

News Release

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For Immediate Release



San Joaquin Valley
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

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TO: Local news, business
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District proposal first in the nation **Plan to address federal 8-hour ozone air-quality standard**

(Fresno, CA) – Today, after several months of extensive public input, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is releasing Proposed 2007 Ozone Plan for receive and file with the District’s Governing Board. This plan was developed after more than 18 months of rigorous scientific study, multi-disciplinary collaboration, and numerous opportunities for the general public, environmental and community advocacy groups, and industry representatives to offer critique and suggestions.

A final round of public workshops was held on Feb. 8, 2007, and on April 30, 2007, the plan will be presented during a public hearing to the District’s Governing Board for final action.

“This plan represents the most expeditious, ambitious and innovative air-quality plan ever developed for this region,” said Seyed Sadredin, the Air District’s Executive Director / Air Pollution Control Officer. “Through this plan, all Valley residents will benefit from improvements in air quality soon and continually over time.”

This plan will bring the entire Valley into attainment with the federal, health-based, 8-hour ozone standard as early as possible by employing every feasible air quality mitigation measure. By 2020, more than 90 percent of Valley residents will be living in areas that reach the attainment status for ozone. Yet the area east of Arvin and northwest Fresno will require a level of emission reductions that is only achievable by using advanced technologies and unsecured incentive funds. This leaves the Valley with no choice but to seek up to an “extreme” non-attainment classification.

Through the aggressive pursuit of the earliest possible attainment date for all Valley residents, the District discovered that current technology and the promised new technologies on the horizon cannot bring about all of the needed emissions reductions. Even if the Valley’s economic resources were unlimited, it is physically impossible to generate all of the necessary reductions without significant advancements in pollution-control technology. This dilemma necessitates the step up to the “Extreme” non-attainment classification, as allowed for in the federal Clean Air Act. The new classification will set an attainment deadline of 2023.

The draft 2007 Ozone Plan, formally referred to as a State Implementation Plan (SIP), reduces emissions that create ozone, the main ingredient of smog, which is mostly a summertime problem in the Valley. This is the first plan developed by any air district under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s new standard that limits ozone concentrations averaged over eight-hour periods. If approved by the District’s Governing Board in April, the plan will then be forwarded to the California Air Resources Board and, subsequently, to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for approval.

California Air Resources Board (CARB) staff supported the reclassification to “extreme” in a letter to District Executive Director Sadredin, dated March 1, 2007: “ARB believes that a reclassification to extreme is necessary given the scope of the problem, the SIP’s reliance on new technologies, and the need to secure additional incentive funding. A ‘bump-up’ to the extreme designation appears to be the only option for preparing a federally approvable SIP.”

Over the past several months of public debate, an “Alternative State Implementation Plan for the San Joaquin Valley” was released by the International Sustainable Research Center (ISSRC), based in the Los Angeles area, initially suggesting that reaching an earlier deadline would be feasible under federal guidelines. A revised version of the document released on Feb. 19, 2007, admitted that attainment by 2013 is not possible. The revision

conceded to only achieving 95 percent of their own estimate of NOx reductions necessary for attainment. Although certain deficiencies were corrected, the revision still relied on outdated information, underestimated attainment goals, double-counted reductions, and contained basic mathematical and technical errors.

Despite the above shortcomings, the District carefully considered and evaluated all control measures proposed by ISSRC for inclusion in the 2007 Ozone Plan. The District concludes that the Alternative SIP cannot bring the Valley into attainment under any timeline before 2024. Nevertheless, there are several concepts which have been deemed as viable, and these are included in the 2007 Ozone Plan.

When questioned during the Feb. 20, 2007 California Senate Select Committee on Air Quality hearing by State Sen. Dean Florez as to the nature of the report, ISSRC President Jim Lentz stated that the plan was largely "recommendations to the (District) Board" and was "absolutely not" ready for submission to the federal government. Upon full analysis, the Alternative Plan falls short of attainment while proposing such unfeasible regulations as extended periods of prohibiting agriculture operations, construction work or private individuals' driving.

In order to meet the standard, the Valley needs to reduce smog-forming nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions by about 75 percent, according to air-quality modeling conducted by CARB. The price tag associated with the regulatory measures contained in the proposed plan is estimated at \$15 -20 billion. Regulations alone, however, cannot achieve all of the necessary reductions.

The remaining needed reductions will come through increased incentive funding from state, federal and local sources and advanced technology development. The need for incentive funding is largely due to the fact that new mobile-source emissions standards will only impact new-vehicle purchases, with the existing vehicles remaining in operation utilizing older, higher-emitting engines. Mobile sources account for 80 percent of the NOx emissions in the San Joaquin Valley.

It is estimated that \$188 million per year in incentive funding will be necessary to achieve the remainder of the emissions reductions that cannot be identified through regulatory programs. For the Valley to be successful in securing the necessary incentive funding, an advocacy effort with the public sector, business community, environmental community, and the general public all requesting resources will be necessary. The plan contains a detailed expenditure plan for these funds (clean irrigation pumps, retirement of gross-polluting vehicles, public- and private-fleet turnover, school bus replacement, agricultural equipment, alternative transportation and more).

Reaching the plan's goals will involve substantial investment from the public sector and the business community, and participation and support from every Valley resident.

Specific measures in the plan include:

- ❑ Further local regulations on industrial, commercial and agricultural operation;
- ❑ Local rules requiring employee trip reduction, which would require employers of a certain size to establish carpool and alternative transportation programs for their employees;
- ❑ New state and federal standards for tailpipe emissions from cars, trucks, and locomotives; and
- ❑ Public funding to help the private sector pay for replacing and retrofitting high-polluting engines.
 - This includes the replacement of older-model, high-emitting vehicles: 30,000 cars and 20,000 trucks.

The draft of the plan to be released today includes input and feedback from several months of public review and discussion, including workshops held in February 2007, October 2006 and town-hall meetings held during the 2006 summer. The plan also includes information gained from over \$80 million in research and air-quality studies. The draft plan will be available online at www.valleyair.org by the end of business on Thursday.

A public hearing on the proposed plan is scheduled for 11 a.m. Mon., April 30, and will be held via videoconference at the locations listed below. Members of the public are encouraged to attend and provide input at any of the three District regional offices in Bakersfield, Fresno and Modesto. For directions or more information, members of the public and the media can visit www.valleyair.org. Or, call the nearest District office: Fresno (559) 230-6000, Bakersfield (661) 326-6900 and Modesto (209) 557-6400.