

*The first article below was a part of a 16-page special report on air quality published by the Fresno Bee on Sunday, Dec. 16. A few of the stories were also published in the Modesto Bee. You can read the entire report and view the interactive content online at [www.fresnobee.com](http://www.fresnobee.com).*

## **Stiffer rules could speed cleanup**

By Mark Grossi

Fresno Bee, Sunday, December 16, 2007

Is the Valley air district doing all it can to clean the air? Could it be more aggressive?

Five years ago, when The Fresno Bee published a report exposing government neglect in the fight for clean air, officials at the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District said they were doing everything possible.

But judges and lawmakers disagreed. Court decisions and new state laws forced the district to make tougher rules.

Today, progress is obvious: The Valley now meets federal standards for PM-10 -- coarse specks of dust, soot and other debris. Bad ozone days have dropped by half. The district had its cleanest summer on record in 2007.

But the Valley, which stretches from Stockton to Bakersfield, is nowhere near meeting the latest federal standard for the smallest particles, which limits specks that can have more serious health effects. And over the past five years, the Valley has violated federal ozone limits more times than anywhere else in America.

The public is alarmed. For the past four years, surveys have ranked air pollution as the No. 1 concern.

Yet air officials today sound much as they did five years ago. They say they need another 17 years to clean up the ozone mess. And once again they say they're doing all that is allowed under the federal Clean Air Act.

Instead of pushing the boundaries of federal law and passing the toughest rules possible, such as banning use of older vehicles on the worst smoggy days, the air district's latest ozone-cleanup plan relies on voluntary efforts by businesses, helped along with taxpayer money.

Sayed Sadredin, executive director since March 2006, said the air district must balance the economy and health concerns.

The district has enacted developer fees to counter sprawl and periodic bans on fireplace use to cut haze in the winter. But pushing too hard would cost businesses -- which Sadredin said have invested \$42.5 billion in Valley air quality since 1980 -- too much, he said.

"We have some of the toughest regulations in the state today," Sadredin said. "But we always work with the businesses getting them involved in the process, give them flexibility if there are three ways to get to the same result air quality-wise. We let them choose the cheapest option, and sometimes people confuse that with giving them a free pass."

Critics, though, say it is time to be more assertive. Tom Franz, president of the Association of Irrigated Residents, a Valley-based activist group, says the district must assault the air problem like a public health agency dealing with a crisis.

Said Franz: "Our lungs should not be subsidizing polluting industries -- developers, oil companies, big agriculture."

The Valley's population has grown three times faster than the state during the past five years -- adding enough people since 2002 to fill another city the size of Fresno. These people are driving millions of new miles, adding tons of new pollution into the air.

Yet air quality has improved. For the most part, residents in Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties now breathe air that meets federal standards.

High concentrations of pollution don't develop as often any more, and violations of the federal ozone standard over the past five years dropped from 125 days to 65.

"A true characterization, in my opinion, would be to say that significant progress has been made, but enormous challenges remain," Sadredin said.

Those challenges include the air-quality bureaucracy. The local district has little control over the biggest problems -- engines and fuels for cars, trucks, boats, trains, planes and other moving sources of air pollution.

State and federal agencies rule those sources, and they decide the timing of the pollution cutbacks. About 95% of the most-needed Valley reductions are outside the air district's direct authority.

In a twist that seems patently unfair, the Valley's air district is responsible for meeting cleanup deadlines, no matter how fast state and federal rules clean up vehicles.

A missed deadline could mean federal sanctions that include higher costs for new and expanding businesses, as well as delays for \$2 billion in road-building funds.

While onerous, those sanctions are rarely enforced. New and expanding businesses in the Valley were briefly required to pay extra fees several years ago. Road-building funds for this region have never been held back over air quality problems.

Despite this, the district has focused on meeting deadlines and avoiding sanctions, say critics -- instead of adopting tough, creative tactics to clean the air. Of 174 tons per day of pollution removed since 2002, 111 tons is due to lawsuits and legislation.

The district stirred a fierce debate, for example, by delaying the date it plans to meet federal ozone standards from 2013 to 2024, saying that passing tougher rules to make the original deadline would bankrupt the Valley.

District officials say they want to speed the process with a "Fast Track" program that includes initiatives not in the federally approved plan.

But many of those ideas depend on businesses and local governments to act voluntarily. Most require a lot of money that has not been raised.

A plan to attack the biggest source of ozone pollution, for example, counts on \$1.8 billion in as-yet-undefined government funding to help truckers replace aging diesel rigs.

Another depends on construction of a high-speed rail line through the Valley -- which is still more a dream than reality.

Geography may be the biggest obstacle. It takes far less pollution here to create the same number of federal ozone-standard violations as in the South Coast Air Basin, which includes Los Angeles and Orange counties.

The Valley's air district, with nearly 4 million people, has one-quarter the population of the South Coast district in four times the area. Yet the two districts usually have about the same number of ozone violations each summer.

This 25,000-square-mile Valley is walled off on three sides by mountains that block regular, cleansing wind. Hot, sunny days with only light breezes make it a laboratory for creating ozone, the main gas in smog.

Traffic exhaust and fumes from gasoline, paint and dairy waste collect and stew. The mess can simmer for days, forming a nasty brew of corrosive ozone that damages skin, eyes and lungs.

In addition, fires from the Sierra Nevada pour smoke and smog-making chemicals into the Valley. In September, the Valley had a week of ozone violations, mostly because of a fire almost 250 miles north.

The winter-time worries might be worse. Gases from cars and trucks combine with ammonia from cow waste in the Valley's booming dairy industry. The gases and the ammonia form microscopic specks of ammonium nitrate, which hang like tiny chemical bombs in the foggy air.

The specks, called PM-2.5, can penetrate deep into the lungs, triggering asthma, bronchitis and other ailments. The tiny chemical debris can pass into the blood and lodge in the heart.

Heart disease and hardening of the arteries have been linked with these specks. Research at UCLA shows the smallest particles can inflame the human body at the most basic level -- cells.

## **As Temperatures Rise, Health Could Decline**

By David Brown

Washington Post, Monday, December 17, 2007

Depending on where you are, this is going to be a hotter, wetter, drier, windier, calmer, dirtier, buggier or hungrier century than mankind has seen in a while. In some places, it may be deadlier, too.

The effects of climate change are diverse and sometimes contradictory. In general, they favor instability and extreme events. On balance, they will tend to harm health rather than promote it.

That is the majority view of scientists trying to solve an equation whose variables range from greenhouse gas concentrations and the El Niño weather pattern to mosquito ecology and human cells' ability to withstand heat.

"We are not dealing with a single toxic agent or a single microbe where we can put our finger with certainty on an exposure and the response," said Jonathan A. Patz, a physician and epidemiologist at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. "Climate change affects everything."

Predictions of how global warming could affect people's health are crude. They are based on the experience of the past several decades, when there has been a small, well-documented rise in the temperatures of the planet's atmosphere and oceans. What that says about the future -- a time when warming is expected to accelerate, but people may be able to prepare for it -- is quite uncertain.

In the last quarter of the 20th century, the average atmospheric temperature rose by about 1 degree Fahrenheit. By 2000, that increase was responsible for the annual loss of about 160,000 lives and the loss of 5.5 million years of healthy life, according to estimates by the World Health Organization. The toll is expected to double to about 300,000 lives and 11 million years of healthy life by 2020.

The biggest tolls were in Africa, on the Indian subcontinent and in Southeast Asia. Most of that increased burden of death and disease was from malnutrition, diarrhea, malaria, heat waves and floods. But those diseases will play a minor role, at best, in many regions that nevertheless will feel the effects of global warming.

To organize their thinking -- and to focus the attention of policymakers -- researchers tend to put the health effects of climate change into five groups.

### **Heat Stress**

The most obvious effect of global warming is hotter weather.

Scientists predict that heat waves will be longer and more frequent in the future. Their worst-case effects may have been glimpsed in Europe's summer of 2003, the hottest spell there since the

1500s. About 30,000 people died of heat-related illness, including 14,800 in France in three weeks in August.

People who were old, very young, ill, immobile or poor were at highest risk. Although the human body can adapt somewhat to chronically higher temperatures, those groups will remain vulnerable -- and they are likely to make up a bigger slice of the population in the future.

About 20 percent of people in industrialized countries are over age 60 today. That figure will rise to 32 percent by 2050. More people will also live in cities -- 61 percent of the world's population by 2030, compared with 45 percent now. Cities are "heat islands," 9 degrees Fahrenheit warmer on average than surrounding rural areas and resistant to the cooling effects of night.

Aging and urbanization -- and possibly more obesity -- will put people at greater risk for heat-related illness. Nevertheless, that consequence of global warming may be easier to avoid than others, as a study published three years ago suggests.

It examined mortality on hot days in 28 cities in the last third of the 20th century. Death rates were lower in the 1980s and 1990s than in the 1960s and 1970s in most places, with the least reduction in cities of the Northeast and the Midwest. (A heat wave in Chicago in 1995 caused more than 500 deaths, the biggest U.S. toll in years.)

This steady decline in heat-stress death was almost certainly the consequence of air conditioning, better awareness of the problem and improved medical care.

"If there is a very effective response system, then even in hotter temperatures you may not see more deaths," said Kristie L. Ebi, an epidemiologist and consultant in Alexandria. She helped write the health chapter of the most recent report of the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which was this year's Nobel Peace Prize winner along with Al Gore.

#### Extreme Weather

Climate change is expected to increase the severity of storms, especially ones associated with cyclical events such as the El Niño Southern Oscillation.

Flooding is the most common weather disaster, responsible for the deaths of about 100,000 people and the displacement of 1.2 billion from 1992 to 2001. The worsening of this hazard will vary by region. It is expected to change little in Southeast Asia by 2030, but it may increase 50 percent in West Africa and quadruple in Central and South America.

In addition to storms, rising oceans threaten coastal populations. Of the world's 20 megacities, 13 are at sea level. Storm surges, while short-lived, can cause permanent damage, eroding land and damaging water supplies and cropland with saltwater.

Greater variability in weather patterns along with higher temperatures may lead to droughts and water shortages. Today, 1.7 billion people -- about one-third of the world's population -- live in places that have periodic water shortages. That number is expected to increase to 5 billion by 2025.

When it comes to food production, climate change will have varying effects. Overall, it will tend to slow the long historical decline in the number of hungry people.

In 1990, there were 520 million people at risk of hunger, according to a study by British and American scientists published in 2005. In the absence of global warming, that number was predicted to fall to 300 million by 2080. With global warming, it is expected to fall to 380 million, although under various scenarios of greenhouse gas reductions it could drop to 320 to 340 million, according to recent mathematical modeling.

#### **Air Pollution**

Climate change affects air pollution in two ways.

Heat speeds chemical reactions and consequently may worsen pollution from ozone and airborne particulates, or soot. It may also spur pollen production by some plants, which could in turn worsen asthma and allergies in some people.

One model of global warming's effects on air pollution in 15 eastern U.S. cities predicts that the number of days exceeding ozone standards will rise from the current average of 12 to 20 per summer by 2050. Deaths linked to that pollutant -- nearly all in people who have lung or heart ailments -- could go up 5 percent under that scenario.

### **Waterborne and Food-Borne Disease**

Higher temperatures and torrential rains are likely to cause outbreaks of some diarrheal diseases.

The incidence of cholera -- a bacterial infection whose home is South Asia but that circles the world in slow epidemics -- depends in part on water temperatures in the Bay of Bengal and on monsoon rains. A recent study of waterborne-disease outbreaks in the United States in the past 50 years found that 67 percent were preceded by heavy rainfall.

Researchers in Australia have shown that the number of food-borne infections from salmonella bacteria goes up in hot weather.

Overall, climate change is expected to increase the burden of diarrhea, mostly in developing countries, by 2 to 5 percent by 2020.

### **Vector-Borne Disease**

Scientists suspect that many diseases transmitted by insects and animals will become more common, although there is more uncertainty about this than other consequences of global warming.

Dengue and malaria, carried by mosquitoes, are most likely to increase. Under some projections, Africans will be exposed to malaria 25 percent more of the time in 2100 than they are now.

That risk, however, could be offset by controlling mosquitoes with pesticides, the use of bed nets by children and pregnant women, and better medical care.

Other diseases that may become more prevalent are yellow fever (also carried by mosquitoes), schistosomiasis (by snails), leishmaniasis (sand flies) and Lyme disease (ticks).

### **The Role of Planning**

In the United States, most public discussion of global warming has been about ways to slow the phenomenon, and not about ways to dampen or prevent effects that are already inevitable.

"We are a good decade behind Europe in designing and developing adaptations that will decrease our vulnerability and increase our resilience," said Ebi, the epidemiologist.

Such planning is wise not only for the federal government and states, but for cities and towns as well, Ebi believes.

"The impacts of climate change really do depend on your local context," she said.

### **'Greenhouse' ruling: An exhaustive look**

**What the court said exactly, how pollution limits affect mileage, state law's impact on global warming, etc.**

Sacramento Bee, Sunday, December 16, 2007

A federal court decision upholding California's pioneering "greenhouse gas" law last week illuminated the state's unique right to set its own vehicle emission standards. Here's a primer on the controversy and what's at stake for consumers.

**Q:** What did the court decide?

**A:** The U.S. District Court in Fresno ruled in favor of California in a lawsuit brought by major auto manufacturers seeking to strike down the 2002 law before it takes effect next year. Judge

Anthony Ishii disagreed with the auto industry's claim that the curb on climate-altering tailpipe gases amounts to an unconstitutional intrusion on federal regulation of fuel mileage.

**Q:** What do these pollution limits have to do with gas mileage?

**A:** The only practical way automakers can reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases - so named because of their heat-trapping effect in the atmosphere - is to make cars run more efficiently and burn less fuel.

**Q:** How much reduction in greenhouse gases would be achieved?

**A:** The restrictions, which apply only to non-commercial vehicles, are expected to result in 22 percent fewer emissions of carbon dioxide by 2012 and a 30 percent reduction by 2016, compared with 2002 model cars, according to the state Air Resources Board, which regulates the law. That translates into 155, 200 fewer tons of carbon dioxide by 2030, air board estimates show.

**Q:** Would these regulations make any measurable difference in global warming?

**A:** By themselves, no. While California is the world's 10th-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, it's responsible for barely 2 percent of the carbon dioxide produced worldwide, according to the state Energy Commission. The state's contribution to global warming simply is too small for the emissions cuts - or any amount of state regulation - to make a difference, scientists say. The law's supporters are nonetheless optimistic, banking on the state's legacy as a national and even international trailblazer of pollution controls. As California goes, so goes the rest of the world, they say.

**Q:** How would the new regulations affect the type and cost of cars offered for sale?

**A:** Air board officials say automakers can achieve the bulk of required emission reductions using technology available today, without sacrificing the design or size of the vehicle. Some of the fuel-saving features are in models already on the road, such as more efficient valve-timing, sleeker aerodynamics and smoother-rolling tires. The added production cost would be about \$1,800 per vehicle, they say. Automakers say the law would inflate production costs as much as \$6,000 a vehicle.

**Q:** Why did the automakers sue California?

**A:** California is the only state permitted under the federal Clean Air Act to set its own rules on auto emissions and fuels. Other states, however, can adopt the California standards. Many states, particularly in the populous Northeast, typically have followed California's lead. The ripple effect leaves automakers with no economical choice but to build cars for the whole nation that meet the stricter - and often costlier - California rules.

**Q:** Why is only California allowed to enforce tougher emissions standards than the federal government's?

**A:** In passing the original Clean Air Act, Congress in 1970 made an exception for California because its air pollution was already so severe and because its smog-fighting efforts predated the federal law. Congress said California should have the "broadest possible discretion in selecting the best means to protect the health of its citizens."

**Q:** With the legal victory now in hand, when will California begin enforcing the greenhouse gas law?

**A:** California still needs the Bush administration's permission to enforce the law. To get the waiver, the state must convince the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that it faces "compelling and extraordinary conditions."

**Q:** Where does California's request for the waiver stand?

**A:** Attorney General Jerry Brown has sued the EPA to force a decision on the state's 2-year-old request for the waiver, and EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson has promised to decide in the next two weeks. If and when the waiver is approved, California and 13 other states that adopted the same law can enforce it - but more lawsuits could delay that.

## **Vigil to honor local asthma victims**

Merced Sun-Star, Monday, Dec. 17, 2007

Merced County community members are invited to carpool to or meet at a San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District workshop in Fresno for a vigil.

Meet at the Costco parking lot, 1445 R St. in Merced, at 4:30 p.m. to carpool to the Fresno air district. The vigil will be from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave in Fresno.

The point is to remember all those who have died this time of year from asthma, and those who continue to suffer from breathing the dirty air, said Melissa Kelly-Ortega, program associate for the Merced/Mariposa Asthma Coalition.

This is a community-based vigil, not an Asthma Coalition event, she added.

The air district will be discussing at its meeting a plan for attaining standards for fine particulate matter pollution. But this plan is similar to the 1997 standard, which isn't as stringent as some residents would like. "We are urging the district to go beyond the minimum standard," Kelly-Ortega said.

For more information, call 209 261-7109.

## **Roast your chestnuts - guilt-free - in these comfy places**

Column by Angela Hill

Tri-Valley Herald, Sunday, December 16, 2007

It has often been said that I am cold-blooded, and it's true. Not in the meanness sense. Heaven forbid. But in the literal temperature sense.

I'm one cloudy day away from being a gecko and doing commercials for insurance companies, but it's too cold to do them naked like those little geckos do, and I'd have to be wearing a parka and Uggs. Even in the summer. Even if I try to think about hot things like sunny beaches and steamy saunas and Al Gore, in the global warming sense, of course.

I'm always freezing, and I make sure to let everyone know this through extreme whining. Whining makes me warmer! But it often makes other people hot under the collar or at least unable to simmer down. But that's their problem.

This chilly trait could be found in all females of my family. My dad used to call my grandmother "Two-Degree Florence," because the thermostat had to be set just so or her teeth would chatter like tiny enamel-clad jack hammers.

As we speak, I have a small space heater purring away under my desk here at work. (Shh. Don't tell building management!) I also have a small space heater at home, for when the house heat isn't on or the fire isn't going. Sometimes even that isn't enough and I've been known to take the next logical step - I go get my blow dryer. Yes, I crank that puppy up to high, hold it under my 10 layers of sweaters and let the hot air swirl inside, the tiny but powerful heating element aglow through my clothing like a lone firefly in the night.

See, the little cottage we're currently renting was built sometime in the '30s. The walls are thin as runway models and there's zero insulation, so the old gas heater is practically useless. It's like a really old dog breathing on your leg. No, that would be warmer. Did you turn the heat on? Yes. Are you sure? I think so. But it's so cold, maybe you turned on the air conditioning instead. We don't have air conditioning. You mean that's just unconditional air?

With the combination of my coldness and the heater's lameness, we use our fireplace a lot when the weather outside is frightful. Why? Because it's so delightful. It's a great little fireplace. An arched mouth and mismatched brick laid in off-kilter rows so it looks like a Hobbit built it. A drunk Hobbit. There's nothing better than basking in the golden sleep-inducing glow of a fire, like a gecko sprawled on a sun-drenched rock.

Yet, alas, every other night seems to be a Spare-the-Air

night these days, and the burning of fires is now atmospherically incorrect. It's frowned upon by the folks at the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, who may someday ban residential wood fires entirely. The "wet blanket" moniker has never seemed so apropos.

Because of this, guilt often outweighs my desire to be warm and/or festive, and back to my space heater I go, wasting energy and making Al Gore simmer.

So, for the remorseful firebug or the non-fireplace-owning individuals out there, I offer an early Christmas gift: Guilt-free fire enjoyment. A brief list of public-access fireplaces in the Bay Area that will warm you and a bunch of other people at the same time and will be befouling the air anyway - or not, because some are gas flames rolling over ceramic logs, so you don't have to give a hoot cause they don't even pollute.

- The first is the fireplace by which all other fireplaces should be measured. It's the behemoth in the dining room at the Pelican Inn at Muir Beach, on Hwy. 1 on the way to Stinson from San Francisco. Thirty minutes and a lifetime away.

It's this wonderful 16th-century-style Inglenook fireplace outlined in rough wooden beams. Blackened antique fireplace tools that resemble medieval torture devices dangle above the flame of real burning logs. There are wooden seats on each side of the fireplace, built into the walls, with room enough for two cozy couples. The woodsmoke curls around you, and you come out smelling like a smoked trout, but you don't care. There's another fireplace in "The Snug," but that's the little living room reserved for overnight guests. (Shh. I have snuck into The Snug, but don't tell building management!)

- Back over in the East Bay, start with Le Bateau Ivre (The Drunken Boat) in Berkeley. It's a cozy little restaurant and coffeehouse on Telegraph in an 1898 farmhouse. The stone fireplace is in the rear dining room, so after 4:30 p.m. you may have to go for a meal to get near the flames. But during the day, you can take a coffee or cocoa and sit by the fire.

In addition to whining, gossip makes me warmer too, so here's a juicy little tidbit: The place was originally built as the residence of a Frenchman from Pennsylvania who had a wife and kids back East, came to California for a trip, met a lovely woman, married her and raised a second family without either family ever knowing about the other. Hot stuff!

- There's another old French place in Berkeley, but this one's gone Irish. Check out Beckett's Irish Pub and Restaurant on Shattuck. The historic 1925 French-Provincial-style brick building has three, count'em, three fireplaces. They're gas, but great.

One in the front of the pub reaches its rough-hewn bricks up the full two stories to the wood-beam ceiling. The table right in front is the prime spot, and much coveted. And they have to turn it off when musicians play there or, as the hostess put it, "They'll burn their butts."

- There's a small fire always going at The Pub on Solano Avenue in Albany. This coffee house/pub/tobacco shop is in a little old house, so it feels very comfy. A stone and wood-rimmed fireplace in the living room greets you as you walk in the door. There are overstuffed chairs by the fire. Little tables here and there with people reading books.

- Out at the water's edge of University Avenue at the Berkeley Marina is Skates on the Bay. The fireplace in the bar is fake, but toasty. Nice restaurant, trendy foods. Great views. Right near Skates is H's Lordship's restaurant, with a big stone fireplace filling the far end of the bar, flames reflecting in big plate-glass windows.

- In Oakland, L. J. Quinn's Lighthouse on the estuary has a nautically-appointed restaurant on the bottom floor, but the fireplace is upstairs where it's more casual - the kind of place where you can, and are encouraged to, throw peanut shells on the floor.

- In the Tri-Valley, try the old Pleasanton Hotel. It was originally built in the 1860s, but burned down at least once in the meantime. Now there's a (controlled) fire in the Fireside Room. It's not a hotel anymore - just a restaurant, bar and banquet facility. You can drop in and sit by the fire as long as no events are booked in that room.

- Not far from that is the Rose Hotel, which is actually a hotel. A European-style boutique hotel, in fact, with overstuffed sofas in front of the white marble mantle.

- Over on the Peninsula, try The Mountain House on Skyline in Woodside. Set in towering redwoods, the restaurant and bar is rustic and casual. Just as you walk in the door, there's a big brick fireplace to your right, with chairs pulled up close to it, as chairs should be.

These are just a few places around the Bay. E-mail me with more, and we'll post them on our Web site.

And if nothing else, at least there is the Yule Log. That's the TV version of a crackling fire that is aired at the holidays. It's a looped video of flaming logs in a fireplace with Christmas music going in the background. Occasionally, a hand will reach in and push the logs around. Thank you, hand.

It used to be on Channel 20 in the '80s, then was unceremoniously doused. Public outcry from fireplace-less folk encouraged its triumphant return in 2002. Last year it was on local station KICU-6, and on some cable channels nationwide.

In my old apartment with no fireplace, I used to turn on the Yule Log show and set my space heater next to the TV, to get the full effect. If it's a Spare-the-Air night I might have to do that again. This time I'll add my blow dryer.

## **Burns limited through Saturday**

By Kim Minugh

Sacramento Bee, Saturday, December 15, 2007

Today is the second and last day of a "Stage 1" alert prohibiting wood burning in most types of stoves within Sacramento County.

The alert, issued by the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District, began Friday and ends tonight. Burning is expected to be allowed Sunday, but will be discouraged. The ban is part of the Check Before You Burn program, in effect within Sacramento County from now until the end of February.

Residents with an EPA-certified fireplace inserts or stoves, or pellet stoves are exempt from the ban. First-time violators will be fined \$50 or required to attend compliance school, according to the district. Subsequent violations will result in higher fees.

On Friday, the air quality in Sacramento County was "unhealthy for sensitive groups," the district reported. Today, it is "moderate," with the same forecast for Sunday.

For more information about whether burning is allowed, call (877) NOBURN-5 or visit [www.sparetheair.com/burncheck.cfm](http://www.sparetheair.com/burncheck.cfm)

## **Senate passes \$286 billion farm bill with bumper crop of subsidies**

Carolyn Lochhead, Chronicle Washington Bureau

S.F. Chronicle, Saturday, December 15, 2007

Washington -- Farm subsidy supporters dared the Bush administration to veto a \$286 billion farm bill that passed the Senate 79-14 on Friday, more than enough to override the president and keep crop subsidies flowing for the next five years, even as farm income sets records.

Sen. Kent Conrad, D-N.D., pointed out that all four Senate Democratic presidential candidates - Hillary Rodham Clinton, Barack Obama, Chris Dodd and Joseph Biden - sent word that they would have voted for the bill had they not been busy campaigning in Iowa corn country.

"Seventy-nine votes in the United States Senate, and with four presidential candidates, that would be 83 votes," said Conrad, who engineered a new \$5.1 billion "permanent disaster" fund aimed at Great Plains farmers who plant wheat where the rain seldom falls and their crops often fail. "That would certainly be enough to override a veto."

While Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer both supported final passage, the California Democrats had voted for almost every reform amendment, from a radical overhaul of the subsidy system, to payment limits, income limits and cuts in subsidies to crop insurance companies.

That puts the two senators leading the nation's biggest farm state squarely at odds with their San Francisco colleague, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who was instrumental in quashing reform efforts in the House last summer.

The Senate and House versions of the farm bill still must be reconciled in a conference committee and passed again before the president gets a chance to sign or veto the legislation.

All the amendments to the Senate bill that attempted to chip away at crop subsidies and divert the savings to nutrition and conservation programs, of key interest to California, failed under stiff opposition led by Conrad and Georgia Republican Saxby Chambliss.

"The way the system in Congress works, it is making it extremely difficult to do the rational thing for healthy foods and healthy farms," said Mark Lipson, policy program director for the Organic Farming Research Foundation in Santa Cruz. "The wider societal goals we need our food and farm system to have are not in the forefront."

The giant bill will set U.S. food policy for the next five years. Farm bills usually draw little outside attention, but this year a rare left-right coalition with deep roots in the Bay Area formed to push for what they called a food bill instead of a farm bill.

These advocates wanted more attention for organic and local farming and conservation, among other things, while public health groups were furious that the federal government continues to subsidize junk food during a costly obesity epidemic.

"The Democratic leadership of this Congress has come down at almost every turn in favor of subsidized big agriculture," said Ken Cook, president of the Environmental Working Group. "It seems when your approval ratings are in the toilet, you stop flushing."

The administration remained adamant that despite the coming election, President Bush would veto the bill and the one that passed the House in July. Acting Agriculture Secretary Chuck Conner said it relies on \$15 billion in higher taxes and \$22 billion in budget gimmicks and continues to send checks to the wealthiest farmers and landowners, mainly for corn, cotton, rice, wheat and soybeans. Federal support for dairy and sugar also would be increased.

Bush had proposed limiting subsidies to those earning less than \$200,000 a year.

"I can't believe this is a tough issue," Conner said. "Taking tax dollars from middle-income Americans and transferring those dollars to the wealthiest few is simply bad policy."

The administration said it will lean on House and Senate negotiators next month as they try to meld the two bills into a final version.

The ribbon of commodity interests running from the Northern Plains through the Midwest and into the South is famous for its grip on Washington. Since the Great Depression, it has managed to sustain a handful of crop subsidies for a shrinking number of increasingly large farms.

In the meantime, U.S. agriculture has changed radically. Farms have consolidated, and the subsidized corn starches, sugars and vegetable oils now permeating processed foods have emerged as a leading public health concern.

California farmers, who provide half the nation's fresh fruits and vegetables, have little interest in crop subsidies. Only 9 percent of the state's growers participate in those programs.

Even those who do, such as the San Joaquin Valley's cotton farmers, are shifting rapidly to higher-value alternatives such as almonds and pistachios, or a more valuable long-staple cotton they market under the Supima brand that receives negligible federal aid, said Daniel Sumner, a farm economist at UC Davis.

But California's growers do have a big stake in the farm bill's heavily oversubscribed environmental programs. These split costs with farmers for addressing such things as water runoff, [air pollution](#), soil erosion or wildlife habitat and the conservation programs such as the Grassland Reserve that provide relief against intense suburban development pressure. They are available to all farmers, not just those who grow commodity crops.

Sara Hopper, an attorney with Environmental Defense, said 2 out of 3 farmers applying for environmental programs are rejected. Despite big increases in the farm bill for environmental protection, half would still be rejected under the Senate bill, she said.

"You could pay for all farmers to be included and not have to resort to any kind of tax increase," if commodity subsidies were cut, Hopper said.

Fresh produce growers also have a big stake in the giant federal nutrition programs, from food stamps, which accounts for two-thirds of the overall bill, to school lunch programs. They wanted a major expansion of purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables for these programs.

The Agriculture committees were forced to add \$2.1 billion in the Senate and \$1.6 billion in the House for specialty crops, a small fraction of the \$26 billion going to commodity farmers just in one program, but still a breakthrough.

Yet gains are at risk in House-Senate conference negotiations, given the budget problems in the bill, said Robert Guenther, senior vice president for public policy for the United Fresh Produce Association.

"We potentially could be the first on the chopping block. We're kind of the new kids on the block," Guenther said.

## **Poor air quality prompts Spare the Air alert**

S.F. Chronicle Staff Report  
Friday, December 14, 2007

SAN FRANCISCO - Bay Area air quality officials have declared tonight a Spare the Air night and are asking people to cut back on driving and not to burn wood in fireplaces and woodstoves.

Air pollution on still winter nights consists mainly of small particles, the principal sources of which are wood burning and vehicles, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District said. Tonight's air quality is forecast to be unhealthy, the district said.

Anyone who feels compelled to have a fire should avoid moist or green wood, which produces more pollution than dry, seasoned wood, air quality officials said.

Unlike during Spare the Air days during the summer, there is no free public transit during wintertime alerts.

## **Kettleman City landfill project delayed**

By Eiji Yamashita

Hanford Sentinel, Friday, Dec. 14, 2007

KETTLEMAN CITY -- Opposition groups say a so-called bioreactor proposed at Kings County's landfill is another assault on the well-being of surrounding communities that have endured a long history of being a dumping ground.

Proponents tout the project as the "next generation" of environmentally-friendly landfill operations because it speeds the breakdown of waste and slows the need for future landfill expansion.

Amid the clash of views, the long-awaited project by Waste Management remains on hold.

Grassroots groups and environmental justice advocates have filed an appeal with state environmental regulators, challenging a permit issued in September to allow the Kettleman Hills facility to convert part of a landfill into a bioreactor.

The groups say the project would negatively affect the residents who are already experiencing disproportionate impact on their health.

The appeal was filed in October with the state Department of Toxic Substances Control by San Francisco-based Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice as well as Kids Protecting Our Planet, El Pueblo para El Aire y Agua Limpio (People for Clean Air and Water) and Lucha Por Salud Justicia Ambiental.

It alleges the DTSC's decision was flawed and violates civil rights of poor, ethnic communities.

"We base our appeal on what we believe to be defects in their decision," said Bradley Angel, executive director of Greenaction. "We're questioning the adequacy and accuracy of some of the responses to the comments (by the public) and some of their unresponsiveness."

The Kettleman Hills facility is one of the largest toxic waste repositories in the country.

Bob Henry, district manager of Waste Management's 225-acre Kettleman Hills operation, said the bioreactor project only benefits the community.

"This next-generation technology is something that is sweeping across the country because of the positive environmental benefits of the project," Henry said.

In September, the state agency gave Waste Management a permit to convert about 18 acres of the 30-acre garbage area in Landfill B-19 into a bioreactor. By injecting non-hazardous liquid into solid waste, landfill gas can be eliminated much more quickly and more waste can be crammed in and therefore the future need for landfill expansions will be reduced, Henry said.

The company currently runs 10 full-scale bioreactor demonstration projects in the United States and Canada.

The Kettleman Hills project awaits an outcome of the appeal. A decision to deny or uphold the appeal will be made by Jan. 29, DTSC officials said this week.

#### Environmental disputes

The bioreactor debate is one of several controversies looming over projects at the Kettleman Hills facility.

Waste Management also plans to construct a new 62-acre municipal waste landfill, B-17, and expand hazardous waste landfill B-18 by 11 acres in coming years.

Kings County is on the fast track to prepare a draft environmental impact report on the company's plan to create a new 63-acre hazardous waste landfill. The document is expected to be made public next month.

Environmental groups are also keeping a close eye on the company's plan to continue its storage of polychlorinated biphenyl (PBC), a toxic chemical once used in electronics. In a meeting held in March by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, activists spoke against the permit.

The federal agency is likely to issue the permit sometime next month.

Calling the EPA assessment "bogus," Angel said what governments are allowing in Kettleman Hills is a "textbook form of environmental racism."

"What they are using is a double standard of environmental justice decision-making," Angel said. "They are always targeting poor people and Spanish-speaking communities. (Landfills) should be equally distributed (around the state) if they are so environmentally benign. But that's not what you see here."

Henry countered that projects at Kettleman Hills are proven to pose little risk based on independent studies.

"I would disagree with Greenaction's assessment," Henry said. "I would point back to a study done by the U.S. EPA. That draft environmental justice assessment found that there would be no adverse impact on Avenal or Kettleman City in association with our facility."

Kettleman City, a town of 1,500, is about four miles away from the landfill. The EPA found no evidence that the community is impacted by the landfill.

Angel disagrees. He says the study failed to consider the cumulative impacts.

"People aren't just exposed to pollution from the landfill. [They are exposed to pollution from the trucks hauling wastes, pesticides, diesel and bad water,](#)" he said. "All of these things together affect the health of Kettleman City residents."

Henry says Waste Management has brought nothing but positive impacts on the community.

"There are positive impacts for our being there," Henry said, listing donations to the community made by Waste Management over the years, such as maintenance of sports fields, free oversize trash collection, and a donated fire engine for the fire department.

"There are a few people in Kettleman City who are in opposition with our projects, but we do have a lot of supporters as well," Henry said.

#### PBC issue

What's complicating the bioreactor projects is the fact that some of the solid waste in B-19 overlays hazardous waste containing PCB.

Environmental groups worry that liquefied waste could leak into toxic waste underneath.

The company says the liquid injection mostly occurs in the area where there's no hazardous waste beneath and that the state-of-the-art double liner system would fully contain the liquid within the landfill.

Also, the hazardous waste is sealed off with clay and high density plastic layers to prevent contact with bioreactor liquids, the company says.

But Angel doesn't believe the system is fool-proof.

"The company says it's safe. State officials say it's safe. But a liner has broken once," Angel said.

Angel was referring to a 1988 Kettleman Hills landfill slope failure.

Henry said the landfill today is much more stable and safer. The liner system today is state-of-the-art with safety built into it, he said.

"Since the slope failure that occurred in 1988, there's been a lot of geotechnical studies done," Henry said. "Lessons learned. Today, we're using different materials, different geometry and different configurations (for the liner system.)"

[Fresno Bee editorial, Sunday, Dec. 16, 2007:](#)

### **Fighting for air is a battle for everyone in the Valley Cleansing skies requires money, political will.**

Five years ago, when The Bee published its seminal report, "Last Gasp," air quality was far down the list of concerns of Valley residents. Today, as we mark the publication of "Fighting For Air," The Bee's new special report on air quality, the situation has changed. Now the quality of the air we breathe is among the top issues on people's minds.

There are two things we all need to keep in mind when it comes to the Valley's air: It is cleaner than it was five years ago. But it isn't clean. And it won't be clean without a great more effort and expense.

Take one measure -- the number of violations of federal ozone standards in a given year. In 2002, there were 125 such violations. This year, there were 65. That's an impressive decrease -- but it still leaves the Valley as one of the top two most polluted regions in the country.

There are many reasons for the Valley's terrible air quality. Some are beyond our control, but others can be addressed -- though sometimes the cure is difficult and expensive.

Start with geography. We can't do much about the bowl-shaped configuration of the Valley, which traps bad air between two mountain ranges much of the year. Nor can we do much about the weather, which doesn't always provide cleansing breezes, especially in the smoggy summer months.

But we can do a great deal about the vehicles we drive and the fuels they use. We can do much more to dampen the amount of dust we spew into the atmosphere. We can better control emissions that come from a variety of sources, from dairies to earth-moving equipment to backyard barbecues and paint cans.

We can do much more -- but will we? It's easy to be pessimistic. We hear, for instance, that Americans -- and especially Californians -- will never give up their beloved individual vehicles and move to mass transit. The fact that gasoline has passed \$3 per gallon with no discernible impact on driving habits gives credence to that view.

But we can do a great deal about a regulatory structure, from the federal level down to local agencies, that is more about being defensive, staving off sanctions, than it is about aggressive efforts to change behavior. We can work to change a system that places mandates for improvement on local and regional agencies and then withholds the tools they need to be most effective.

That's the case with the Valley. Our biggest problem is mobile sources of pollution -- cars, trucks, trains, boats, planes -- yet the Valley's air district has no control over those emissions. That power rests at the state and federal levels, where bureaucracies -- especially the federal agencies -- are often more interested in protecting politically powerful special interests than in making life healthier for all of us.

That has to change. If the federal Environmental Protection Agency won't protect us -- and it shows little enthusiasm for that task under the Bush administration -- then it must let the state and regional agencies do the job. That's a job for Congress and for our representatives in Washington, D.C.

California's congressional delegation must also work hard to stave off Bush administration efforts -- as with the current debate over the energy bill -- to weaken the state's power to create tougher standards than Washington imposes.

At the state level, we have those stricter standards, but often there is little or no enforcement. That has to change as well. Valley representatives in Sacramento must lead the way to more aggressive state enforcement of the rules.

A good place to start would be with the state's Smog Check program, which is simply not very effective in removing gross polluters from our roads. Another essential step is to build the high-speed rail system.

Regionally, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District must shift its mindset from avoiding sanctions to a bolder strategy for cleaning up the air. It is telling that the district, which likes to brag about its accomplishments in recent years, has more often been pushed into action by litigation than it has initiated its own bold moves.

The air district should move toward tougher measures, such as banning older vehicles -- trucks, cars, buses -- from the roads on the worst smoggy days. The state and regional agencies must find ways to get people out of those older, dirty vehicles and into cleaner ones.

City councils and county boards of supervisors must take air quality into account with every planning decision they make. No more sprawl.

Build mass transit and other alternatives to polluting vehicles.

Individuals have the toughest chore: We must change our behavior. Get into alternative-fuel vehicles whenever possible. Walk, take a bus, ride a bike.

And keep the pressure up on public officials. Give them the power to clean the air, and insist that they use it.

We'll all breathe easier.

[S.F. Chronicle editorial, Monday, Dec. 17, 2007:](#)

### **A very green year**

It will take over a decade, but the country is heading in a new direction in the way it thinks about energy use and the environment. First the House and now the Senate have passed laws that boost fuel economy by 40 percent, the first such change in 30 years.

That's not all. In Fresno last week, yet another court ruling - this one involving a landmark California law on tailpipe emissions - gave the state the power to set tougher limits. It was another legal vindication of efforts to upgrade clean air standards.

In far-away Bali, the same trend is at work. There, over 100 nations at a United Nations session are pressing the U.S. and several other holdout countries to join in a planet-wide updating of the Kyoto climate change rules.

There's a clear trend here. Despite setbacks and delays, energy use, pollution limits and the 800-pound gorilla of climate change are getting serious attention and political support. Just a year ago, none of this was foreseeable.

Comforting as such thinking is, this is no time to stop. Trimmed from Washington's deliberations on mileage rules were tax credits for solar and wind power, a reduction in fossil fuels used by electric utilities, and an end to \$13 billion in tax breaks for oil companies. All should be taken up again, as this state's senator, Barbara Boxer, indicates she will do. (California, no surprise, is on track to require 20 percent renewable energy from its power plants.)

These changes are remarkable. But there is no bigger future question than the environmental policies of the next occupant of the White House. With 2007 winding down on a positive note, it's time to set the stage for next year. What do you want from the next president?

[N.Y. Times editorial, Monday, Dec. 17, 2007:](#)

### **Disappointments on Climate**

**A week that could have brought important progress on climate change ended in disappointment.**

In Bali, where delegates from 187 countries met to begin framing a new global warming treaty, America's negotiators were in full foot-dragging mode, acting as spoilers rather than providing the leadership the world needs.

In Washington, caving to pressures from the White House, the utilities and the oil companies, the Senate settled for a merely decent energy bill instead of a very good one that would have set the country on a clear path to a cleaner energy future.

The news from Bali was particularly disheartening. The delegates agreed to negotiate by 2009 a new and more comprehensive global treaty to replace the Kyoto Protocol. (Kyoto expires in 2012 and requires that only industrialized nations reduce their production of greenhouse gases.) They pledged for the first time to address deforestation, which accounts for one-fifth of the world's carbon dioxide emissions. And they received vague assurances from China - which will soon overtake the United States as the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases - and other emerging powers that they would seek "measurable, reportable and verifiable" emissions cuts.

From the United States the delegates got nothing, except a promise to participate in the forthcoming negotiations. Even prying that out of the Bush administration required enormous effort.

Despite pleas from their European allies, the Americans flatly rejected the idea of setting even provisional targets for reductions in greenhouse gases. And they refused to give what the rest of the world wanted most: an unambiguous commitment to reducing America's own emissions. Without that, there is little hope that other large emitters, including China, will change their ways.

There is some consolation in knowing that the energy bill approved last week included several provisions - among them the first significant improvement in automobile mileage standards in

more than 30 years - that over time should begin to reduce the United States' dependency on foreign oil and its output of greenhouse gases. The bill would have had much greater impact if the Senate had not killed two important provisions opposed by the White House and its big industrial contributors.

One would have required utilities to generate an increasing share of their power from renewable sources like wind. The other would have rolled back about \$12 billion in tax breaks granted to the oil companies in the last energy bill and used the proceeds to help develop cleaner fuels and new energy technologies.

The decision to maintain the tax breaks was particularly shameful. Blessed by \$90-a-barrel oil, the companies are rolling in profits, and there is no evidence to support the claim that they need these breaks to be able to explore for new resources. Yet the White House had the gall to argue that the breaks are necessary to protect consumers at the pump, and the Senate was craven enough to go along.

This Senate will have another chance to provide the American leadership the world needs on climate change. An ambitious bipartisan bill aimed at cutting America's greenhouse gas emissions by 70 percent by midcentury has been approved by a Senate committee and may come to the floor next year. Though the bill is far from perfect and will provoke intense debate, it could offer a measure of redemption for the administration's embarrassing failure in Bali.

[Hanford Sentinel, Commentary, Sunday, Dec. 16, 2007:](#)

### **The Back Bench: Redistricting resurfaces again**

By Lee Lockhart

California voters may get another chance at bringing fairness to the process that determines the legislative district boundaries of the State Legislature. After the 2000 census, Legislative leaders from both political parties got together and devised a plan that protected and preserved Republican and Democrat districts.

The results of their efforts are clear. In the elections of 2004 and 2006, not one of the 120 state legislative districts had an election that defeated an incumbent legislator. That is a safe district.

Now, an organization called California Voters First Campaign is organizing an effort to place a measure on the November 2008 ballot. This new organization is composed of AARP, California Common Cause and the League of Women Voters. The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce endorses this attempt to place this measure on the ballot. To be successful, this organization needs to qualify about 700,000 signatures on petitions before the proposed measure can appear on the November ballot.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger endorses this new effort to bring fairness to legislative elections. His proposal to reorganize the process, Proposition 77, was defeated by the voters in 2005. Voters have turned down six redistricting measures since 1982.

This new ballot measure will pertain only to the California Legislature. Congressional districts will remain under the control of state legislators. Their omission was the result of opposition from U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. There was concern that a big-money campaign focused on defeating the measure would be organized if congressional seats were included in this new attempt to bring fairness to the election process involving legislative districts.

The purpose of the new and fair process would be to make legislative districts more competitive during the election process. If a legislator was elected on a competitive basis, that person may be more inclined to listen to all of the voters in the district. The person may become more compromise-minded and/or a centralist when it comes to solving important problems or conditions in their legislative district or the state. Citizens of the State need a legislature focused on solving important problems/issues instead of maintaining the status quo.

The California Legislature failed this year to resolve issues involving: water storage and distribution, [air pollution](#), traffic, medical care and they return next month to Sacramento to face a possible budget deficit that may surpass \$10 billion.

California will be a better state when the state legislators are elected from competitive districts.

*Lee Lockhart is a former member of the board of trustees for College of the Sequoias and a former member of the Board of Supervisors.*

[Washington post Editorial, Saturday, December 15, 2007](#)

## **Waiting on the EPA**

**It's time the agency allowed California's tougher tailpipe emissions standards to take effect.**

THE ENERGY BILL that overwhelmingly passed the Senate late Thursday will help curb America's addiction to oil. Its crown jewel is a hike in the corporate average fuel economy for cars and light trucks from 25 miles per gallon to 35 mpg by 2020, the first boost in 32 years. Gone are the tax provisions that riled Senate Republicans and President Bush, who now says he'll sign the bill when it reaches his desk. With the House all but certain to pass it next week, a significant piece of environmental legislation finally is close to becoming law.

Mr. Bush had been pushing for the bill to designate the Transportation Department as the sole agency to regulate both fuel economy and tailpipe greenhouse gas emissions, in order, he said, to guard against "regulatory uncertainty, confusion and duplication of efforts." Tailpipe emissions are the provenance of the Environmental Protection Agency. If the EPA had been stripped of that authority, California would have been blocked from instituting its stringent tailpipe emissions standards. Now that Mr. Bush has backed off, we urge him to light a fire under EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson to grant California the waiver it needs.

In 2002, the California legislature mandated a 30 percent reduction in global warming-enhancing tailpipe emissions from cars and light trucks by 2016, starting with the 2009 model year. The Golden State has the authority to do this under the Clean Air Act, and other states can follow, as Maryland and 15 others intend to do, as long as the rules are not arbitrary and are at least as tough as federal regulations. All that's missing is a waiver, which the EPA has granted to California more than 40 times over three decades but which has been slow in coming this time around.

The first request was made in 2005. Hearing nothing, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) wrote to Mr. Bush in April 2006 and October 2006. Still nothing. In April this year, he threatened to take the EPA to court if a decision wasn't made by October. Mr. Johnson said he would make a judgment by the end of the year. Mr. Schwarzenegger went to court on Nov. 8. What will happen now is anybody's guess.

In addition to the foot-dragging at EPA,

e-mails released in October revealed an aggressive lobbying effort against the waiver earlier this year by the secretary of transportation. But the courts have been clear in their support of the California tailpipe emissions law. On Wednesday, a federal judge in California threw out an automaker lawsuit against the emissions regulations. He buttressed his opinion by citing a September decision that tossed similar litigation in Vermont and the Supreme Court ruling in *Massachusetts v. EPA* in April that affirmed the EPA's authority and obligation to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.

While Mr. Schwarzenegger has been waiting, the EPA's Mr. Johnson was in Beijing with other Cabinet-level officials for a "strategic economic dialogue" with Chinese officials all last week. You can check out his blog at <http://www.epa.gov/chinadiary/index.html>. We hope he used the 14-hour return flight to come to the same conclusion as the courts did.

Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses the Port of Long Beach commissioners are due to vote on the \$35 cargo fee-per-TEU, which will raise more than \$1.6 billion that will go towards replacing and or retrofitting older cargo trucks. For more information, contact Claudia Encinas at (559) 230-5851.

### **Guerra a la contaminación**

La Opinion, Monday, December 17, 2007

Se espera que la Comisión del Puerto de Long Beach apruebe una tarifa de 35 dólares por "camión sucio" a cobrar por cada contenedor de carga que pase por el puerto para subsidiar el cambio de algunas de las 14 mil grandes plataformas que se utilizan en las instalaciones.

Las autoridades estiman que la tarifa generaría hasta 1,600 millones de dólares para el año 2012. Los subsidios estatales y locales para aire limpio aportarán otros 180 millones de dólares para reemplazar viejos camiones diesel por camiones nuevos que contaminan menos, con dinero que se distribuirá a los conductores de camiones y a los transportistas terrestres a partir de mediados de 2008.

La tarifa, que cobrarían los operadores de las terminales a partir de junio, ayudará al sector de transporte de carga a cumplir con las regulaciones progresivas sobre emisiones adoptadas por los puertos de Los Ángeles y Long Beach en noviembre.

Se espera que el jueves la Comisión del Puerto de Los Ángeles firme para adherirse al programa.

"Los camiones diesel son una fuente importante de la contaminación del aire asociada a los puertos y presentan un nivel de riesgo para la salud inaceptable para el público", dijo Richard Steinke.

La tarifa se aplicaría a todos los contenedores transportados por camiones hasta 2012 o hasta que casi todos los camiones del puerto sean reemplazados por modelos que cumplan con las normas federales de emisión en 2007. Los nuevos camiones diesel emiten 90% menos contaminantes que los modelos anteriores.

Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses the growing list of states to support and follow California's strict law against vehicle emissions. For more information, contact Claudia Encinas at (559) 230-5851.

### **16 estados a la expectativa ante ley ambiental de California**

Noticiero Latino

Radio Bilingüe, Monday, December 17, 2007

La lista de gobiernos estatales que esperan unirse a una autorización federal para que California ponga en vigor su ley contra el cambio climático ya aumentó a 16 estados.

La ley de California es considerada la más estricta en el país contra emisiones vehiculares que producen el sobrecalentamiento terrestre y hasta el mes pasado la apoyaban once estados. California demandó el mes pasado a la Agencia de Protección Ambiental por su retraso en esa autorización.

De entrar en vigor, dicha ley impondría a la industria automotriz diseñar vehículos con mejor rendimiento en gasto de combustible y que contaminen menos a partir de los modelos de 2009.

Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses the Federal Court's decision to allow California the right to have a law against automotive emissions and EPA's contradictory reactions. For more information, contact Claudia Encinas at (559) 230-5851.

### **Fallo de una corte podría autorizar una ley de California contra la contaminación**

Noticiero Latino

Radio Bilingüe, Friday, December 14, 2007

La decisión de un a corte federal en Fresno, que otorga a California el derecho a poner en vigor su propia ley contra la contaminación vehicular, tuvo reacciones contradictorias de la Agencia federal de Protección Ambiental (EPA, por sus siglas en inglés).

Una vocera dela agencia que no quiso dar su nombre, dijo a la prensa en California que esa decisión autorizaría al estado a echar a andar su legislación, pero que su agencia aún tiene que revisar si existen implicaciones legales que los forzen a autorizar al estado poner sus propias reglas de control de la contaminación vehicular.

Según cálculos extraoficiales, la ley de California y otras diez réplicas en otros estados podrían reducir una contaminación equivalente a 74 millones de vehículos en el país. Sin embargo, la EPA aún considera si negará a los estado esta posibilidad de seguir el ejemplo Californiano e imponer sus propios estándares federales.