

In The News 04-12-07

Governor raising funds, urging global warming action back East

By Michael Doyle, Sun Star Washington Bureau

San Diego Tribune and Merced Sun-Star, Thursday, April 12, 2007

WASHINGTON -- Greenbacks and a greener world brought Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger back East this week, as he combines campaign fundraising with high-profile pitches for environmental protection and California water storage.

Schwarzenegger is boosting his national profile by urging stronger action to combat global warming. In meetings with politicians, academics and the U.S. foreign policy elite, Schwarzenegger invokes California as the nation's environmental model.

"In California, we are doing everything we can to tip the balance in favor of the environment," Schwarzenegger said Wednesday afternoon at Georgetown University. "California is big. California is powerful, and what we do in California has an impact. We are sending the world a message."

It's the theme of the week, both globally and parochially.

Substantively, Schwarzenegger privately urged Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Stephen Johnson this week to grant California a waiver needed to regulate tailpipe emissions from cars and trucks. The governor invited Johnson to visit the state during an upcoming 90-day comment period, the latest bid to kick-start a waiver application first filed in December 2005.

Rhetorically, Schwarzenegger is beefing up his environmental credentials.

Schwarzenegger and Intel Corp. Chairman Craig Barrett delivered keynote speeches Wednesday at Georgetown's Newsweek Conference on Environmental Leadership. Not coincidentally, Newsweek magazine's 3.1 million subscribers saw a smiling Schwarzenegger holding up the Earth on the cover this week.

Intel was the other corporate sponsor of the daylong program. Schwarzenegger's role was confined to his 20-minute speech, in which he urged federal policymakers and Detroit automakers to take more aggressive action.

"What I'm saying to Michigan is, 'Michigan, get off your butt and join us,'" Schwarzenegger told the young and enthusiastic crowd.

This Thursday afternoon, the governor, whom Newsweek dubbed "the green giant," will bring this same environmental message to the Council on Foreign Relations in New York City. The 86-year-old organization attracts insiders who shape opinions and gravitate to government posts. That's an appealing platform for a term-limited politician now stumping nationally for a "post-partisan" approach to governing.

"We've got a full house for him," said Lisa Shields, the council's vice president for communications, noting that Schwarzenegger "is a national figure, and he's shown leadership on environmental issues, which our members are interested in."

The council's Web site, www.cfr.org, will webcast Schwarzenegger's speech live today starting at 10 a.m.

With Schwarzenegger getting the full-bore celebrity treatment and showing his bipartisan ways by appearing Wednesday alongside former California Democratic Assemblywoman Fran Pavley, other partisans had to snipe from afar.

"Schwarzenegger flies everywhere in a private jet (and) has a garage full of Hummers," said Bob Mulholland, a campaign adviser to the California Democratic Party, "so there's more greenhouse gases coming from his mouth than Schwarzenegger has actually reduced in the environment."

Schwarzenegger also scheduled a fundraising event in New York City following today's speech.

Schwarzenegger's campaign spokeswoman, Julie Soderlund, declined to say how much tickets cost, how much they expect to raise or where the event is being held. The event is part of a plan to retire a \$2.4 million debt from last year's gubernatorial campaign.

In the last several weeks, records show, Schwarzenegger's campaign has picked up \$5,000 checks from contributors, including the auditing firms Deloitte Services and KPMG, Texas-based grocery executive Charles Butt and Henry Cisneros, the Democratic former secretary of housing and urban development.

One of Schwarzenegger's two home-state senators, Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer, is likewise focused on global warming as chair of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. The two did not huddle this week.

Instead, Schwarzenegger met Wednesday with Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein. Although Feinstein has authored legislation that would extend California's strict tailpipe emissions standards nationwide, the two talked more Wednesday about the need for additional California water storage.

"The key is being able to capture water in the wet years and hold that water for dry years," Feinstein said, while Schwarzenegger nodded approvingly.

Governor chides automakers to clean up emissions

'Get off your butt,' he says to Michigan

By Michael Doyle - Bee Staff Writers
Sacramento Bee, Thursday, April 12, 2007

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Wednesday told American automobile companies to "get off your butt" to promote cleaner technologies and said international trade sanctions may be needed to protect the global environment.

Declaring that California "is sending the world a message" in leading the fight on global warming, Schwarzenegger made his remarks as the featured speaker for a Global Environmental Leadership Conference at Georgetown University. He is getting national attention-- appearing on the cover of Newsweek magazine this week -- for California's efforts to roll back greenhouse gases by 25 percent by 2020.

"In California, we are doing everything we can to tip the balance in favor of the environment," Schwarzenegger said in his remarks. "California is big. California is powerful, and what we do in California has an impact. We are sending the world a message."

In meetings with politicians, academics and the U.S. foreign policy elite, Schwarzenegger is invoking California as an environmental model.

This week, he privately urged Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Stephen Johnson to grant California a waiver needed to regulate tailpipe emissions from cars and trucks.

The governor invited Johnson to visit California during an upcoming 90-day comment period on the emission plan. And Wednesday, he used his Georgetown speech to cajole automakers and other states to sign on to cleaner fuel standards.

"There's a billboard in Michigan that accuses me of costing the car industry \$85 billion... because of our new carbon fuel standards," Schwarzenegger said. "The billboard says, 'Arnold to Michigan-- Drop dead.' ... What I'm saying is: 'Arnold to Michigan-- Get off your butt. Get off your butt and join us.'"

"California may be doing more to save U.S. automakers than anyone else because what we are doing is we are pushing them to make changes."

Schwarzenegger joined a fellow speaker, Intel Corp. Chairman Craig Barrett, at the Georgetown conference. The event was sponsored by Newsweek magazine, whose 3.1 million subscribers saw a smiling Schwarzenegger holding up the Earth on the cover this week.

In Schwarzenegger's 20-minute speech, the governor touted California's partnerships with Britain and Canada to come up with solutions to global warming. Meanwhile, he suggested that nations that don't take future steps to reduce pollutants blamed for global warming could be held accountable through "environmental tariffs, duties and other trade restrictions."

"This is a matter of fair trade. Nations cannot dump anything and in the future they will not be able to dump carbon or greenhouse gases either because this is an unfair trade advantage," he said.

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Instead, Schwarzenegger met Wednesday with Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein, who endorsed his \$6 billion water storage plan, including construction of two dams.

"The key is being able to capture water in the wet years and hold that water for dry years," Feinstein said, while Schwarzenegger nodded approvingly.

Livermore lab says bigger blasts would send depleted uranium into air

By Jake Armstrong, Record Staff Writer
Stockton Record, Thursday, April 12, 2007

TRACY - Bigger outdoor blasts proposed at an explosives test range southwest of Tracy could release up to 453 pounds of depleted uranium into the air a year, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory officials told air pollution regulators in an application last week.

Lab officials did not disclose that information in a November request to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to more than triple the amount of explosives used in detonations at its test range, Site 300. The district initially granted the lab permission, but revoked the permit in March after learning the blasts would contain radioactive materials.

Depleted uranium is less radioactive than naturally occurring uranium, and when detonated, it would be carried by wind, said Gretchen Gallegos, of the lab's Operations and Regulatory Affairs Division. The lab has not found radiation levels above federal thresholds at its monitoring stations, she said.

"All of our activities are well within any health measure, and there's nothing to be concerned about," Gallegos said.

The public will be able to give input on this new explosives request at public meetings the dates of which are yet to be determined, said Jaime Holt, the district's public information administrator.

District staff approved the lab's permit without any public scrutiny in November, causing a public outcry. This time, the district will perform a risk assessment on the blasts and review the request according to the California Environmental Quality Act, Holt said, adding the district just began reviewing the application and does not yet have a time line for completion.

Lab officials want to increase the amount of explosives used in blasts from 100 pounds to 350 pounds for government tests performed at the site, which is owned by the U.S. Department of Energy and operated by the University of California. The explosions would be capped at 8,000 pounds a year; lab officials said they plan only three tests per year at the 350-pound level.

Meanwhile, U.S. Department of Homeland Security officials will tour Site 300 Monday to further evaluate the University of California's proposal to locate there the National Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility, which would

research incurable diseases that harm humans, animals and plants. The visit is part of a nationwide tour of 18 sites vying for the federal laboratory. DHS officials will then shorten the list of proposals, conduct environmental reviews of the finalists, and decide on a site in October 2008.

Lawrence lab reapplies for blasts permit

By John Upton
Lodi News Sentinel, Thursday, April 12, 2007

Proposed explosives tests upwind from Tracy will release as much as 450 pounds of radioactive depleted uranium dust into the air every year, according to an air pollution permit application filed Friday by Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

The blasts will annually release other elements into the air, some of which will also be radioactive.

A permit allowing the blasts was approved with no public scrutiny by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District in November, but was withdrawn after a community backlash.

Regulators in March instructed the weapons lab to reapply for the permit and to provide data that would allow it to analyze the health effects of radiation that would be released by the blasts.

The district does not normally regulate radioactive material, and it had not been informed by the lab that the blasts would be radioactive.

District spokeswoman Jaime Holt said Wednesday that air pollution controllers had begun to evaluate the lab's new permit application.

"We'll be looking to see the extent of their risk assessment, and if we need to conduct one ourselves, we will," Holt said.

Holt said there would be an "appropriate opportunity for public input" before the district approves or rejects the permit based on guidelines in the California Environmental Quality Act.

Many of the radioactive elements in the blasts already pollute the soil and water at Site 300, which along Corral Hollow Road is hidden in hills southwest of Tracy.

The director of the lab's public affairs department said late Tuesday that she was unable to answer technical questions about the application.

"Nothing has changed from our application last fall," Susan Houghton said. "We have simply resubmitted our application."

The \$1.7 billion a year Department of Energy lab has sought to increase its outdoor test limits from the equivalent of 100 pounds of TNT to 350 pounds, and to increase its annual testing amount eightfold to 8,000 pounds "in support of homeland security and national defense activities," according to the permit application.

Houghton and other lab representatives in January told the Tracy City Council that the lab has currently planned just three of the 30 blasts in the 350-pound range that would be allowed by the permit in the coming 18 months.

City Seeks Residents With Green Thumbs

D.C. Hopes Beautification Takes Root

By Yolanda Woodlee, Washington Post Staff Writer
Washington Post, Thursday, April 12, 2007

While throngs of tourists trek to the Tidal Basin to see the District's trademark cherry trees this time of year, some residents are discovering new magnolias, maples and dogwoods right in their own curbside tree boxes.

It's springtime in "Tree City USA," a designation given to the District some time ago by the National Arbor Day Foundation, and the city's Urban Forestry Administration has spent six months planting about 500 trees in each of the eight wards.

Every year from October to April the city spends about \$890,000 to plant the 4,500 trees. This year, the planting started in Ward 8 in Southeast and gradually moved to Ward 1 in Northwest.

"We really needed some trees," said Kathy Henderson of Carver Terrace in Northeast. "People are so happy. I'm pleased that citizens are embracing trees so enthusiastically. Putting in the trees gives us something positive to talk about."

District residents should call the D.C. Department of Transportation, which oversees the urban forestry program, to request trees for their neighborhood. Although it's too late for this spring, residents who call by July 15 can put in orders for the fall planting.

Jourdinia Brown of Shepherd Park said she listed places where trees were missing and, last spring, asked the city to replace them. In October, the trees were planted along three blocks of 14th Street in Northwest.

"It gave the neighborhood an entirely different look," said Brown, who has lived in Shepherd Park since 1963. "It makes me feel very good because they have brought beauty to the neighborhood, and they help the environment."

John Thomas, the city's chief forester, said a tree-lined street has environmental as well as emotional benefits. They create a "neighborhood feel," Thomas said. Those benefits increase property values, generate more business and reduce crime, studies show. The trees absorb heat during the day and release it at night. They also help capture the rain, trap pollutants and produce oxygen, he said.

"They decrease your air conditioning use, improve [air quality](#) and reduce the ozone effect," Thomas said. "If you have a nice urban canopy, it helps the sewage system absorb water."

After the planting season, the city relies on residents to help nurture the trees. Without citizen involvement, some of the trees planted along the sidewalks will wither and die. Officials are hoping to form partnerships with residents to water and mulch the young trees. Thomas is speaking at Advisory Neighborhood Commission meetings, and fliers are being distributed throughout communities with directions on how to care for the trees.

After several trees perished last year, the city planted six more trees in the 700 block of Fairmont Street in Northwest this spring.

James Best, a 15-year resident of Columbia Heights who describes himself as "a nature person," said when the saplings were planted, he never envisioned they wouldn't survive. He said the neighbors didn't know they were expected to water them.

"That's the city's job," said Best, who was watering the bright tulips and pansies in his yard at the end of a hot day. "They planted them. They never asked the neighbors to water them."

The Fairmont Street trees weren't the only ones that didn't live a year.

Magnolias, redbuds and dogwoods also were planted along a 1.5-mile stretch of North Capitol Street last spring. The urban forestry program hoped to make the street more aesthetically pleasing, while creating a traffic-calming effect, said Erik Linden, a spokesman for the transportation department.

The goal was to set up a greenway along North Capitol Street, with 265 trees, but the exhaust and the wind from the passing vehicles was too much for the young trees, Linden said. Only about a dozen remain this year, and the others have been removed.

Because the contractor guarantees replacement if a tree doesn't live for a year, plans are to replace those trees with more durable foliage, such as ornamental grasses or heat-tolerant perennials, Linden said.

Michael Stockton, a board member of the Palisade Citizens Association, said he's determined not to let the 48 trees recently planted along Sherier Place NW die.

"That's not going to happen here," said Stockton, who is asking his neighbors to adopt a tree or two and "water it, weed it and mulch it to make sure it grows."

"They've made an impact on our neighborhood," said Stockton, who requested the trees about 18 months ago. "When you live on a block with no city trees and they come in and plant them, it makes a tremendous difference. It's fun to see."

Agency wants 2 plants on 1 site

State Energy Commission takes into account widespread opposition to Clawiter Road location in west Hayward

By Matt O'Brien, STAFF WRITER

Tri-Valley Herald, Thursday, April 12, 2007

HAYWARD — As it faces the prospect of allowing two new gas-fired power plants in a city that has made clear it doesn't want more than one, the California Energy Commission made some unusual suggestions this month.

How about having the two competing developers join together and build both plants on the same Hayward property?

"It would be a big change, given that they're two separate entities," said CEC spokeswoman Susanne Garfield, speaking of the separate development proposals by San Jose-based Calpine Corp. and Texas-based Tierra Energy.

Calpine wants to build its 600-megawatt combined cycle Russell City Energy Center adjacent to the city's wastewater treatment plant near the Hayward shoreline.

Tierra wants to build a 115.5-megawatt peaker plant called Eastshore Energy Center about a half-mile to the east on Clawiter Road.

Although the Eastshore project is smaller and likely would produce a lower total amount of pollution than Russell City, it has received far more local opposition because of its location closer to homes and businesses.

City officials have welcomed the Russell City plan, which, if built, would bring a promised \$10 million donation to the Hayward Public Library. Eastshore, however, has raised the ire of residents, and the Hayward City Council voted unanimously to oppose it last month.

In a written order dated April 5, the state commission said Eastshore has garnered "energetic community opposition," including more than 600 letters.

As a result of the controversy, commissioners Jeffrey Byron and John Geesman ordered that "all feasible" alternative scenarios be examined.

"Thus, we direct the parties to also include input from the Russell City proponent regarding the feasibility of one site for both projects, potential cumulative impacts of two sites, alternative interconnection locations ... and any other relevant information," the commissioners wrote.

The order has raised eyebrows, especially among developers who already are deep into the process of getting approval for the sites they acquired.

Based on their plant proposals, Calpine and Tierra already have signed separate contracts with Pacific Gas & Electric to produce power for the regional grid. Those contracts were reviewed and approved by the California Public Utilities Commission.

Asked about the CEC order after a recent meeting at Hayward City Hall, Calpine representatives said they haven't had a chance to look into it.

Tierra's vice president of development, Greg Trewitt, said he also wasn't clear about what the order meant.

"We'll certainly look at it if the CEC wants us to do so," Trewitt said.

City Manager Jesus Armas said it is unlikely that the Calpine project, which would utilize city land, would have any room for another project — especially not during the construction process, which would last a few years.

"It's not clear as to what it means by one site," Armas said.

And for residents adamantly opposed to having two power plants in Hayward at all, moving one to the west isn't good enough. Because of the relatively high level of pollution they would create, both power plants could be built only if their owners agreed to purchase credits to reduce pollution elsewhere in the Bay Area, officials have said.

"The residents are not interested," said Eden Avenue resident Paul Haavik. "There's no sense in having two so close together that make a cumulative effect on the emissions."

Haavik is so concerned about the Eastshore plant that he applied for "intervenor" status in the state's review process, meaning that the longtime west Hayward resident now has the right to present evidence, call and cross-examine witnesses and keep apprised of the entire proceedings.

Trewitt said Tierra is having an open house and community meeting at 7 p.m. Monday to "answer some of the fears" about the project. The meeting will be at Life Chiropractic College West, 25001 Industrial Blvd.

"We'll do a brief description of the project and what it encompasses, but what we really want to do is get into a question-and-answer session," Trewitt said. "If the public has any concerns, we can either address it there or follow it up in a newsletter."

Meanwhile, several residents are planning to stage a protest outside the meeting place beginning at 5:30 p.m. Monday. A flier distributed through the neighborhood urges neighbors to "bring your signs" to make a unified statement against the plant.

Santa Cruz is embracing car sharing by the hour or day

In the Fresno Bee, S.F. Chronicle and other papers, Thursday, April 12, 2007

Santa Cruz, Calif. (AP) -- Communal cars are coming to Santa Cruz.

The cars will be sprinkled around the city and University of California, Santa Cruz, for use by the hour or the day. People who need cars for short periods to run errands or take day trips would pay \$7 to \$10.

The idea is to ease traffic and parking congestion as well as cut down on pollution. The university is soliciting bids from two companies that participate in car-share programs elsewhere.

People who sign up for the program get the advantages of a car without the cost - gasoline and insurance are included. The companies own and maintain the cars.

"With the program, there's a greater incentive to use a car just when you need one, and the rest of the time you'll use the bus or ride a bike," said Larry Pageler, co-director of university Transportation and Parking Services.

Seven communal cars are expected to be available this fall, he said. More cars and pick up sites could soon follow.

With 20,000 cars entering the campus daily, university officials hope the program will relieve parking problems.

Tech hub to open sensor data to anyone

By BRIAN BERGSTEIN | The Associated Press

In the Bakersfield Californian, Thursday, April 12, 2007

Surely a lot of data gets crunched every minute in Cambridge, Mass., home of Harvard, MIT and lots of technology-focused companies. Now scientists hope to capture seriously fine-grained data about the very city itself, and let students and researchers elsewhere benefit.

Engineers at Harvard University and BBN Technologies Inc. are collaborating on what they believe is a first-of-its kind wireless sensor network atop Cambridge light poles.

Initially the sensors will grab weather data like temperature, rainfall and wind speeds, but eventually the project designers plan to integrate such things as pollution detectors and traffic monitors.

What's new about the system, known as CitySense, is that the sensor information will be entirely open to the public over the Web. And people anywhere can sign up for a slot to run experiments on the network.

So while a local doctor could check whether an asthma patient lives in a neighborhood with high levels of dangerous particulates, another researcher could use the system to model, say, how temperature and air pressure vary over short distances in an urban environment.

Even the data-transfer performance of the network itself - a "mesh" system in which each sensor acts as a transmitter and receiver - could be worth analyzing.

So far just a few sensors, each smaller than a football, are up on Cambridge light poles, which will also provide power to the devices.

But the National Science Foundation, which is fueling CitySense with \$900,000 over four years, expects it to grow to 100 sensors. Even Cambridge always could use some more data.

[Letter to the Fresno Bee, Thursday, April 12, 2007:](#)

'Starting to hurt'

I agree with Ray Unruh [letter April 10] regarding our forked-tongue Fresno County Supervisor Bob Waterston. His district has felt the swinging door hitting us in the "backside" before.

When I heard Mr. Waterston make the statement on TV that "no new casinos because of the roads, water and air," I was appalled. What is the difference between the roads, water and air around Mono Wind and the roads, water and air around the Jesse Morrow Mountain? A big operation (Cemex Mining) wants in so it's the back of the swinging door for the constituents again. Remember the garbage collection.

The Cemex operation will take a big part of Jesse Morrow Mountain down, as well as pumping water at a minimum of 15,000 gallons a day (from where?). The water is needed to keep the dust down. Where is the Environmental Protection Agency? Can just anyone get away with that?

Highway 180 is a big mess because of Vulcan being allowed to put more trucks on the road. Cemex will add at least 900 more trucks daily. The destruction of Indian heritage on Jesse Morrow Mountain is another issue completely.

Get a pillow for your backside because that swinging door is starting to hurt.

Sherry Moses, Sanger