400 faxes about the company's contribution to e-waste, said Robin Schneider, executive director of the Austin, Texas-based Texas Campaign for the Environment. The group is asking Apple to reduce or eliminate recycling fees for consumers and build in-store recycling centers.

Apple spokesman Steve Dowling said the company would not comment on environmentalists' yearlong campaign.

Apple charges most American consumers \$30 to recycle unused or broken computers and laptops. And though Apple doesn't have a specific iPod recycling program, a service promoted by its corporate Web site sells consumers shipping labels and packaging materials for sending equipment to recycling vendors.

In January, Apple agreed to help sponsor an industry initiative launched by eBay Inc. and Intel Corp., that created an informational Web site to help motivate Americans to resell, donate or

recycle used gadgets. Gateway Inc., Hewlett-Packard Co., International Business Machines Corp. and Ingram Micro Inc. are also participating, as well as the U.S. Postal Service, which in some cases will help deliver PCs to eBay drop-off locations or recycling centers.

The popularity of the iPod and iPod Mini — as well as more affordable gadgets such as the pack-of-gum-sized \$99 iPod Shuffle — makes Apple an obvious target for environmentalists' scorn. Apple shipped 5.3 million iPods last quarter, a nearly sevenfold increase from the same period last year.

"We'd like nothing better for Earth Day than for Steve Jobs to say he's agreed to producer takeback recycling," Schneider said.

## **Massive energy bill shields MTBE makers**

By Nicole Tsong and David Whitney -- Bee Washington Bureau  
Sacramento Bee, Friday, April 22, 2005

WASHINGTON - The House passed a comprehensive energy bill Thursday that included a provision to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and protected manufacturers of the gasoline additive MTBE from lawsuits.

The energy bill, approved 249-183, is the fifth version in four years to pass the House and marks the third time the House has approved a bill permitting drilling in the Alaska coastal plain.

The MTBE lawsuit protection provision was one of the main reasons the energy legislation failed last year.

Throughout the two-day debate, the biggest battle was over the provision that would shield the oil-company makers of MTBE from liability for the cost of cleaning up underground water supplies contaminated with the product.

An effort to scrap the provision fell six votes short.

California's 53-member House delegation was divided on the issue straight down party lines.

MTBE, or methyl tertiary butyl ether, was the leading additive used by the oil industry under a 1990 Clean Air Act amendment aimed at reducing air pollution. While it may have worked to cut smog, it also turned into a water pollution problem when it leaked into the ground from underground tanks at service stations.

Nearly 1,500 lawsuits have been filed alleging product liability, and the cost of cleaning up polluted sites has been put at \$29 billion, although the industry contends the bill will be far less.

With the manufacturers immunized from lawsuits, critics charged that cities and states would have to pay the cleanup costs for a product that the industry knew would become a major pollution problem if it ever leaked into the ground.

The Congressional Budget Office determined that the provision would amount to an unfunded mandate - a term popularized by Republicans for government actions that unfairly thrust the cost of federal decisions on the states.

Democrats hammered hard on Republicans not only for refusing to enforce their own doctrines against such mandates but also for protecting the oil industry as part of an energy bill already full of subsidies.

House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi, D-San Francisco, condemned that provision as an "outrageous giveaway." Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Los Angeles, said "your local governments are going to have to pick up billions of dollars in costs to clean up the drinking water."

But Republicans, even reading from Waxman's own remarks at the time, said it was well understood in 1990 that Congress was virtually directing the oil industry to use MTBE to reduce air pollution.

Led by Rep. Lois Capps of Santa Barbara, the Democrats forced a reluctant House Republican leadership to hold a vote on yanking the provision, which last year was blamed for scuttling a deal with the Senate on an energy package.

The Capps amendment was defeated 219-213, but the margin was close enough that it is certain to add to pressure already facing the House leadership to compromise on its defense of the oil industry.

Rep. Charles Bass, R-N.H., who sits on the Energy and Commerce Committee's environment and hazardous material panel, said the search is on for an MTBE remediation plan that would include "all the responsible entities."

"This problem is not going to be solved by lawsuits," he said.

This week's debate on the House floor over the energy bill took on an urgent tone because of rising gasoline prices. Republicans touted the bill as critical to lowering energy prices, although they acknowledged the bill would not provide immediate relief for fuel prices.

But at a press conference Wednesday, Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman and several House leaders stood in front of the words "Fill 'er up" printed over a picture of a full fuel gauge. President Bush also called on Congress this week to pass the bill, saying it would help lower energy prices and encourage domestic oil production with drilling in ANWR.

The bill also:

- \* Includes \$8 billion in tax breaks for oil, gas, nuclear, coal and electric utilities.
- \* Requires refiners to increase use of corn-based ethanol.
- \* Expands daylight-saving time by two months to the first Sunday in March and the last Sunday in November.
- \* Allows the federal government to decide where to place liquefied natural gas import terminals. California lawmakers fighting two proposed LNG terminals off the coast of Oxnard oppose this item.
- \* Provides a tax credit of 20 percent, up to \$2,000, for homeowners who install more efficient windows and doors and improved insulation.
- \* Alters the Clean Air Act by giving localities whose polluted air comes from distant states more time to meet national air quality standards.
- \* Sets mandatory reliability standards for electric power lines, instead of industry self-regulation.
- \* Provides \$2 billion in royalty relief to the oil and gas industry over 10 years for research on ways to recover more oil and gas from the Gulf of Mexico.

Joining the GOP majority in passing the bill were 41 Democrats. Rep. Joe Barton, R-Texas, said the size of the Democratic support was a sign that this year's legislation might fare better in the Senate than the energy bill that died there two years ago.

Proponents still need to maneuver through several more steps before the legislation becomes law. They are awaiting a companion bill from the Senate, which likely will not include a provision to open the Arctic coastal plain to drilling. A long-standing filibuster threat from Democrats has stalled ANWR provisions in the past, and this year the Republican leadership passed the ANWR measure in the Senate's budget resolution, which is not subject to a filibuster.

## **House approves energy package**

### **After debate over MTBE liability for companies, lawmakers pass bill that includes drilling in refuge.**

By Nicole Tsong and David Whitney / Bee Washington Bureau  
Fresno Bee, Friday, April 22, 2005, 6:43 AM)

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The MTBE lawsuit protection provision was one of the main reasons the energy legislation failed last year. The MTBE and Alaskan drilling issues are likely to meet strong opposition in the Senate.

The bill would:

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An amendment from Rep. Edward Markey, D-Mass., to remove the ANWR provision from the bill failed on the House floor late Wednesday in a 231-200 vote.

Throughout the two-day debate, the biggest battle was over the provision that would shield the oil-company makers of the gasoline additive MTBE from liability for the cost of cleaning up underground water supplies contaminated with the product.

An effort to scrap the provision fell four votes short. California's 53-member House delegation was divided on the issue straight down party lines.

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## **Brazilian official promoting ethanol fuel Trade minister arguing for cooperation with U.S. firms on new energy source to be marketed to Japan, China**

By David Armstrong, Chronicle Staff Writer  
S.F. Chronicle, Friday, April 22, 2005

Ethanol fuel produced from agricultural byproducts and marketed jointly by Brazilian and U.S. companies could eventually power the accelerating auto market in energy-hungry China and Japan, a Brazilian cabinet minister suggested earlier this week.

Luiz Fernando Furlan, Brazil's minister of development, industry and foreign trade, said in an interview that about 30 percent of new motor vehicles in his country are able to burn ethanol or a mix of ethanol and gasoline.

The cost of ethanol fuel, which emits less greenhouse gas and pollutants than gasoline, is only 60 percent to 85 percent of the cost of gas in Brazil, and costs are falling as more motorists choose the alternative fuel in an era of stubbornly high oil prices.

"Our proposal in coming here is to join forces and grow the market," Furlan said Wednesday. He is in California to meet with state agriculture and transportation officials as well as executives from companies such as ChevronTexaco, BP Amoco and Cargill Inc. on a four-day visit as head of a Brazilian trade mission.

The government of Brazil, Latin America's biggest and most populous country and the region's largest economy, wants to broker deals and help create U.S.-Brazilian joint ventures in the energy field, though these would be strictly private enterprises, Furlan said.

"We understand that renewable energy will be a commodity in the 21st century," he said.

Despite Brazil's status as a major player in world trade, it is known for little more in this country than Carnival, coffee and soccer, Furlan said.

In fact, he said, Brazil is buttressing traditional strengths in agriculture and aircraft and automobile manufacturing with newfound expertise in high tech. According to Brazilian government statistics,

Brazil has a higher usage of the Internet, personal computers and mobile phones than do China, India or Mexico.

Brazil is especially eager to make its presence felt in California, given the state's prominence in high tech, agriculture and environmental circles.

By sharing Brazil's expertise in making ethanol and leveraging California's global connections and marketing flair, Brazil hopes to expand its export markets and introduce itself as a quickly modernizing place to do business, he said.

"Japan is requiring (new) cars to burn 2 percent ethanol, and the figure will go up to 10 percent," Furlan said.

An even larger potential market for ethanol will be found in mainland China, where a burgeoning urban middle class is buying cars -- and increasing congestion and pollution in the Middle Kingdom's dynamic cities.

"Sao Paulo is about the size of Los Angeles," Furlan said of Brazil's largest city. "The air was so bad you couldn't find birds in Sao Paulo. Since we adopted ethanol, you can see a wide variety of birds there."

The same kind of cleaning and greening, he said, could happen elsewhere, even in Asia's bursting-at-the-seams cities, if they adapt cleaner, renewable sources of energy from the New World.

"It's good for industry, it's good for the countries, it's good for the environment," Furlan said.

[Fresno Bee editorial, Friday, April 22, 2005:](#)

## **Just make the rule**

Air district dithers as forces on both sides keep the pressure on.

The Valley's air district board on Wednesday did what many of us do when we find ourselves caught between a rock and a hard place: It tried to step sideways. It probably won't work.

The governing board of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District signed contracts with a pair of large developers designed to mitigate or pay for additional pollution caused by their developments. Castle & Cooke California Inc. plans 7,500 residential units in Bakersfield. The Tejon RanchCorp wants to build a 15-million-square-foot warehouse and industrial complex about 20 miles south of Bakersfield.

Under its contract, Tejon would pay the air district nearly \$532,000. The money would be used to upgrade engines and pollution-control devices for businesses and industries in the area.

No amount has been set for the Castle & Cooke contract.

On its face, the idea of contracting with each developer to reduce pollution from their projects might seem sound. As usual, there's more to the story. The developers in this case were praised lavishly by air district board members for "volunteering" the contracts. In fact, the developers pushed very hard for this approach, some believe, in order to continue stalling the adoption of a comprehensive rule the district is supposed to have for all projects in its boundaries, a rule that is already many months late in the making.

The rule would govern what are called indirect sources, such as the pollution coming from added traffic that results from a residential development. Under such rules, developers can either take steps to limit the additional pollution or, when that isn't practical, contribute fees to a fund that would be used to make other pollution reductions in the area.

Environmentalists have been pressing hard for adoption of the rule, and that makes sense. We don't need a haphazard, piecemeal approach to new pollution sources anymore than we need leapfrog development. One comprehensive rule that forces significant reductions in new pollution is the best approach.

The building industry has made it clear to the air board that it's likely to sue if a rule the builders don't like is adopted. Environmentalists are likely to do the same if the delay in adopting a useful rule continues.

Welcome back to that rock and hard place.

[Modesto Bee, Thursday, April 21, Letter to the Editor](#)

## **Ozone is both a friend and an enemy**

In response to the writer of "Ozone is our friend, not an enemy" (Letters, April 19), ozone is our friend only when it stays in the stratosphere. Ozone is toxic and becomes our enemy when it comes into contact with living organisms (source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration "Ozone FAQ"). Ozone is good ... until people start breathing it.

JEFFREY FREDE, 8th grade  
Turlock

[Bakersfield Californian, Letter to the Editor, Friday, April 22, 2005:](#)

## **Let politicians know**

I recently attended a community talk at which Gordon Nipp of the Sierra Club spoke about his efforts to protect our community from the cumulative impacts that are arising due to rapid growth. I found his talk to be informative and thought that others would be interested in the points he brought up.

Nipp pointed out that his concern is not with the physical growth of our community; rather his mission is to address the problems that arise with that growth. He's calling for air pollution-reduction projects to be incorporated along with growth, for some agricultural land to be preserved amongst the growth and for roads to be built or updated in order to accommodate the growing population (some of our roads already severely fail at this).

As far as I am concerned, the valley's poor air quality and poorly devised traffic routes are issues that ascend all political views; these are issues that are impacting the health of each person in the community. I have heard countless complaints (while in line at the grocery store, in restaurants and waiting in doctors' offices) about these issues.

I encourage everyone who has a complaint or a suggestion about these issues to get involved. Attend a civic meeting or write to your elected officials. At the very least, speak out! If we don't tell our elected officials our thoughts about these issues, how will they know?

JENNIFER RANDEL, Bakersfield

[S.F. Chronicle commentary, Friday, April 22, 2005:](#)

## **Earth Day, 35 Years Later**

### **Earth Day re-purposed**

By Paul Taylor

Here we are (again) at April 22, Earth Day. Conceived and first celebrated in the United States in 1970 through the activism of some congressmen and naturalists, Earth Day, according to historians, was further enabled by the sustained popularity of author Rachel Carson's best-seller, "Silent Spring," along with a growing public recognition of environmental issues as revealed by a series of oil spills and toxic waste episodes.

The dawn of our 35th Earth Day will reveal the remnants of an environmental movement born in the 20th century that has lost its way in the 21st. As has been the case in recent years, this Earth Day will include a devout yet fading cadre of celebrants. Predictably, there will be green "group grapes" by those who practice environmentalism as a secular religion. The news media will pay their respects with the obligatory coverage of the green establishment rallies, and, no doubt, some political pageantry. Sadly, these activities will promote the same, tired, capitalist-bashing

doomsday rhetoric of a movement that now exists largely as a withering political constituency. Let's update and re-purpose the occasion to celebrate Earth Day.

The last few decades of the environmental movement have created an elite green establishment of large nonprofit eco-groups. These environmental organizations grew from 2,000 to 4,000 in the United States during the 1990s. Big green conglomerates now function as an "axis of antagonism," prospering on political controversy, junk science and obstructionism without providing a credible product or service in support of our future prosperity.

After years of being fear-mongered by the daily environmentalist warnings of eco-apocalypse -- of which none has occurred -- Americans have grown more and more skeptical of, if not annoyed by, green activist predictions, protests and propaganda. All sectors of the United States spend as much on environmental protection as the federal government spends on national defense and homeland security combined -- perhaps a prudent balance of priorities. The experience of more than 30 years of environmental regulations and costly controls, brought about by such landmark legislation as the Clean Air and Endangered Species acts, clearly reflects a commitment to managing natural resources and solving pollution problems.

But the eco-establishment will not concede victory in having helped to implement our environmental-protection programs. This is because it would lose its political identity and livelihood, and place its political survival on a path to extinction. Eco-nonprofits have become skilled at gaming our massive environmental regulatory system for political advantage in the guise of politically correct progressive public service.

The United States is among the world leaders in environmental protection. So when you hear eco-ideologues howling about ANWR drilling, the rollback of the Clean Air Act, forest management and the myth of global warming as "ecotastrophies," understand that America's real environmental problems are largely solved or under active management. Earth Day should be a day to celebrate our national investment and prodigious successes in environmental protection.

*Paul Taylor is an environmental scientist in Los Angeles and author of "Green Gone Wrong: Ecopolitics Exposed" (Writer's Club Press, 2001).*

[S.F. Chronicle commentary, Friday, April 22, 2005:](#)

**Earth Day, 35 Years Later**

## **Our legacy from John Muir**

By Pete McCloskey

In the spring of each year in the Sierra, it seems worthwhile to reflect on the legacy left by two men from Wisconsin who came to Northern California in their youth.

The first was John Muir, who arrived in 1868 and who over a span of nearly 50 years convinced presidents and the nation that the Sierra Nevada were among the treasures of the world. His writings and his example gave us the understanding that our mountains and wilderness were of spiritual as well as economic value and should be preserved for all people, as well as for the wildlife that have made it their natural habitat for millennia. Muir was called "the greatest Californian" and recognized as the father of our National Park system. He died in 1914.

Years later, a second young man from Wisconsin arrived to attend college in San Jose. His name was Gaylord Nelson. He came to know California well. On a return visit here in 1970, Nelson, now a U.S. senator, had a vision similar to that of Muir a century earlier: Nelson thought we should have an Earth Day, a day to reflect on the enormous privilege of the mountains, forests, rivers and wilderness we share with the creatures of the earth and sky. And so, the first Earth Day came into being, to be held April 22, that day also being the anniversary of the first Arbor Day, which had been conceived in 1874 as a way to have schoolchildren plant a tree on a spring day each year. Today, every state celebrates Arbor Day.

Nelson, a Democrat, thought Earth Day should be bipartisan and bicameral, and he asked an obscure California Republican congressman to serve as co-chairman. He thought it should be run by young people and asked Stanford Student Body President Denis Hayes to direct it. He raised enough funds for Hayes and a group of colleagues to send letters to student leaders

around the country, suggesting that they hold seminars on air and water pollution, wilderness, land use and the protection of species.

The nation was then in the throes of dissent over the Vietnam War, particularly on college campuses. President Richard Nixon, fearing anti-war demonstrations, ordered the FBI to put all Earth Day events under surveillance. He needn't have worried. A happy, informative and peaceful day was celebrated by all.

But underneath the surface, a revolution was brewing. The thousands of students who had studied the forces adversely affecting their lives decided to do something about it. They issued a press release in a little-read afternoon paper in the nation's capital, naming 12 members of the House of Representatives "The Dirty Dozen," vowing their defeat in the upcoming elections. Few congressmen read the article and none gave it any credence. What could a bunch of kids do to challenge the twin goals of economic prosperity and unmitigated development?

Things suddenly changed, however, a few weeks later, when the two Democrats on the list, one the chairman of the powerful Public Works Committee, were narrowly defeated in their own primaries. The students of Earth Day had turned out by the hundreds to walk precincts on election day, coaxing ordinarily apathetic voters to the polls. But it was in November that Earth Day activists struck with a vengeance. Five of the 10 Republicans were defeated and two others nearly so.

The result was one that the modest senator from Wisconsin would never have dreamed could occur. When Congress convened in January, 1971, nearly every member proclaimed him- or herself a confirmed environmentalist. During the next four years, with a Republican president and a Democratic Congress, a whole series of landmark legislation was enacted: the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Amendments, the Coastal Zone Protection Act, the Estuarine Act, the Marine Mammals Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act. That bipartisan cooperation continued for 30 years, with thousands of acres added to National Parks, National Monuments, wilderness and wildlife protection areas.

Regrettably, with the election of George W. Bush, protection of the environment is being abandoned in favor of resource extraction. Rep. John Doolittle, R-Rocklin (Placer County), has referred to environmentalist leaders as "having an agenda similar to communism," writing a letter to President Bush suggesting that every possible environmental regulation that stands in the way of logging, mining or the drilling for oil be rescinded or softened. The president has been happy to do just that.

In addition, Bush has appointed lobbyists from the coal, oil, utility and timber industries to head up the very agencies that regulate their industries. Dedicated federal employees who have objected have been transferred or fired. The Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Fish and Wildlife scientists have reported that their bosses have required them to suppress scientific opinions that differ from Bush administration policies. Experts who have described the dangers of global warming have been accused of using "false science."

Doolittle is not the only congressman to have, in his words, tried "to cut the legs out from under the environmental movement." His colleague, Richard Pombo, R-Tracy, chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, has called for the repeal or evisceration of the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act and has proposed oil drilling off the California coast. Incredibly, both men have pushed for construction of the Auburn Dam, to turn one of California's last great rivers, the American, into a 13-mile-long lake.

It is hoped that the college and high-school students of 2005 would do as their forebears did 35 years ago -- rise up in support of the visions of John Muir and Gaylord Nelson, demanding that our congressional representatives maintain a reasonable balance between development and the preservation of the remaining wilderness, lakes, rivers and mountains that John Muir did so much to save a century ago. Earth Day would be a good time to tell Doolittle and Pombo that their constituents care about the earth and all its inhabitants: humans, animals, birds and indeed our very souls, which gain so much from the unique and inspirational Sierra Nevada.

*Pete McCloskey, who represented the Peninsula in Congress from 1967 to 1982, was the co-chairman of the first Earth Day in 1970 and served as the ranking Republican member on the House Fish and Wildlife Subcommittee from 1970 to 1982.*