

Report warns of dire warming in Arctic

Four-year study blames vehicle and factory emissions for accelerating climate change.

By JEFF SALLOT

[Thurs., Nov. 4, 2004, Toronto Globe and Mail, in the Orange County Register](#)

Sometime this century, polar bears may disappear from Hudson Bay. The Northwest Passage may become a busy shipping lane. The Inuit of the Arctic may suffer higher rates of skin cancer because of increased exposure to ultraviolet rays.

These are some of the possibilities outlined in a scientific study to be presented next week to senior government officials from Canada and seven other countries with Arctic territory. It predicts profound changes in climate, wildlife habitat and human living conditions in the far north because people living to the south are polluting the air.

The four-year study also suggests that what's happening in the north is a harbinger of a changing climate that, if unchecked, will eventually alter living conditions everywhere on Earth.

The 1,400-page report, dubbed "the brick" by the more than 250 scientists working on the project, is to be released Tuesday in Reykjavik, Iceland, at a ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council. The council countries are Canada, Iceland, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Russia and the United States.

Parts of the report have been leaked to the media by scientists in Europe, who said they were trying to thwart efforts by the Bush administration to keep the study under wraps until after the presidential election.

Canadian officials familiar with the study say there was no political interference from Washington on the timing of the release, but that the Bush administration has generally been out of step with an emerging global consensus on the risks of global warming.

The report warns that gases from factory and vehicular emissions are accelerating changes in the Arctic - shrinking glaciers, melting sea ice, thawing permafrost and changing weather patterns.

Robert Corell, an American oceanographer who headed the study, detailed some of the climate changes in testimony before Congress this year.

He said the average winter temperature in the Alaskan and western Canadian north has increased an average 3 degrees Celsius in the past 60 years. This is twice the rate of temperature increases globally. Arctic sea ice has shrunk by 10 percent in the past three decades, he said.

With warming temperatures and pools of stagnant water in summer, people in the Arctic will have to worry for the first time about diseases carried by mosquitoes.

The beaver population in Alaska is moving north, causing worries about the kinds of diseases it carries. Inuit hunters are falling through ice more frequently. In European Nordic regions, birch trees are supplanting lichen pastures that have been the main food source for reindeer.

As sea ice disappears, polar bears, which rely on the ability to move on ice to hunt seals, will be forced ashore. But they don't have the ability to forage for food on land, Corell said.

News from the San Joaquin Valley

The Associated Press

[Thurs., Nov. 4, 2004, In the Bakersfield Californian and Nov. 3 in the San Francisco Chronicle](#)

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) - The San Joaquin Valley leads the country in daylong smog violations for the sixth consecutive year.

California had its cleanest summertime air in three decades, but the Valley had 104 violations of the daylong, or eight-hour, smog standard. The region had more violations than both Los Angeles and Houston, two areas with much larger populations. The Valley has had more than 600 daylong violations since 1999.

Researchers have determined that longer exposures, even at lower levels, are more harmful than the shorter ones because they allow time for the main ingredient of smog, ozone, to irritate the lungs. Ozone can cause lung-related problems, such as asthma.

The numbers suggest that valley residents spend more time in ozone-laden air than anyone else in the country. People who work outside, such as farm laborers, are more at risk than people who work indoors.

Joel Schwartz, adjunct fellow with the Reason Foundation, said he thought the number of violations was overstated because no single location experienced all 104 violations. On average, most Valley locations had about 14 violations, he said.

The Valley's bowl shape and its weather patterns hold pollution longer than most places, making it difficult to keep its air clean. Air officials have until 2013 to clean up the Valley enough to meet the eight-hour standard.

Developers must be partners in cleaning Bakersfield's air

By GORDON NIPP, Bakersfield

[Thurs., Nov. 4, 2004, Bakersfield Californian, Commentary](#)

Bakersfield's dirty air is everybody's business and everybody's responsibility. The rapid growth of recent years makes it ever more important that we do everything we can to ensure that Bakersfield will be a healthy and pleasant place to live and work.

Physicians and scientists are learning that dirty air keeps kids' lungs from developing fully, and we know that dirty air harms seniors and people with chronic illnesses like asthma.

Air pollution is such a threat to our future that the Sierra Club's local chapter has challenged the approval of local developments that will add to the pollution that puts our kids at risk. The city and the county must do more to ensure that the short-term benefits of growth are not gained at the expense of our health and quality of life.

Due in part to these challenges, developers are beginning to acknowledge their contribution to our area's dangerously dirty air. Recently, a local developer voluntarily agreed to a small air quality fee that the city of Bakersfield will use for air pollution reduction projects, such as cleaning up or replacing polluting vehicles.

Unfortunately, the fee doesn't come close to making up for the air pollution that the development will cause mainly due to more automobile and truck traffic. By trying to pay the least amount possible, the developer is shortchanging our community instead of helping to protect the public's health.

It is because of situations like this that our local government should develop and adhere to strong standards to combat dirty air. The city of Bakersfield is developing a zero emissions program through which developers could fund pollution reduction projects that would offset the air pollution associated with their project.

There are three steps that should be taken to improve the odds that this program will deliver results.

- Developers shouldn't be hiring the air consultant who calculates how much pollution they are responsible for. If the consultant comes up with numbers that are more costly to the developer, it is unlikely the developer will hire that consultant again. This conflict of interest can tempt consultants to massage the data to minimize the developer's obligation. Government should remove this temptation by hiring and monitoring the consultants itself.
- When measuring how a development will worsen our air quality, our public officials should insist that pollution created during construction be included. The pollution created during the construction process is dismissed by developers as temporary, but it is very real to people suffering from air pollution-related diseases.
- The process of choosing projects to be funded with air quality fees should be open to all. Public oversight would help ensure that the money was used for new, cost-effective projects and not for projects that would have occurred anyway without this program.

If the Bakersfield program meets these standards, it has the potential to be a significant, precedent-setting effort that could help clean our air and better protect the health of our residents.

Gordon Nipp of Bakersfield is a retired math teacher and a member of the executive committee of the local chapter of the Sierra Club. Community Voices is an expanded commentary that may contain up to 500 words. The Californian reserves the right to reprint commentaries in all formats, including on its Web page.

With demand for air purifiers growing, here's what to look for

By Dinah Eng

[Thurs., Nov., 4, 2004, Los Angeles Times](#)

Last fall, Diane Nathanson, a Toluca Lake resident who is allergic to pollens and other airborne particles, bought an air purifier, thinking that it would also cut down on cooking smells and odor from the dog.

"But then I saw a Consumer Reports study that said the model I bought wasn't very effective, so I took it back," says Nathanson. "After that, I heard about the Living Air Flair on the radio. It was used at the Pentagon to clear the air after the 9/11 attacks, so I bought that. It does seem to help, but I don't use it all the time because my husband doesn't like the noise."

Air pollution and allergies plague many in Southern California. At this time of year, Angelenos are facing the official end of the ozone smog season, and the rise of fine particulate pollution.

To combat this, consumers are increasingly turning to home air purifiers. According to the latest figures from Consumer Reports, concerns about pollution, allergies and terrorism spurred sales of 3.4 million units by consumers in 2002, up 70% from 2000.

The top-selling five brands of air purifiers, based on unit sales from July 2003 to June 2004, include Sharper Image's Ionic Breeze, Holmes, Honeywell, Oreck and Hamilton Beach, according to NPD Group, a market research firm.

Air purifiers generally fall into three categories: HEPA filters, electronic cleaners (which include ion generators or ionizers), and hybrids, which use more than one filter to capture different sized particles in the air.

According to physicians and the American Lung Assn., air cleaners that use HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filters are the most efficient and remove the smallest particles. They are used in hospitals and other areas that require clean indoor environments. Of the top five sellers, Holmes, Honeywell and Hamilton Beach offer HEPA models.

The most recent testing by Consumer Reports showed that overall, electronic cleaners were not very effective.

Dr. Michael Hirt, with the Center for Integrative Medicine in Tarzana, advises against buying electronic air purifiers that use ion generators or ionizers, which generate negatively charged ions. The ions act as a magnet for dust, which is then collected on a steel plate, or inadvertently adheres to other objects in the room.

"As soon as the charge wears off, the dust falls to the floor, and you're surrounded by it again," says Hirt. "More importantly, the ionization process creates ozone, which is an air pollutant and an oxidant. We take antioxidants to help counter the effect of oxidants on our bodies, so pumping ozone into your home potentially has a negative effect."

Hirt says running an ion generator for short periods of time when no one is home is probably safe,

but consumers should understand that the main purpose of doing so is to rid the house of odors, not to clean the air itself.

Bengt Rittri, president of Blueair Inc., which manufactures air purifiers with ion generators, says his products reduce the ozone in a room, and do not add to it.

"Our protective galvanized steel housing eats ozone, reducing and not adding ozone to the environment," says Rittri.

Physicians note that even the best air purifiers don't always help allergy sufferers.

"I recommend them, but it depends on the situation," says Dr. Joseph Gaudencio Dizon, an allergy immunology specialist with Kaiser Permanente. "It's good for dealing with pollens and molds that may be in the environment, or even for animal dander. But if someone's allergic to dust mites, air purifiers are not that helpful because dust mites don't tend to be airborne."

Beijing gasping for clean air

[Thurs., Nov. 4, 2004, CNN](#)

BEIJING, China (Reuters) -- China's capital, host of the 2008 Olympics, is in "a state of emergency" because of air pollution and one of the city's biggest polluters will slash production till the end of the year, state media said Thursday.

Improving air quality is key to the city's drive to be ready for the 2008 summer Games, and visiting International Olympic Committee officials have seen the air quality at its worst over recent days.

The capital has set a clean air target for 2004 of 227 days but has fallen well short of this.

"With 40 more days of clean air still needed, we are in a state of emergency," the Beijing Morning Post quoted a notice issued by the Beijing Environment Protection Bureau as saying.

The notice urged companies and factories to "strive hard to grab blue skies," the newspaper said. By the end of October, Beijing had registered only 187 blue-sky days, meaning it needed clear air in 40 of the last 61 days of 2004 to meet the mark, the newspaper said.

Steel maker Shougang Group said it will cut production to curb pollution.

"Some factories will examine and repair equipment in November and December which will cut production to 40,000 tonnes so as to reduce pollution," Shougang's vice general manager, Liu Shuiyang, was quoted as saying.

Liu did not say how much the factories would normally produce in two months.

Shougang would also cut steel production in Beijing to four million tonnes a year by 2007, state media said last October.

Beijing's normally poor air, choked by car exhaust, factory emissions and construction dust, deteriorates when thousands of coal-burning heating plants and smaller domestic coal stoves are lit in the winter.

China, already the world's fastest growing car and energy market, has earmarked \$7 billion of its total \$37 billion Olympic budget to clean up the capital.

At the beginning of October, the city's skies were smothered by smog so thick it forced the rescheduling of two shows by a visiting French aerobatics team.

Pre-Olympic plans call for relocation of 200 polluting factories and treatment of more than 90 percent of sewage in the city's noxious canals by 2008.

Shougang Group was considering moving out of the city altogether in 2012 to help clean the air, state media said last year.

The Beijing Morning Post also said the city had spent 16 million yuan (\$1.93 million) to buy 40 street-sweeping trucks, which would be in use at the end of November.

Bush win drives coal stocks up as 'Kerry risk' removed

HEATHER DRAPER, Dow Jones Newswires

[Thurs., Nov., 3, 2004, in the S.F. Chronicle,](#)

DENVER (Dow Jones/AP) -- Coal stocks rose Wednesday after Sen. John Kerry conceded the election.

Coal stocks had been held down by "Kerry risk," analyst Jonathan Wolff of Wachovia Securities wrote in a research note Wednesday. "Kerry and the Democrats are more environmentally conscious and were seen as potentially affecting the coal demand growth story, which was just getting started in earnest."

A Kerry administration likely would have tried to enforce stricter nitrogen oxide, sulfur oxide and mercury emission standards and could have reignited the global warming issue, Wolff said.

"We think a second term with Bush would limit the risk on the carbon dioxide issue becoming a major concern for coal demand," he said.

Richmond, Va.-based Massey Energy Co., the nation's fourth-largest coal company based on revenue, was "gratified" to see the Bush win, said Katharine Kenny, investor relations director.

"A Bush win is probably a positive in that he has been very aware of energy issues in the country," Kenny said.

Massey shares closed at \$27.51, up \$1.39, or 5.3 percent, on heavy volume on the New York Stock Exchange.

Other coal stocks ended higher Wednesday include Peabody Energy Corp., up 5.3 percent; Consol Energy Inc., up 4.6 percent; Arch Coal Inc., up 5 percent; and Walter Industries Inc., up 7.7 percent.

Massey Energy's Kenny said that Bush's Clear Skies Act is a "fair and balanced plan for the future that acknowledges the importance of coal and clean coal in the future energy needs of our country."

She said a Bush win "is an acknowledgment that coal will be an important part of the energy future in the U.S."

Supporters say Bush's proposed Clear Skies Act will cut pollution while providing clarity to power companies on emission standards, especially for coal-fired plants.

The Sierra Club Web site says the initiative "expands the pollution trading system that results in some communities getting cleaner, but many communities losing out on cleaner air."

Wachovia's Wolff said the Clear Skies Act now has a greater chance of being passed, and could encourage power generators to build more coal-fired plants.

"We continue to believe the coal group has legs," he said.

Legg Mason analyst Paul Forward was bullish about the coal industry even before the Bush win. He wrote on Monday that he maintains "a positive view on the U.S. coal industry as an alternative fuel to increasingly scarce natural gas and oil."

Forward said short-term risks to the sector are that too much coal production comes online or that oil and gas prices decline significantly, but he said he sees "little current evidence that these risks are building."

Neither analyst owns shares in the companies mentioned. Wachovia and Legg Mason provide investment banking services to some of the companies they cover.

Valley leads air violations

Region had the most eight-hour ozone violations this summer: 104.

By Mark Grossi / The Fresno Bee

Leading in ozone violations (Number of eight-hour ozone violations for 2004): San Joaquin Valley: 104 South Coast (L.A.): 88 Houston: 44 Source: California Air Resources Board; Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

California had its cleanest summertime air in three decades, yet the San Joaquin Valley still had 104 violations of the daylong, or eight-hour, smog standard.

It was the sixth consecutive year that the Valley led the country in eight-hour smog violations. The Valley was worse than both Los Angeles and Houston, two more heavily populated areas.

What a confusing tale. Breezy summer weather gave the Valley the fewest violations since 1975 in a different smog standard: the one-hour, or peak, reading.

The Valley had only nine violations of the one-hour standard. So how could the area also have 104 eight-hour violations? The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has an answer.

"Even if the weather is better, we're still going to experience a lot of days over the eight-hour standard," said supervising meteorologist Evan Shipp. "It doesn't take that much to produce eight-hour exceedances." In other words, lower levels of pollution will cause violations over longer periods of time. Researchers have determined the longer exposures even at lower levels are more harmful than the shorter ones.

The long exposures allow time for the main ingredient of smog, the corrosive gas called ozone, to irritate the lungs. Ozone can trigger lung-related ailments, such as asthma.

With more than 600 daylong violations since 1999, the numbers indicate Valley residents spend more time in ozone-laden air than anyone else in the country. People who work outside, such as farm laborers, are more at risk than workers inside a building.

"If you're sitting in an air-conditioned office most of the time during summer, it probably doesn't affect you as much as someone who is out in it," said Shipp.

One critic said he thought the number of violations was overstated.

Where can you find people in the Valley who experienced the 104 bad days for the eight-hour standard? Nowhere, said Joel Schwartz, adjunct fellow with the Reason Foundation, a national Libertarian organization.

"There is no single location that had 104 eight-hour exceedances," Schwartz said. "The worst location in the Valley is Arvin [in Kern County], which had 97 exceedances in 2004."

On average, most Valley locations had about 14 violations, he said, and that is a better way to talk about the exposure. Arvin residents had the worst of it, but even they didn't experience 104 days, he said.

Air officials did not comment directly about Schwartz's approach, but Shipp said the Valley cannot be segmented. Arvin's problem is connected to the whole Valley, he said. Pollution from other parts of the Valley drifts south to Arvin, where it accumulates.

"People in the Valley are still experiencing high levels of ozone for days at a time," Shipp said. "We are well over the standard on many days."

Air officials have until 2013 to clean up the Valley enough to meet the eight-hour standard. The Valley's bowl shape and its weather patterns hold pollution longer than most places, making the job difficult.

To make the standard, no more than three violations are allowed in a three-year period at each monitor. Aside from Arvin's 97 in the past season, Oildale in Kern County had 30.

"We're all part of the problem," Shipp said. "That's why we will need to control as many sources as possible to come into compliance."

Smell is nauseating

[Bakersfield Californian, Letter to the Editor, Thursday, Nov. 4, 2004](#)

I'm writing to let people know how bad the dairy smell is on Old River Road between Millux and the 223. It's so bad in the morning that one time I threw up while passing through this area and now have resorted to wearing a filter mask and breathing only through my mouth until I pass the area.

This can't be healthy for anyone driving in the area. I challenge these obviously profitable businesses to eliminate the suffering of passing motorists and neighboring residential communities.

-- PATRICK CLARK, Taft