

## Tulare County cities agree to reduce dust

By Kerri Ginis, The Fresno Bee, *November 19, 2002*

Eight cities in Tulare County recently adopted measures to lower the amount of dust or particulate matter generated by traffic on rural roads.

City leaders agreed to six control measures that will reduce tiny particles, or PM-10, in the Valley's air. Those measures include paving roads, purchasing more efficient street sweepers and frequently cleaning the streets near industrial areas.

Tulare County is among the first in the Valley to adopt these types of control measures, said transportation engineer Ted Smalley, a staff person for the Tulare County Association of Governments.

"Our cities were all very cooperative," he said following Monday's meeting of the association in Visalia. "They were all willing to work on this."

Much of the focus for reducing PM-10 will be on paving rural roads. The county has 120 miles of unpaved roadways, and officials have committed to paving nearly 15 miles, which is expected to cost \$1.1 million.

Tulare County risked losing \$25 million to \$30 million a year in federal highway funding if it didn't find ways to reduce particulate matter. It's part of a larger mandate by the federal government to reduce dust or particulate matter in the air.

The Valley is among the six worst air basins in the country for PM-10 -- particles 10 microns or smaller. The particles, which are about one-seventh the width of a human hair, lodge in the lungs, causing asthma attacks and other health problems.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is requiring the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to create a particulate-matter plan. The plan is expected to be completed by next spring.

Eventually all 59 agencies that fall under the Valley's air district will have to adopt similar control measures, Smalley said.

"Ultimately, everyone wants to avoid losing highway funds," he said. "We want to do our part now and work together so we don't run into that problem."

Visalia City Council Member Phil Cox said the city adopted the control measures at its Nov. 4 meeting.

The city also adopted some additional measures, including putting a white stripe along the edge of roads where there aren't any gutters. The white stripe should help keep cars off the dirt shoulders.

"This is something that all cities want to take part in," Cox said. "We wanted to make sure we contributed in a positive way."

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## Wood burning is discouraged

By Hanford Sentinel Staff, November 20, 2002

FRESNO - San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Control Officer David L. Crow is urging Valley residents to refrain from using wood-burning fireplaces and stoves until Friday morning, due to unhealthy levels of airborne particles during the current foggy conditions.

This is the second such request this season in the SJVAPCD's annual "Please Don't Light Tonight" campaign.

The request for residents to voluntarily curtail wood burning affects residents in Fresno, Kings, Tulare, Madera and Kern counties. The requests are usually issued in a 24-hour period; however, persistent weather patterns led the district to issue this request for the coming three nights.

The curtailment request does not apply to residents who rely on wood-burning devices as their only source of heat, users of pellet or EPA-certified wood burning stoves or EPA-certified fireplace inserts, or mountain residents living above 3,000 feet.

[Letters to the Editor, Bakersfield Californian, November 19, 2002](#)

## **Put blame where it belongs**

I agree wholeheartedly with a recent letter writer, who protested the placing of so much responsibility for air pollution on fireplace-burning.

The bulk of the valley's pollution problems comes from such sources as oil refineries, agriculture (crops and animals) and vehicles, especially diesel-powered trucks and equipment. The problem with asking homeowners to stop burning fireplaces is that, unlike those other industries, homeowners don't have huge lobbying machines in Sacramento to grease the palms of our legislators so that their clients can benefit from exemptions to the laws.

Other cities in California also have enacted ordinances outlawing gasoline engine leaf blowers, which has a side benefit of helping reduce noise pollution. The act of blowing, whether with gas or electricity, puts a great volume of particulates into the air. One step in the right direction would be to outlaw all two-cycle engines in the state. (That would also help to clean up our lakes and forests.)

I, for one, will comply with the no-burning nights and will also investigate fireplace inserts. But if homeowners must sacrifice, so must the industries.

It is well past the time that our legislators (including our City Council and Board of Supervisors) get some backbone and do what is needed to reduce air pollution -- pass laws with teeth and then ensure that they are enforced.

**GREGG K. KNOWLES, Bakersfield**

## **Sick of over-regulation**

I am a law-abiding citizen, but until someone regulates all the dirty air coming from the Bay area, stops all the lawn blowers and air pollution from the agriculture/petroleum industry, etc., I will continue to burn wood in my fireplace whenever I choose.

I'm getting tired of being over-regulated by government officials without even getting an opportunity to cast a vote in my favor.

**ROY WATERHOUSE, Bakersfield**

## **Regulate 'real' polluters**

Kern County has four major highways and several state roads that receive hundreds of diesel trucks per hour spewing tons of particulate matter and noxious gasses into the air. The Environmental Protection Agency has directed its wrath against individual homeowners of the Southern San Joaquin Valley with little evidence of any controls being directed against the highly organized and politically connected trucking industry.

Let us solve the dirty air problem by implementing incremental and real controls against the gross polluters and allow the nuclear family to gather around a cheery holiday fire to celebrate the holidays and the few chilly evenings we have during the winter.

**JERRY BECKWITH, Bakersfield**

## **District ruling fascist**

I am livid. When did we, as a representative democratic people, turn over our rights to allow a quasi-star chamber "district" to tell us what we can do or not do in our own homes? Forbidding the use of a wood-burning fireplace is totalitarian fascism.

All of us in Kern County need to revolt. Call or e-mail your representatives. This type of action must be stopped.

I would rather have EPA in charge of the situation because Congressman Bill Thomas could control the purse strings of the EPA as chairman of the Ways and Means committee.

**KENNETH SCOTT, Bakersfield**

## **Proposal is laughable**

I'm laughing so hard I can hardly write this. Those two health watchdogs, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and The Californian, agree that folks shouldn't burn their fireplaces on some unknown air quality days during winter and maybe not at all.

In the meantime, the county is considering another dairy (no pollution there.) Drive-thru drug stores, drive-thru banks and drive-thru fast-food joints continue to be built unabated.

Four Wal-Mart Supercenters (at Panama and Highway 99, Harris and Gosford, Coffee and Meany and an unconfirmed one at Highway 178 and Morning Drive) are being pushed through the city with no real attention to the traffic and air pollution problem they will add to. After all, almost 1 million square-feet of unnecessary retail space is worth more than the air we breathe.

I'll just freeze my tush off this winter while those folks in the first paragraph continue to suggest we handle serious pollution problems with realistic proposals like chimney cops and eliminating left-hand turns.

**RICHARD A. CRANE, Bakersfield**

## **Look elsewhere for cause**

It never ceases to amaze me how the Air Resources Board and our own Board of Supervisors and City Council members can find time to construct a new ordinance to regulate when we are allowed to light our fireplaces this winter.

Now if they can pass an ordinance to regulate the thousands of cows belching and passing gas at the proposed mega-dairies, we'll have something -- clean, sweet-smelling air. Wouldn't it be just peachy? Has this same group considered the many refineries around the county?

**DARRELL SOMERS, Bakersfield**

## **Enough is enough**

Enough is enough. Now they want to stop us from using our fireplaces. What's next? They say it made a big difference in Denver. I guess so. After all, they are a little bigger than we are, plus they have more houses with fireplaces, and more people use them because of the cold.

Are we all burning wood? I don't think so. I don't think it would make much difference if we all stopped burning wood. Let's turn to things that will make a difference. Let's get the city to do its paving at night and stop interrupting the traffic flow. Cars are the biggest polluters. Like it or not, that's true.

This summer, I got caught in a big traffic jam going east on the Truxtun extension from Mohawk almost to Coffee. We all were just crawling along. What did that do for our air quality?

How about this. On bad air days, let's get the fast-food restaurants to close their drive-up windows. This eliminates cars idling and cuts the pollution.

If you are so concerned about our fireplaces, why not get the wood people to sell only hard wood? It burns hotter and cleaner, leaving less soot in our chimneys.

This whole mess is just one more example of "those" people getting in my face telling me how to live. Well, I have been doing just fine for more years than I care to say without any help from those people. Oh, yes, that word mandatory. They can put it where the sun don't shine.

**JAMES COMMISSO, Bakersfield**

## **Will fight for right to burn**

I would like to put the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District on notice. Human beings have heated their dwellings by burning wood since the days of the cave dwellers. Hundreds of millions of American homes have been built with wood-burning fireplaces since the days of the early settlers.

I'll be damned if I will consent to or obey any such nonsense as a rule by any socialist organization, such as the SJVAPCD, to try and take this right from me.

I fully intend to defy and break this proposed rule should it become law as often as I feel like it. Anyone trespassing on my property to try and enforce this stupid law had better come armed and prepared to die for

his stupidity. It is time Americans wake up to the erosion of our basic human freedoms by left-wing socialists in this state and take a stand to defend what's left of our liberty as our forefathers did, or relinquish the right to call yourself an American.

**ROBERT W. McNINCH, Bakersfield**