

Air district will help replace old cars, trucks and tractors with cleaner models

By John Holland

Modesto Bee, Friday, Oct. 26, 2018

Owners of old cars, heavy-duty trucks and farm tractors can get help in buying cleaner-burning models through funding announced this week.

The aid comes from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. It works to ease asthma, emphysema and other ailments in eight counties from San Joaquin south to Kern.

Owners of cars from 1999 or earlier can get up to \$9,500 to replace them with gasoline-powered models that are more fuel-efficient or with hybrid, plug-in hybrid or battery electric vehicles. The exact amount is based on the specific replacement vehicle and the applicant's household income.

The program is part of the Drive Clean in the San Joaquin campaign, which has total funding of \$30.3 million for the 2018-19 fiscal year, district spokesman Anthony Presto said. The campaign also includes a separate rebate program for electric vehicles and help with repairs that allow old cars to pass smog tests.

The funding comes from fees charged by the California Department of Motor Vehicles and from the state's cap-and-trade program. The latter pays for efforts against climate change through fees on greenhouse gas emitters.

The air district also received \$3.8 million from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to help replace 100 farm tractors and 105 trucks in commercial fleets. The money will be combined with about \$20 million from other district sources and from the farmers and fleet owners.

The \$3.8 million is part of \$9.6 million that the EPA awarded around California this week for cleaner school buses, airport shuttles, harbor tugboats and other projects.

"EPA is committed to improving air quality and advancing cleaner technologies to improve the quality of life for residents throughout California," Pacific Southwest Regional Administrator Mike Stoker said in a news release.

More information on the district programs is at www.valleyair.org or 209-557-6400.

Meetings, club events in and around Modesto

Excerpt from Modesto Bee article, Sunday, Oct. 28, 2018

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Turlock

What: Tune In and Tune Up

When: Saturday, Nov. 3, 8 a.m. to noon

Where: Stanislaus County Fairgrounds, 900 N Broadway

Info: The Valley Air District and Valley Clean Air Now offer a free emissions test for vehicle owners who feel they may not pass current emission standards. Open to the first 525 vehicles that do not pass the emissions test. Car owners will receive a \$500 voucher for repairs at a participating STAR smog shop. Expect at least a 2-hour wait, no smog certificates will be issued, no diesel vehicles accepted. For more information call [1-800-806-2004](tel:1-800-806-2004) or [email info@valleycan.org](mailto:info@valleycan.org) or visit valleycan.org.

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\$3.7M grant aims to cut diesel pollution in Valley

Stockton Record, Sunday, Oct. 28, 2018

FRESNO — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency last week announced an award of more than \$3.7 million to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District for two projects the district is spearheading to improve Valley air quality by reducing heavy-duty diesel vehicle emissions.

The federal funding came through the EPA's Diesel Emission Reduction Act grants program and will match the federal dollars with district funds for both projects.

The Air Pollution Control District manages air quality strategies for the eight-county Valley stretching from San Joaquin County in the north to Kern County in the south.

The first project will replace more than 100 heavy-duty diesel trucks in the Valley with newer trucks, while the second will replace 100 diesel-powered agricultural tractors with new off-road agricultural equipment. Both projects require the new replacement vehicles to have dramatically lower emissions than the older vehicles, meeting or even exceeding current EPA emission standards.

Agriculture and trucking are critical for the Valley's economy, and both currently rely on diesel-fueled vehicles or equipment that are a significant source of air pollution. These projects aim to support the Valley's economic needs while also improving the region's air quality and health, according to U.S. Rep. Jim Costa, D-Merced, whose district spans the central part of the Valley.

"The Valley faces unique challenges when it comes to improving our air quality, and I applaud the district for designing effective programs that both meet the real needs in the San Joaquin Valley and deservingly earn federal support," Costa said.

[Bakersfield Californian Op-Ed, Sunday, October 28, 2018:](#)

Sunday Forum: Valley residents deserve clean air

Growing up in this great valley and working for nearly 20 years with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution District (Air District) to improve our air quality, I have gained a deep appreciation for the ingenuity, effort and investment that we as a region have made to improve the quality of life for all valley residents.

There is no doubt that the San Joaquin Valley faces unique and unparalleled air quality and economic challenges that require sustained and creative efforts by all of us if we are to overcome them. Surrounded by mountains, experiencing weather that often traps air pollution, and serving as the primary corridor for moving freight through California and the rest of the nation means that even greater reductions in air pollution are needed to improve air quality when compared to other regions throughout the nation.

Given this challenge, the San Joaquin Valley has been working for decades to improve our air quality by putting into place the toughest and most innovative clean air measures anywhere. These efforts have not been easy or cheap – billions in dollars have been invested by valley businesses to upgrade equipment, modernize fleets, install pollution control equipment and enhance operating practices with the goal of improving air quality and public health. Through these investments, air pollution in the San Joaquin Valley has been reduced by more than 85 percent and air quality has improved considerably over the years. Valley communities now experience more clean air days than ever before. Accomplishing this has only been possible through strong leadership from our local governing board, and cooperation and sacrifice from valley businesses and residents that have repeatedly been asked to do more.

Despite our collective efforts to clean up the valley's air, there is no doubt that more must be done given the public health implications as well as the economic consequences to our region of not meeting federal mandates. Building on the valley's past efforts, the Air District has been hard at work preparing a new plan for improving the valley's air quality and meeting the newest federal air quality standards for fine particles. This new plan has been supported by dozens of public meetings and workshops involving residents, businesses, public agencies and others that have taken the time to participate, provide valuable input and make suggestions. The draft plan contains a range of new regulations, clean air grants and other innovative measures across every sector that push the deployment of new technologies and will reduce air pollution significantly in the years to come, including:

Even further restrictions on the use of residential wood-burning devices and fireplaces, increased public education on the health impacts of wood smoke and increased grants for transitioning to clean devices.

New rules to further reduce air pollution from industrial sources such as boilers, steam generators, internal combustion engines, glass manufacturing facilities, agricultural conservation management practices and other sources.

Innovative strategy for reducing air pollution from commercial restaurants using underfired charbroilers.

A suite of clean air grants for valley residents, including grants for electric and other clean air vehicles, replacing gas mower with electric mowers, grants for vanpools and other grant opportunities.

Incentive programs for valley businesses including for the replacement of heavy duty trucks, agricultural equipment, off-road equipment, electric dairy feed mixers, locomotives, almond harvesting equipment, commercial zero-emission lawn and garden equipment and other grant opportunities.

While the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District will continue to seek additional reductions from local stationary sources under our authority, it is clear that bold measures and investment to reduce mobile source emissions now comprising 85 percent of our remaining air pollution must be pursued. In addition to the Air District's new local measures, the California Air Resources Board is committing to reduce air pollution from mobile sources under their authority through a number of new measures, including new regulations for cleaner vehicles and ongoing inspection and maintenance of heavy duty trucks, as well as new incentive-based grant measures to help replace aging heavy duty trucks and agricultural equipment with new clean technologies.

Accomplishing these significant reductions will require swift and decisive action by the state and federal governments to establish new state and national clean air standards for trucks, locomotives and other mobile sources. To implement the new clean air grant measures in the new plan, \$1 billion per year in new funding will be required from the state over the next five years. Without this action, the valley will not be able to achieve our clean air goals and meet federal clean air mandates, and as a result will be subject to devastating penalties and face a competitive disadvantage with the rest of the nation. That is why, in addition to the significant mobile source reductions called for in the new plan, the Air District has repeatedly called for the federal government to recognize the valley's need for mobile source reductions and adopt new clean air national standards for mobile sources.

Moving forward with the strategies in this plan will be a major endeavor that can only be accomplished through a collaborative approach and significant investment at the local, state and federal level. The valley has seen success in advocating for our needs in Sacramento and bringing hundreds of millions in new dollars to valley communities for clean air investments. We will need to build on this success to secure the needed funding in the coming years. Much is being asked again of valley residents and businesses in the new plan, and we will need continued support from all valley sectors, and the state and federal governments, to achieve clean air for all valley residents.

Samir Sheikh is the executive director/air pollution control officer of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.