

## **Fresno doctor on state air board**

### **Cardiologist John Telles replaces Fresno County Supervisor Judy Case.**

E.J. Schultz - Bee Capitol Bureau

Fresno Bee, Thursday, April 17, 2008

SACRAMENTO -- Gov. Schwarzenegger on Wednesday named Fresno cardiologist John Telles to represent the Valley on the California Air Resources Board, an influential agency that sets statewide pollution and greenhouse gas regulations.

Telles, a 59-year-old Democrat, replaces Fresno County Supervisor Judy Case. Case, a Republican, was ousted earlier this year by the Democratic-controlled state Senate over accusations by environmentalists that she catered to agriculture interests.

The governor also named Telles to serve in one of four newly created spots on the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control Board, which sets smog rules in the eight-county region.

Telles was not the candidate environmentalists endorsed, but they are giving him a chance.

"We hope Dr. Telles can be a champion for kids with asthma and for all people in the Valley who suffer because of air pollution," said Carolina Simunovic, an air-quality advocate with Fresno Metro Ministry.

Growers -- who are often the target of new air rules -- gave him a good review.

Telles has "excellent medical and scientific perspective" but is also well-versed on Valley agriculture and the economy, said California Grape and Tree Fruit League President Barry Bedwell.

Telles, a former president of the Fresno Madera Medical Society, is managing partner of Heart Group Cardiovascular Associates Inc., where he has worked since 1979. In an interview with The Bee last year, he said he got interested in air issues when coaching soccer and noticing that so many kids needed inhalers.

Case came under fire from Democrats for her vote to extend a Valley clean-air deadline to 2024, more than a decade beyond the initial deadline set by the federal government. Democrats also cited her opposition to legislation signed last year by the governor that adds four members to the Valley air board -- two city appointees and two health experts.

Telles, who fills one of the health slots, is the first of the new appointments. He will not draw a salary in the state or Valley post and still must be confirmed by the state Senate, which has a year to approve him.

State Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter, who led the charge against Case, said he would meet with Telles soon to "discuss our high expectations for him."

## **Motorists could pay for clean air**

### **Fresno lawmaker's bill could increase fee up to \$30 a year**

BY JAKE HENSHAW, Sacramento Bureau

Visalia Times-Delta and Tulare Advance-Register, Friday, April 18, 2008

SACRAMENTO - San Joaquin Valley motorists could face vehicle fees of up to \$30 a year to help clean up the region's air if a bill that passed a key committee this week becomes law.

Assembly Bill 2522 by Assemblyman Juan Arambula, D-Fresno, would allow the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to boost vehicle fees to raise as much as \$96 million to

combat some of the poorest quality air in the state. The current maximum vehicle fee of \$7 generates \$18 million a year.

"This is a self-help measure," Arambula said.

But the fee increase is tied to actions by federal environmental and state air officials and would require passage of a similar bill by Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter, which would authorize vehicle fees as high \$36.

The Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association opposed the Arambula bill, arguing the proposed fee increase should be approved by voters.

## **Harbor extends green equipment program**

By Donna Littlejohn, Staff Writer

In the LA Daily News, Friday, April 18, 2008

Pleased by the results so far, harbor commissioners Thursday approved an expansion of a year-old experiment testing out pollution-free electric yard equipment.

The test vehicle now will be put to work at a local terminal while the port spends \$5.4 million to have 20 additional electric yard tractors built.

The new machines are to be delivered in six months along with five on-road electric trucks that will be ready for service in about nine months.

"We have a prototype that appears to be viable and working," said harbor commission President S. David Freeman.

The original tractor, which travels in a range of about 20 miles at 25 mph, was part of a joint demonstration project by the port and the Air Quality Management District.

During its first year of service, it traveled about 300miles and logged some 160 hours.

The agreement to provide more electric vehicles is with Balqon Corp.

The 20 new tractors will be deployed as part of a "green terminal" program at Yusen Terminals.

## **Australian Olympians tested for asthma**

The Associated Press

In the Washington Post, Contra Costa Times and other papers, Friday, April 18, 2008

MELBOURNE, Australia-The Australian Olympic Committee has begun screening some athletes for asthma in the lead up to the Beijing Olympics and the higher-than-normal pollution levels in the Chinese capital.

Australian officials said Friday that asthma testing for "high-risk prospective" athletes on the 2008 team, including triathletes and long-distance runners, was being conducted in an attempt to minimize the impact of air pollution on their performance, as well as identify those at risk.

Beijing is one of the world's most polluted cities. A mix of particulate matter, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide often blankets the city at levels five times higher than World Health Organizations safety standards.

"Many athletes may have underlying mild asthma or exercise-induced asthma, but not be aware of its presence, as the symptoms are 'normal' for that athlete when working hard," said Dr. Karen Holzer, an air quality specialist and a 2008 Australian team doctor.

"Athletes involved in sports requiring training or competing for prolonged periods in the outdoor air such as triathletes, middle and long distance runners, cyclists, rowers and kayakers, in addition to swimmers, of whom a significant proportion have asthma, are being screened for the presence and severity of underlying asthma or exercise-induced asthma."

Holzer said athletes identified as being at risk would have their cases monitored and have preventative measures put into place before they leave for Beijing.

## **Climate change may alter bay growth patterns**

By John King, Chronicle urban design writer  
S.F. Chronicle, Friday, April 18, 2008

The worldwide issue of climate change has a local twist: It's altering the Bay Area's long-running debate over how and where to grow.

Some officials are suggesting that some bayside areas may need to be abandoned in light of studies that indicate San Francisco Bay could rise several feet by 2100 because of sea level changes. Conversely, other areas along the bay could be developed so that new projects shield low-lying existing communities.

At the same time, the call to reduce carbon emissions - a factor in global warming - is being used to argue for dense new development in the region's urban core, rather than on the outskirts of auto-reliant suburbs.

"Global warming isn't just a problem for penguins in Antarctica and polar bears in Alaska," Will Travis, executive director of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, told a gathering of local government officials this week. "We need to take a hard look at how our region is growing."

The BCDC was established in 1965 because of concerns that the bay was shrinking - nibbled away by developers and municipalities that saw shallow marshes as ideal spots for everything from high-rise buildings to sprawling dumps.

Now the situation is the reverse. Maps released by the BCDC last year show that rising sea levels of about 1 meter (3.28 feet) would submerge many of the wetlands that now ring much of the bay. Left unchecked, the water would also cover portions of the Oakland and San Francisco airports and other developed locales.

"We need to abandon our notion of restoring the bay to the way it was in the past," said Travis, who has been making similar speeches to local groups in recent months. "We need to put the conditions in place that will let us react to the future the way that we want."

Travis was one of several speakers at "Preparing for Rising Sea Levels in the Bay Area," a daylong conference in Oakland on Wednesday. The forum was a first for the region, and much of it focused on steps that can be taken to lessen the region's current energy use as part of larger efforts to slow or reverse global warming.

But the main emphasis was the overlap between local land-use and global climate conditions.

The clash is strongest along the water, where land will recede without aggressive - and expensive - intervention.

As far back as 1990, a study by the Pacific Institute said it would cost the Bay Area \$940 million to adapt to a 1-meter rise in water levels, with an additional \$100 million annually in maintenance. The costs were related to higher seawalls and levees and the rebuilding of roads and rail lines at higher elevations.

Institute President Peter Gleick told officials on Wednesday that the cost estimate is "hugely conservative" today. "The status quo around the margins is going to be unsustainable," said Gleick, whose institute is now updating the study. "We're in trouble long before we get to a meter."

## **Buying out landowners**

Gleck did not say specifically that it might be cost-efficient to buy out some landowners along the bay. The BCDC's Travis did.

"There are places where it might be better to remove developments and restore wetlands. Wetlands are wonderful for flood control," Travis said. "Clearly, we can't allow our cities to go under water ... (but) we shouldn't build levees everywhere."

Travis did not give specific examples of where such retreats might be advisable; any such studies are years away.

Conversely, Travis also said the changing conditions might make bayside growth desirable in selected locations. Large-scale projects could serve as a sort of buffer to what already exists on landfill.

"We need a more nuanced approach" rather than simply banning bayside growth, Travis suggested. "There's a lot of low-lying development we need to protect ... we need a new type of more resilient development."

Inland development patterns also could shift because of efforts to trim greenhouse gas levels.

For decades, critics have complained suburban sprawl covers farmland and causes air pollution because of increased automobile use. They now point out that those long commutes boost the amount of vehicle miles traveled - a major factor in carbon emissions.

Also, inland housing tracts tend to be in communities where summers are hotter, boosting energy consumption per capita.

The flip side: Much of this sprawl has occurred because of growth limits imposed by cities near the bay. But according to regional planning officials, older communities are becoming more receptive to infill development.

## **Higher-density growth**

At the forum, Ken Kirkey of the Association of Bay Area Governments described how 50 jurisdictions have applied for grants that would be used to help map higher-density growth in neighborhoods near bus and rail lines. Together, these areas contain space for 395,000 housing units - 50 percent of the region's projected housing needs through 2035.

Afterward, Kirkey said climate change alone won't cause people to change their attitudes on growth. What's new is an understanding of local land use's larger ramifications.

"There's a willingness to discuss the way we grow because of climate change," said Kirkey, ABAG's planning director. "People get the connection."

As for what comes next, "This is a region that thinks of itself as a leader," Kirkey said. "If we want to be a leader in responding to climate change, we can't just buy Priuses. We need to talk about where and how we live."

## **How big is your carbon footprint?**

By John King

S.F. Chronicle, Friday, April 18, 2008

Our modern industrial society emits an unprecedented amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, contributing to global climate change.

How much do we as individuals contribute to global warming? There are a variety of carbon calculators available on the Web that can help estimate your carbon footprint, or the amount of greenhouse gas produced by your particular lifestyle.

Chronicle reporter Ilana DeBare worked with researcher Chris Jones from the UC Berkeley Institute of the Environment using the CoolCalifornia calculator ([www.coolcalifornia.org](http://www.coolcalifornia.org) <<http://www.coolcalifornia.org>>) to estimate the carbon footprints of typical urban and suburban Bay Area households.

Keep in mind that these are very rough estimates, based on average or median data. In some cases, there were no local figures available so we used national data.

It's no surprise that San Franciscans - with smaller homes, fewer cars per household and less driving - have a smaller carbon footprint than their Contra Costa County counterparts.

But what is surprising is that, when you account for the size of their households, San Franciscans' average carbon footprint is not much smaller than Contra Costans'. The average San Francisco resident has a footprint of about 13 tons of carbon, compared with 14 tons per person in Contra Costa. That's partly because even though San Franciscans drive less than their suburban neighbors, national data suggest that they do more air travel - a major source of carbon emissions.

Both San Francisco and Contra Costa households have carbon footprints that are much larger than the global average of 8 tons per household, or about 2 tons per person. Even the most eco-minded Bay Area household is responsible for far more carbon emissions than households in less wealthy parts of the world.

[Letter to the S.F. Chronicle, Friday, April 18, 2008:](#)

### **Away from the wheel**

Editor - There are far more important reasons for eliminating the driver's ed requirement for San Francisco teens: air pollution, global warming, traffic congestion, lack of parking spaces, car accidents, obesity and stress.

The car is at the root of many of society's biggest problems.

Good for those teens who say no to driving!

*Maureen O'Rourke, Corte Madera*

[Letter to the Contra Costa Times, Friday, April 18, 2008:](#)

### **Berkeley a terrible neighbor**

Every day and every night Pacific Steel Casting operates, toxic pollution from its Berkeley smoke stack drifts silently into Albany, El Cerrito, Kensington and Richmond.

Recent air quality tests measured levels of nickel and manganese from this company hundreds of times above the levels set by the World Health Organization and the EPA. Those results have been published and are available on the Web.

It's hypocritical that Berkeley attempts to claim such a "green" image, while the Berkeley City Council openly supports doing nothing about stopping the pollution.

Councilwoman Linda Maio and Mayor Tom Bates aren't affected by the pollution; they live far away, safe and sound. But residents downwind (Albany, etc.) are affected every day. Shame on Berkeley for being such a terrible neighbor.

*Andrew Galpern, Albany*