

Valley air board sponsors 'Bike to Work Day' on Tuesday

Modesto Bee, Monday, Oct. 6, 2008

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is urging commuters to get out of their cars and ride bicycles to work on Tuesday.

The district's "Bike to Work Day" was originally scheduled for July but was postponed because of the poor air brought on by summer forest fires that burned over many parts of the state.

The city of Modesto will hold a rideshare information fair at 10th Street Place on Tuesday morning. Also, police officers will escort riders from the Fun Sport Bikes shop in McHenry Village to 10th Street Place.

The air board has other events scheduled in Fresno and Bakersfield next week.

Officials weigh benefits, costs of forest fires

By Mark Grossi

The Fresno Bee, Monday, Oct. 6, 2008

When officials decided not to stop the Tehipite fire east of Fresno, they got three big payoffs -- a cheaper fire to manage, reduced risk for firefighters and cleanup of dangerously overgrown forest.

But this fire -- which has burned 11,000 acres since mid-July -- worries the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. Officials fear smoke and ozone-creating gases might harm air quality.

The district needs further analysis to determine whether the Tehipite and another blaze, called the Hidden fire, caused bad-air days in the Valley. State records show this region had its highest September total of ozone violations in five years.

Then a familiar debate begins, pitting beneficial forest fires against unwanted smoke.

The Valley's air quality is among the worst in the country, but Sierra Nevada fires are natural and necessary to eliminate excess growth that fuels catastrophic fires.

Air violations in the Valley won't count against the district later if fires caused them.

But while the district becomes involved in controlling smoke from any human-made fire, it has no authority over natural lightning-caused blazes, such as the Tehipite fire.

"I can't order them to put it out," district executive director Seyed Sadredin said.

In June, the state got a taste of poor air quality from fires burning overgrown forests. Hundreds of lightning-caused fires in Northern California sent tons of ozone-forming gases and soot into the air, causing violations throughout the state.

The Valley had violations for both soot and ozone in June.

The soot violations occurred from Stockton to Bakersfield for four consecutive days, which is considered unusual.

But there were no soot violations in September, according to state records. The Tehipite and Hidden fires have not been as big of a problem for the Valley, according to federal officials.

Parks officials added that air quality is not the only factor when evaluating whether to stop a fire or let it burn. The bigger concerns are protecting the public and keeping firefighters safe.

But if they need to, the National Park Service and other federal agencies could douse parts of the Tehipite fire to eliminate excessive smoke.

Smoke is one of the main reasons park officials moved quickly to extinguish the Hidden fire in Sequoia National Park. It was contained last week at about 3,700 acres.

The fire was near the Generals Highway. There also were nearby tourist attractions, such as Crystal Cave and the trail to the Muir Grove of giant sequoias, and officials worried about how smoke would affect visitors.

"We have a lot to lose if there's a problem with air quality," said Deb Schweizer, fire information specialist with Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks. "We want to protect the public and the forest from poor air quality."

When the Tehipite fire started in Kings Canyon National Park, park officials tried to stop it, hoping to avoid smoke problems. But seven firefighters were injured in steep and dangerous terrain, Schweizer said.

Officials re-evaluated and decided to let it burn, rather than risk more injuries in one of the most remote places in the park. It has since burned into the Sierra National Forest.

U.S. Forest Service officials are helping by watching air quality carefully in the foothills. They have placed portable air monitoring devices at Hume Lake, North Fork, Prather, Trimmer and Oakhurst, said Trent Procter, the service's regional air quality program manager.

But even as they worry about the smoke, park officials acknowledge they want natural fires that will help the forest ecosystem. The Tehipite fire offers an ideal opportunity.

"I'm guessing that the Tehipite fire is burning in a place that hasn't had a fire in 100 years," said fire ecologist Anthony Caprio of Sequoia and Kings Canyon parks. "The forest needs more frequent fire."

Allen Clyde, owner of Clyde Pack Outfitters at Dinkey Creek and Wishon Reservoir, said he often passes through the overgrown area and considers fire risk to be extreme. He cautioned visitors to avoid even lighting a cigarette.

"If ever there was a place that needed to be cleaned out with a fire, this was it," he said. "You'll see how much good it will do next spring."

If all goes well, the fire will slowly wipe out low-growing shrubs, snags and forest debris until the snow flies -- just as such small fires have done for thousands of years.

Small, natural fires open up the forest for a variety of sun-loving plants and trees, such as the sugar pine. Large, old trees in the Sierra are generally fire resistant, as long as the fires don't feed on thick underbrush and build up into the crowns of the trees.

But decades ago, government policies called for snuffing out all fires. Years later, officials realized that the forests had become dangerously overgrown.

Now, millions of acres in the Sierra and the West are filled with dense forests. They are primed for wildfires that could cost lives in mountain communities, destroy centuries-old trees and leave a pall of smoke for weeks.

It is also a lot cheaper to let a fire burn. The price tag on the Tehipite fire was about \$700,000, officials said.

The cost of the Hidden fire was 10 times higher -- more than \$7 million.

The Hidden fire might have been managed differently if it had entered a grove of giant sequoias, Schweizer said. It was near the Suwanee, Muir and Skagway groves of giants.

"Giant sequoias benefit from fire," she said. "But there was just too much potential for problems with the Hidden fire, so it was suppressed."

Ignoring fire may be hurting Valley air quality

The Fresno Bee

In the Merced Sun-Star, Saturday, Oct. 4, 2008

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Kern chosen for landmark study of children's health

BY EMILY HAGEDORN, Californian staff writer
Bakersfield Californian, Saturday, Oct. 4, 2008

And Cal State Bakersfield — receiving a \$10.4 million five-year grant, the largest in the school's history — will spearhead the local research.

"This is a landmark study, which will be the definitive work on factors impacting the growth of children," said Cal State President Horace Mitchell at Friday's news conference. "It puts us on another level in terms of the research we're doing."

The \$3.2 billion National Children's Study, the largest long-term children's health study in U.S. history, is being led by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Environmental Protection Agency. Researchers will follow 100,000 children nationwide from before birth to age 21.

Kern County is one of 105 locations nationwide to be chosen randomly and one of nine in California.

Locally, 1,000 women who are pregnant or likely to become pregnant will be enrolled by 2011, said Peggy Leapley, co-principal investigator for the project in Kern County. She recently retired from her post as chairwoman of Cal State's nursing department.

A bonus of being chosen as a focus area is that the study will yield hyper-local data researchers haven't had before and will shed light on concerns unique to Kern families, she said.

"We've never done this kind of study," Leapley said. "A lot of times, we're speculating about what causes different things. This will show how factors are associated."

The enrolled women will be representative of the areas where they live, said Dr. Duane Alexander, director of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Development.

To ensure correct representation, researchers will study the demographics of the areas and then go door to door in selected neighborhoods, Leapley said.

They want to enroll soon-to-be mothers of all ages, even teens, said Dr. Peter Scheidt, study director.

Over the course of the study, the participants will visit with researchers 13 times, at home and at the study centers like Cal State, Scheidt said.

Researchers hope to gain information about how children's genes and environments interact, which includes gathering data on [air and water quality](#), nutrition, parenting, safety and health care.

The study will look at conditions like autism, asthma, pre-term birth, obesity and diabetes, and the findings will be released periodically throughout the life of the project, said Dr. Portia Choi, director of maternal, child and adolescent health at the county Public Health Services Department.

Dr. Kip Tulin, a pediatrician with Kaiser Permanente in Bakersfield who is not associated with the study, said that while it will take years for the data to accumulate, "there may be tremendous benefits in how we run our lives."

"The big question (for physicians) is 'How is this going to affect what I have to do?' We're all strapped for time," he said. "But as far as it being an incursion, I have no problems."

The study should not create an undue burden on participants or doctors, said Asa Bradman, who will help lead the Kern portion from UC Berkeley's Center for Children's Environmental Health Research.

Besides the data, another boon from the study is the opportunity it provides for Cal State faculty and students to work with collaborators at Berkeley, UC Irvine and the University of Chicago, Mitchell said.

Those connections may lead to other large research opportunities, he added.

"We are now in a ballpark where we really get noticed," Mitchell said. "This is a landmark day."

Officials: Toxic chemical found in air near school

The Associated Press

Contra Costa Times, Tri-Valley Herald and SF Chronicle, Sunday, Oct. 5, 2008

DAVENPORT, Calif.—Air quality regulators on California's central coast say they have found high levels of a cancer-causing chemical in the air around a Davenport elementary school and fire department.

Tests conducted by the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District this summer found eight times the agency's acceptable level of chromium 6 at Pacific Elementary School.

Testers found 10 times the acceptable level of the chemical at the fire department in Davenport, a small town along the Santa Cruz County coast.

Agency officials say they believe the chemical is originating in dust blown from a nearby cement plant, which is cooperating with officials to curtail the use of high chromium materials.

Chromium 6 is blamed for causing cancer after long-term human exposure.

Tulare OKs new processing plant

Meat packer should create about 250 jobs for the city

By Cecilia Parsons

Capital Press, Thursday, Oct. 2, 2008

San Joaquin Valley dairy producers will have a new facility to process their culled cows.

Western Pacific Meat Packing Inc. has been granted a permit by the city of Tulare for a \$70 million processing plant they plan to build adjacent to the city's wastewater treatment plant.

Tony Brady, acting chief executive officer for Western Pacific, said that construction would begin within the next year. The 195,000 square foot beef-packing plant will be located in the city's industrial park and will include a cold storage facility and a cogeneration plant.

Brady said the meat-packing plant would have the capacity to process 1,000 animals per shift. They will be processed immediately upon arrival at the plant, he said. No corrals or holding facilities will be built.

With hundreds of dairies within a 100-mile radius of the plant, there is an ample supply of animals, and Brady said it would ease hauling costs for producers who ship animals out of the valley for processing. Beef cattle will also be processed at the plant, he said.

"It will be the plant of the future," Brady said. "All state-of-the-art equipment and full traceability of product." They will ship wholesale cuts from the plant.

The permit process with the city took almost two years. Bob Nance, the city's redevelopment agency director, said securing complete environmental reports for the project was a time-consuming process. The environmental review listed concerns with air quality from increased truck traffic, loss of farmland and water quality impacts. Nance said the increased traffic would be offset by fewer long hauls for cattle to plants out of the valley. The project does adhere to the city's general plan.

Nance and Phil Vandegriff, vice mayor of Tulare, were enthusiastic about the jobs the new plant will bring to the city. They estimated about 250 jobs will be available at the plant once it is in full production.

There was some opposition to the plant, Vandegrift said. There are no homes near the site, but property owners were concerned the plant would cause land values to drop. There was the perception that plant would be like a rendering facility, Vandegrift said.

"Once you look at the project your fears are not as great," he said. "This is a high-quality project and is much needed in this area."

Goshen, an unincorporated community 20 miles north of Tulare, had first crack at the packing plant in 2001. Western Pacific owners bought 55 acres north of the community in 2001 and announced plans to build. County supervisors approved the project, but a lawsuit filed by opponents of the plant bogged down plans. In 2006 Western Pacific turned to the city of Tulare.

Cecilia Parsons is a staff writer based in Ducor.

AP Investigation: Ike environmental toll apparent

By Dina Cappiello, Frank Bass and Cain Burdeau, Associated Press Writers

In the Contra Costa Times, Merced Sun-Star and other papers, Monday, Oct. 6, 2008

WASHINGTON—Hurricane Ike's winds and massive waves destroyed oil platforms, tossed storage tanks and punctured pipelines. The environmental damage only now is becoming apparent: At least a half million gallons of crude oil spilled into the Gulf of Mexico and the marshes, bayous and bays of Louisiana and Texas, according to an analysis of federal data by The Associated Press.

In the days before and after the deadly storm, companies and residents reported at least 448 releases of oil, gasoline and dozens of other substances into the air and water and onto the ground in Louisiana and Texas. The hardest hit places were industrial centers near Houston and Port Arthur, Texas, as well as oil production facilities off Louisiana's coast, according to the AP's analysis.

"We are dealing with a multitude of different types of pollution here ... everything from diesel in the water to gasoline to things like household chemicals," said Larry Chambers, a petty officer with the U.S. Coast Guard Command Center in Pasadena, Texas.

The Coast Guard, with the Environmental Protection Agency and state agencies, has responded to more than 3,000 pollution reports associated with the storm and its surge along the upper Texas coast. Most callers complain about abandoned propane tanks, paint cans and other hazardous materials containers turning up in marshes, backyards and other places.

No major oil spills or hazardous materials releases have been identified, but nearly 1,500 sites still need to be cleaned up.

The Coast Guard's National Response Center in Washington collects information on oil spills and chemical and biological releases and passes it to agencies working on the ground. The AP analyzed all reports received by the center from Sept. 11 through Sept. 18 for Louisiana and Texas, providing an early snapshot of Ike's environmental toll.

With the storm approaching, refineries and chemical plants shut down as a precaution, burning off hundreds of thousands of pounds of organic compounds and toxic chemicals. In other cases, power failures sent chemicals such as ammonia directly into the atmosphere. Such accidental releases probably will not result in penalties by regulators because the releases are being blamed on the storm.

Texas Gov. Rick Perry also suspended all rules, including environmental ones, that would inhibit or prevent companies preparing for or responding to Ike.

Power outages also caused sewage pipes to stop flowing. Elsewhere, the storm's surge dredged up smelly and oxygen-deprived marsh mud, which killed fish and caused residents to complain of nausea and headaches from the odor.

At times, a new spill or release was reported to the Coast Guard every five minutes to 10 minutes. Some were extremely detailed, such as this report from Sept. 14: "Caller is making a report of a 6-by-4-foot container that was found floating in the Houston Ship Channel. Caller states the container was also labeled 'UM 3264,' which is a corrosive material." The caller most likely meant UN3264, an industrial coding that refers to a variety of different acids.

State and federal officials have collected thousands of abandoned drums, paint cans and other containers.

Other reports were more vague. One caller reported a sheen from an underwater pipeline and said the substance was "spewing" from the pipe.

The AP's analysis found that, by far, the most common contaminant left in Ike's wake was crude oil—the lifeblood and main industry of both Texas and Louisiana. In the week of reports analyzed, enough crude oil was spilled nearly to fill an Olympic-sized swimming pool, and more could be released, officials said, as platforms and pipelines were turned back on.

The Minerals Management Service, which oversees oil production in federal waters offshore, said the storm destroyed at least 52 oil platforms of roughly 3,800 in the Gulf of Mexico. Thirty-two more were severely damaged. But there was only one confirmed report of an oil spill—a leak of 8,400 gallons that officials said left no trace because it dissipated with the winds and currents.

Air contaminants were the second-most common release, mostly from the chemical plants and refineries along the coast.

About half the crude oil was reported spilled at a facility operated by St. Mary Land and Exploration Co. on Goat Island, Texas, a spit of uninhabited land north of the heavily damaged Bolivar Peninsula. The surge from the storm flooded the plant, leveling its dirt containment wall and snapping off the pipes connecting its eight storage tanks, which held the oil and water produced from two wells in Galveston Bay.

By the time the company reached the wreckage by boat more than 24 hours after Ike's landfall, the tanks were empty. Only a spattering of the roughly 266,000 gallons of oil spilled was left, and that is already cleaned up, according to Greg Leyendecker, the company's regional manager. The rest vanished, likely into the Gulf of Mexico.

Ike's fury might have helped prevent worse environmental damage. Its rough water, heavy rains and wind helped disperse pollution.

Air quality tests by Texas environmental regulators found no problems even in communities near industrial complexes, where power outages and high winds in some cases knocked out emergency devices that safely burn off chemicals. But the storm also zapped many of the state's permanent air pollution monitors in the region.

"We came out of this a lot better than we could have been, especially thinking where the storm hit," said Kelly Cook, the homeland security coordinator for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

Katrina ranked as among the worst environmental disasters in U.S. history, with about 9 million gallons of oil spilled. But Ike's storm surge was less severe than feared—12 feet rather than 20-feet plus—and the dikes, levees and bulkheads built around the region's heavy industry mostly held.

Much of that infrastructure is protected by a 1960s-era Army Corps of Engineers system of 15-foot levees similar to the one around New Orleans that failed catastrophically during Katrina. In that storm, floodwaters dislodged an oil tank at a Murphy Oil Corp. refinery in Meraux, La., spilling more than 1 million gallons of oil into the surrounding neighborhoods, canals and playgrounds.

Ike's toll on wildlife is still unfolding. Only a few pelicans and osprey turned up oiled, but the storm upended nature. Winds blew more than 1,000 baby squirrels from their nests. The storm's surge pushed saltwater into freshwater marshes and bayous, killing grasses where cattle graze and displacing alligators. Flooding also stranded cows.

The storm also may mangle migration. The Texas coast is a pit stop for birds heading south for the winter. But Ike wiped out many of their food sources, stripping berries from trees and nectar-producing flowers from plants, said Gina Donovan, executive director of the Houston Audubon Society, which operates 17 bird sanctuaries in Texas.

"It is going to cause wildlife to suffer for awhile," she said.

Along the Houston Ship Channel, a tanker truck floating in 12-foot-high flood waters slammed into a storage tank at the largest biodiesel refinery in the country, causing a leak of roughly 2,100 gallons of vegetable oil. The plant, owned by GreenHunter Energy Inc., uses chicken fat and beef tallow to make biodiesel shipped overseas. It opened just months earlier.

Oneal Galloway of Slidell, La., called to report oil in his neighborhood. The town, north of Lake Pontchartrain, was flooded with Ike's surge. He said oil had washed down the streets.

"It looked like a rainbow in the water," Galloway told the AP. "The residue of the oil is all over our fences, there were brown spots in the yard where it killed the grass."

The likely culprit was not a refinery or oil well, according to Shannon Davis, the director of the parish's public works department, but a neighbor brewing biodiesel in his backyard with used cooking grease.

On the Net:

Multi-agency Post-Hurricane Ike Pollution Response: <http://strikeforcenews.com/go/site/771/>

National Response Center: <http://www.nrc.uscg.mil>

[Bakersfield Californian, Commentary, Monday, Oct. 6, 2008:](#)

There's a new (sprawl) Sheriff in town

BY LOIS HENRY, Californian staff writer

The party is over.

And none too soon.

I'm talking about freewheeling, irresponsible development and Senate Bill 375, which was signed into law on Tuesday.

This law does one very, seemingly, simple thing — it ties development to transportation (and ultimately [our wretched air pollution](#)).

And it uses state money as both a carrot and stick to get local officials to go along.

There are a lot of implementation questions still to be settled, but here's a general overview of how it works:

The Kern Council of Governments will have to create an overall development/transportation blueprint using greenhouse gas emission goals set down by the California Air Resources Board.

To achieve those emission reductions, the blueprint must incorporate things like (gasp!) public transit, the mixing of office, retail and housing so people don't have to drive as far or as much, and incentives to encourage infill development and discourage far-flung growth.

In other words, age-old, well-known, often-discussed-but-never-used "smart growth" techniques to make our communities more compact so we stop spewing so much crap into the air every time we go out for a bagel.

To make this palatable to developers, the law requires a full environmental impact report on the blueprint. So if builders propose a development within the blueprint, they don't have to spend their own time and money on a separate EIR.

And to make sure the blueprint is more than just a dust collector on the back of some city planner's shelf, the state will withhold transportation money (and possibly housing and other types of funding) if a city or county approves a development that doesn't adhere to the goals in the blueprint.

The law doesn't say you can't color outside the lines. Just that, if you do, there are consequences.

Brilliant!

This way, Bakersfield and Kern County can keep doing things the same good old boy way they always have — approving leapfrog development out in the hinterlands to their hearts' desire.

They'll just have to pay for the roads all on their own.

Hey, no problem, right? We all know how great we are at funding our own roads.

Bruce Freeman, CEO of Castle & Cooke, was leery that SB 375 will cost developers more money. And he was very skeptical of the public's desire for higher-density housing.

"We have a cultural issue here," he said of Bakersfield residents who, he said, want big houses, big yards and wide streets. "It will be a challenge."

But personally, "I'd much prefer to see higher-density, higher-quality housing than more and more single-family houses on 6,000-square-foot lots, one after the other all the way down to the mountains."

Local planners I talked to had mixed feelings about SB 375.

They all agreed it will change how we do things here — exactly how is still up in the air.

And they thought it was good, generally, to address green house gas emissions.

But they all felt the new law takes away local control.

To which Ed Thompson, California director for American Farmland Trust, said, (and I agree) "Development was out of control! They weren't exercising local control. Maybe what they're really talking about is political power."

Ya think?

The only problem I see with SB 375 is it was too late to stop yet another boneheaded development approved recently by the Kern County Board of Supervisors.

They gave the thumbs up to three projects in the extreme northwest at Nord and Palm avenues, having already approved a sister project at Nord and Dunn avenues last spring. The so-called Northwest Communities, 800 houses on 276 acres, leap far past existing similar development into "ranchette" land where neighbors have one- to five-acre lots.

Supervisors approved the developments despite recommendations for denial from their own planning staff as well as the Planning Commission. In the process supervisors made noises about needing to be "smarter" in how we use our land resources and stopping "urban sprawl."

Puhleeze! These are textbook examples of sprawl.

I asked Supervisor Ray Watson, who championed the developments, how he could say it wasn't sprawl.

He said the area has scattered development already so it's not ag land in the purest sense. Besides, he said, he really wanted to get sewer lines out there and the Northwest Communities developers promised sewer.

I'd agree with him if it was a densely populated area all on septic. But it's not. This is just more haphazard growth based on developer whim, rather than well thought-out planning.

Oh, and of course, there's a lawsuit. That's planning the Kern County way.

Hopefully, SB 375 will set a new standard for planning. One that actually involves, you know, planning.

[Modesto Bee Editorial, Monday, Oct. 6, 2008:](#)

Let's go green, but Props. 7 and 10 won't get us there

Good intentions are never enough to fix a problem. But sometimes, good intentions can do more harm than good. That's the case with Propositions 7 and 10 -- both billed as pathways to a cleaner environment and less polluted future.

We're all for saving the environment and developing cleaner energy. But poorly conceived or even disingenuous proposals should not be written into state law. Voters should reject Propositions 7 and 10.

Proposition 7

Environmentalists, industrialists, municipal and private utilities, labor unions and scientists all have linked arms to oppose this plan. Why would such a diverse group put aside their huge differences to gang up on a proposition that purports to help clean up bad air and reduce global warming? Because it is more likely to have the opposite effect.

The heart of Proposition 7 requires all electricity providers to get 50 percent of their power from renewable sources by 2025.

State law requires investor-owned utilities such as Pacific Gas & Electric to get a portion of their power from renewable resources. Proposition 7 would extend the requirement to public utilities such as the Turlock and Modesto irrigation districts. That's unfair.

Why? Because both utilities already generate a significant portion of their electricity through the most nonpolluting means possible -- hydroelectricity. But they get no "green credit" for that power. Nor would they get any green credit for investing in additional hydro power.

It gets worse. Under the proposition, utilities would get credit only for green power generated at plants producing 30 megawatts or more. That would mean any help given to homeowners to install solar panels wouldn't count for green credit. If it doesn't count, what incentive does any utility -- private or public -- have for helping to solarize homes or for creating biomass generation on farms?

This proposition has a host of similar problems. Worse yet, if passed, it would take a two-thirds vote to fix them.

Proposition 10

T. Boone Pickens has made a lot of money speculating on oil. Now he's speculating on the desire of voters to go green. He wants California to pony up \$5 billion in bonds (which will require \$10 billion to repay) to help him sell more natural gas.

You won't find that expressed in the proposition's language. Instead, you'll find an enticement -- nearly \$3 billion in rebates -- to buy cars and trucks that use alternative energy. But there's a catch. This proposition would allocate the greatest proportion of those incentives to vehicles powered by natural gas. And where will the owners of these new vehicles get that gas?

Well, that's where Pickens' speculation pays off -- he owns a natural gas company.

There are other concerns. Along with short-changing buyers of electric or hybrid cars, it provides much higher incentives to businesses than to those buying passenger vehicles. And it has no provisions to keep people from getting rebates here, then driving to another state and selling the vehicle -- in effect negating any advantage.

Here in the San Joaquin Valley, where the air is frequently dangerous to breathe, we're keenly aware of the necessity to cut vehicle pollution. We just think there are better ways to do it -- ways that will make winners of us all, and not just T. Boone Pickens.

[Sacramento Bee, Letter to the Editor, Monday, Oct. 6, 2008:](#)

Letters to the Editor

What the air board should do

California is having the wrong conversation about climate change ("As emissions grow, so does opportunity," Editorial, Sept. 28). Our distinguished scientists have given us a precise picture of the dire threats ahead while politicians and policy makers insist on sugar-coating the solutions and aiming far below what's needed.

The latest Air Resources Board plan produces more economic benefits than costs because it's in the sweet spot where energy efficiency pays for everything else. But it stops at 1990 emission levels rather than striving for the 30 percent to 50 percent absolute emission reductions that scientists say we urgently need.

California is also ignoring short-term climate forcers like methane, ozone precursors and black carbon. The worldwide daily emissions of just one of these – black carbon or soot – has the warming power of 60 percent of the total carbon dioxide accumulated in the atmosphere over the last 100 years.

Black carbon is also accelerating ice melt in the Arctic and driving us toward irreversible tipping points. That means the most important action ARB can take to stop global warming immediately is to complete the cleanup of existing diesel engines, then to use its considerable influence to inspire the U.S. government and other industrial nations to do the same.

Catherine Witherspoon, Sacramento

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses Tesoro, an energy company filed a lawsuit against the state of California for environment measures. For more information on this or other Spanish clips, contact Claudia Encinas at \(559\) 230-5851.](#)

Compañía energética, “Tesoro”, demandó a California por medidas ambientales

Manuel Ocaño

Noticier Latino

Radio Bilingüe, Monday, Oct. 6, 2008

La empresa energética, Tesoro, productora de combustibles demandó al estado de California por nuevos reglamentos ambientales.

Según Tesoro, la Oficina de Recursos del Aire de California informó sobre las nuevas normas para producir gasolina con el aditivo anticontaminante etanol, sin proporcionar a las empresas suficiente tiempo para adecuar sus plantas de producción.

El año que entra las energéticas con refinerías en California tendrían que aumentar del siete al diez por ciento la cantidad de etanol en cada galón de gasolina.

El aditivo es uno de los factores que eleva el precio del combustible en California.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses suggestions are being made that Sarah Palin pressured Schwarzenegger to veto against environmental law.](#)

Sugieren que Schwarzenegger cedió a presión de Sarah Palin, al vetar ley ambientalista

Manuel Ocaño

Noticiero Latino

Radio Bilingüe, Friday, Oct. 3, 2008

La directora legislativa del grupo, Liga de Conservación y Planeación, Tina Adolina declaró que el gobernador de California, Arnold Schwarzenegger vetó una importante ley ambientalista bajo presión de la gobernadora y candidata a la vicepresidencial republicana, Sarah Palin.

Adolina recordó que en una carta Palin exigió a Schwarzenegger que vetara una ley que habría cobrado una tarifa a los camiones de carga en los puertos marítimos de California, para formar un fondo que se usaría precisamente en limpiar la contaminación que generan dichos vehículos.

En su veto, el gobernador usó precisamente el argumento de Palin, al decir que la medida ahuyentaría inversiones y comercio.