

Fireplace use discouraged today

Modesto Bee, Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2007

People in Stanislaus and Merced counties are asked to refrain from using fireplaces and older wood stoves today because of concerns about air quality. Forecasters say the air will be unhealthy for sensitive people — children, older adults and those with chronic breathing problems. The "burning discouraged" advisory comes from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. The next step is a prohibition on burning.

On the Net: www.valleyair.org

Florez backs biodiesel bills to help air quality

By Stacey Shepard, Californian staff writer

Bakersfield Californian, Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2007

Cottonseeds, soy beans and even the algae lining our canals could be fueling buses and trucks in California if Sen. Dean Florez gets his way.

The Shafter Democrat is expected to announce a series of air quality bills today that would require school buses and government-owned vehicles to run on biodiesel, a fuel produced from a variety of organic sources, including vegetable oils, animal fats and even restaurant grease.

The bills also aim to bring more biodiesel production to California through tax credits.

"We have all the ingredients (in California) to make this a very viable market," Florez said, noting Central Valley farmers could play an important part in the plan. Even algae from water banks and canal liners could be a fuel source, he said.

Biodiesel is considered a renewable, clean-burning fuel. The legislation would mandate a minimum blend of 20 percent biodiesel and 80 percent petroleum diesel in the state.

"This is stuff that can go into the tank, immediately," Florez said. "It's the most readily available and the most implementable given we don't have to have any retrofits of motors."

Big rigs and buses are one of the largest polluters in the Central Valley.

The biodiesel bills come in conjunction with Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's announcement Tuesday of the first ever transportation fuel standards, which will require a 10 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in automobile by 2020.

The governor's plan requires gas and oil producers to cut the carbon content in fuel and encourages producers to pursue fuel alternatives like biofuels and ethanol. It is the first step toward implementing the Global Warming Solutions Act, adopted in September, which mandates the goal of reducing greenhouse gasses by 25 percent by 2020.

But not everyone is endorsing the use of biodiesel as alternative fuel.

While biodiesel reduces the amount of cancer-causing fumes and particulates put into the air by traditional diesel, it doesn't cut nitrogen oxides, a main contributor to ozone pollution, according to air quality experts.

Some studies suggest biodiesel produces more nitrogen oxides than diesel, while others show it's about the same, they said.

"I think we really need to wait and see any future studies coming out," said Scott Nester, planning director for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution District.

The state Air Resources Board doesn't even consider biodiesel and alternative fuel at this time, according to spokeswoman Gennet Paauwe.

However, Paauwe said it could be just a matter of years until a way to reduce the nitrogen oxides produced by biodiesels is discovered.

"It's probably just a matter of time before the technology comes along," she said.

Also, she said, many engine manufacturers won't uphold warranties when biodiesel is used.

Paauwe said great strides have already been made using traditional diesel, including improved pollution controls on engines and a new low-sulfur form of the fuel.

Biodiesel has a downside. The city of Berkeley switched to fueling its garbage trucks and service vehicles with biodiesel about three years ago. About 18 months in, five diesel engines were ruined by a bad batch of pure biodiesel, according to Matt Nichols, the city's principal transportation planner.

The city switched to a biodiesel supplier that guarantees the quality of the fuel, he said. Berkeley now uses a 20 percent blend, since pure biodiesel is more expensive than blends.

According to Florez, the most recent studies on biodiesel suggest that the amount of nitrogen oxides it produces is the same as regular diesel.

"The air district and others want to wait for additional science in terms of this issue, but, to us, it's kind of foolish," he said.

Along with cleaner air, Florez said his initiative helps California become more energy self-sufficient.

"Becoming more self-dependent is ultimately the goal of this package as well," he said.

Gov.: Drop high-speed rail plans

By Jake Henshaw, Sacramento Bureau

Visalia Times-Delta, Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2007

SACRAMENTO - Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger will ask lawmakers permanently to drop the \$10 billion high-speed rail bond, his budget director said Tuesday.

A vote on the bond has been previously delayed and is now scheduled to go to the ballot in 2008.

But Mike Genest, the director of the Department of Finance, said the governor has decided that the bond to help finance a bullet train between northern and southern California though the San Joaquin Valley is not a priority right now.

"It's not that the governor doesn't support high-speed rail. In the long run, it's probably a great idea," Genest told reporters in a briefing.

"It's not ready to go right now, and it's certainly not the highest priority," he added. "High-speed rail is not going to solve our congestion problems today. It may be a key in the future and if so, we need to plan for that," he said.

He said that the High-Speed Rail Authority will continue to operate and suggested that it and other supporters might suggest other ways to build the train system.

"Public-private partnerships come to mind as a very viable approach to a project of that sort," Genest said.

Assemblyman Bill Maze, R-Visalia, who has worked to get the train routed near Visalia, said the train is needed to help address the Valley's air pollution and growth.

"That's short-sighted," he said of the governor's decision, of which, he said, he had not been notified. "I don't see how they can drop that issue."

Governor seeks emissions cut

He wants emissions of heat-trapping gases cut 10%.

Bee News Services
Fresno Bee, Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2007

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Schwarz-enegger said Tuesday he would ask regulators to require the state's petroleum refiners and gasoline sellers to cut by 10% the emissions of heat-trapping gases associated with the production and use of their products.

The order for cuts, which the governor wants completed by 2020, follows California's trademark pattern of hitching its environmental aspirations to its market muscle. It also represents one of the first examples of a state or a national government regulating the fuel in its passenger vehicles as part of a strategy to reduce both emissions that contribute to climate change and dependence on foreign oil.

The plan, delivered in Schwarzenegger's State of the State address to legislators on Tuesday, was the second part of a one-two policy punch the governor announced this week. On Monday, he proposed providing health care to all the state's residents, which unlike the emissions plan, is subject to approval by the Legislature.

"Our country has been dependent on foreign oil for too long," Schwarzenegger said in his address. "I ask you to set to motion the means to free ourselves from oil and from OPEC. I ask you to encourage the free market to overthrow the old order. California has the muscle to bring about such change. I say use it."

The executive order asks state air regulators to take up the governor's challenge. The California Air Resources Board will be responsible for drawing the blueprints to carry out the order, with the help of advisers from the University of California, Berkeley.

It is the first example of the practical impact of a deal made last summer between the Legislature and the governor to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by about 25% by 2020. The transportation sector is responsible for about 40% of the state's carbon dioxide emissions, state officials said, and cars make up about half that amount.

The 10% cut in emissions would be accomplished, experts said, largely through the use of alternative fuels, such as ethanol and other gasoline blends, which would be provided by the refineries and other producers.

The executive order will boost demand for alternative fuels such as ethanol, which could mean big things for Fresno-based Pacific Ethanol, the state's leading ethanol producer.

"This is very historic because what it does is it provides some certainty for the investment community to know that California will in fact have a market that's ever-expanding for renewable fuels," said Pacific Ethanol Chairman Bill Jones, whose company was consulted on the plan. "And when you go to finance projects, that's a very important point to be able to make to the Wall Street community."

The 1 billion gallon a year ethanol market in California could grow to 5 billion gallons a year by 2020 as a result of the order, Pacific Ethanol CEO Neil Koehler said.

The 100-employee company has plans to break ground on three Western ethanol plants in coming months. Its first plant, in Madera County, went operational in October. Its second plant, in Boardman, Ore., is on schedule to be up and running by the second quarter of 2007. The company recently posted its first quarterly profit: \$3.8 million.

Hal Harvey, the environmental program director for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, called Schwarzenegger's plan "a really big deal."

"In my opinion, there are no successful rules anywhere in the world, except Brazil, to get carbon out of fuels," Harvey said.

"It is the big, hairy unmentioned problem with cleaning up carbon." The European Union, he added, is considering a similar rule.

Environmentalists expected the order to turbocharge the market demand for corn-based ethanol and biodiesel fuels, and for natural gas, and to jump-start the introduction of experimental fuels such as cellulosic ethanol, which is made from plant waste or nonfood crops such as switch grass or wood chips.

Bold move on global warming

A WORLD FIRST: Governor to order new standard to reduce carbon content of motor fuels

Greg Lucas, Chronicle Sacramento Bureau
S.F. Chronicle, Wednesday, January 10, 2007

Sacramento -- California will create the world's first global warming pollution standard for transportation fuels, ratcheting down fuel carbon content 10 percent by 2020 under a plan put forward by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger Tuesday in his State of the State address.

The new standard could have implications for the auto industry and change the way gasoline is produced around the globe. Environmentalists hailed it as a way to reduce one of the state's chief sources of greenhouse gas emissions and kick-start fledgling alternative fuel technologies.

"This is a big deal. This policy will be noticed worldwide," said Eric Heitz, president of the Energy Foundation, which monitors the world's energy technology.

Advocates of the proposal said competition from alternative fuels and a reduction in dependence on oil would prevent gasoline prices from rising, but oil companies said changing the mix of fuels to reduce carbon emissions would carry a cost.

"I can't predict what the price will do. All these decisions we will be making going forward will be difficult. There will be economic consequences somewhere," said Cathy Reheis-Boyd, Sacramento lobbyist for the Western States Petroleum Association. "How much and who they're allocated to remains to be seen."

The plan gives the makers of gasoline and diesel fuel discretion in how they reach the target. They can either reformulate their fuel or increase use of alternative fuels such as ethanol, natural gas and hydrogen.

"Our cars have been running on dirty fuel too long. Our country has been dependent on foreign oil for too long. I ask you to set in motion the means to free ourselves from oil and from OPEC," Schwarzenegger told a joint session of the Legislature.

Schwarzenegger plans to issue an executive order requiring the state's Air Resources Board to draft rules for a new carbon fuel standard, which would take effect in January 2010. His authority to do that comes from landmark legislation signed last year aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions across a wide spectrum of industries.

Gasoline sold in California already contains 6 percent ethanol. The amount could be boosted to 10 percent without any harm to auto engines, advocates of the governor's plan said. But such an increase would not be enough on its own to meet the governor's emission reduction standard.

Although the European Union is weighing a similar rule on carbon emissions, California would be the first government to create one.

Heitz of the Energy Foundation said the new standard would be the equivalent of taking 3 million cars off the road by 2020.

The new standard is expected to reduce emissions by 13 million metric tons, more than half of the 24 million metric tons of carbon dioxide the state will need to eliminate to meet 1990 vehicle emission levels.

Transportation accounts for 40 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions in California.

Schwarzenegger has made combatting global warming a centerpiece of his administration. He signed landmark legislation last year to reduce emissions from stationary sources, such as refineries and power plants, to 1990 levels by 2020.

Schwarzenegger's predecessor, Gray Davis, signed the nation's first bill to curb carbon dioxide emissions from tailpipes in 2002. That law required automakers to lower emissions of cars, SUVs and pickups by nearly 30 percent between 2009 and 2014. A legal challenge to the law by the auto industry has threatened that timetable.

Tuesday's announcement indirectly affects automakers, because in order to use more alternative fuels, car buyers will need to be able to find cars that run on those fuels.

Automakers have pledged by 2012 to have half their vehicles run on flex fuel, allowing the use of either gasoline or ethanol. Building more hybrids and more natural-gas-powered vehicles also would help reduce emissions.

Tom King, Pacific Gas & Electric's CEO, said Tuesday he backed the governor's proposal and pledged to increase the number of natural-gas stations the company operates. PG&E also has the largest fleet of natural-gas-powered vehicles -- roughly 1,000 -- of any utility.

Under the proposal, makers of gasoline and diesel fuel that do not reach the 10 percent reduction could buy credits from companies exceeding the standard. The credits would be used to reach compliance.

Schwarzenegger contends that the new policy will help foster more investment in alternative fuels and that increased use of them, in turn, will prevent gasoline prices from rising.

"Competition from alternative fuels will have the effect of driving down gas prices. We certainly expect less volatility in the market because we won't be reliant on a single source of fuel," said Jackalyn Pfannenstiel, chair of the California Energy Commission, which is studying cost of alternative fuels.

California has a ways to go before ethanol-powered vehicles pose a competitive threat to gasoline.

There are four pumps that dispense E85 -- a blend of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline -- in California, a state with 9,800 gas stations and 30 million vehicles.

Is ethanol the heart of gov.'s idea?

Activists and experts offer mixed reactions to the gas alternative after the call for a low-carbon fuel initiative features a key backer of ethanol.

By Janet Wilson and Elizabeth Douglass, Times Staff Writers

Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2007

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's senior staff declared there "are no winners and losers" in California's ambitious low-carbon fuel initiative unveiled in Sacramento on Tuesday. But some parts of the energy industry may have more to gain than others.

Former California secretary of state Bill Jones, co-founder and chairman of Fresno-based Pacific Ethanol Inc. and a contributor to Schwarzenegger's reelection campaign, was a featured speaker, suggesting that ethanol has a major role in the governor's vision for sharply reducing greenhouse gases by shifting to lower-carbon fuel. Not a single oil or gas company was represented onstage.

While some scientists and environmentalists applaud ethanol, others say that it is far from a sure bet in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and analysts said replacing petroleum with things like ethanol could actually raise prices for consumers at the fuel pump, especially in the short run.

"It definitely does raise a concern as to whether ethanol companies will be the primary beneficiaries," said Bill Magavern, a senior policy advisor with Sierra Club California, of Jones' center-stage appearance.

Magavern, who applauded the initiative in general, cautioned that most U.S. ethanol actually increases summertime smog because it evaporates more quickly than petroleum.

California Environmental Protection Agency Undersecretary Dan Scopek said the new "policy is not focused on ethanol. Our policy is focused on creating lower carbon, and there's a variety of different fuels that may prevail as the winner. But this policy does not mandate any one in particular."

As Jones said in an interview, however, "the only alternatives that are available, scalable and financeable today is renewable fuel, and the primary form is ethanol."

A number of studies, including one just completed at UC Berkeley, raise questions about whether corn-based ethanol, the form now most widely used in the United States, actually reduces carbon, the largest greenhouse gas contributor believed to be causing global warming.

"I don't think much of ethanol for energy or anything else," said Tad W. Patzek, professor of geoen지니어ing at UC Berkeley, who said that several studies that he has co-written, including one in the peer-reviewed Natural Resources Research Journal next month, found that the coal, petroleum and other fossil fuels used by tractors to grow corn, and the heating equipment used to distill it into fuel, zeroed out any benefits from burning ethanol rather than petroleum.

But others cited a study by different UC Berkeley researchers last January that concluded that if natural gas rather than coal was used to process ethanol, there was the potential for a 13% to 15% reduction in greenhouse gases over gasoline.

Switching to any form of alternative fuel, including ethanol, could prove costly to consumers, some analysts said.

Philip Verleger, an energy economist and consultant based in Aspen, Colo., called the proposal "innovative and exciting," but added, "It will raise the cost of gasoline ... probably, at least for the next 10 to 15 years."

He said it was unlikely that oil companies would be able to replace gasoline fast enough, and

under the governor's plan would need to purchase credits from companies moving more quickly to reduce carbon.

Ethanol is blended into more than 45% of the nation's gas now, and supporters said every gas station in California could be retrofitted fairly quickly with ethanol-only pumps. Also, car makers have committed to producing millions of vehicles in coming years capable of using 85% ethanol fuel. Ford Motor Co. said the technology could add as little as \$150 in costs per car.

Backers of the initiative said ethanol would be vastly improved in response to market forces unleashed by the governor's initiative. They said that the end result would be lower prices at the pump and less reliance on foreign oil, and that ethanol is the quickest, surest way to go.

Sara Hessenflow Harper, a national security and climate policy analyst with Environmental Defense in Washington, D.C., sees great possibility in ethanol.

She said that newer forms of "cellulosic" ethanol fuel are being developed from rice stock, cow manure, wood chips and other California agricultural products, and that they could make a big dent in carbon-based fuels.

She and others cite Brazil, where ethanol from sugarcane is widely used.

"Unfortunately, for too long, the environmental movement has looked at ethanol for all its negatives ... instead of looking at what it could be," Harper said.

Governor sees room for more building, borrowing

By Laura Kurtzman/Associated Press

In the Tracy Press, Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2007

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Tuesday proposed another huge round of borrowing to build prisons, schools and dams in a state of the state speech that also called for cleaner fuels to help curb global warming.

The borrowing proposals, which add up to \$43.3 billion, are similar to ideas that were cut out of the enormous borrowing plan the governor put forth last year. The Legislature changed it and cut it in half, and voters eventually approved \$42.7 billion in bonds in November.

Addressing a joint session of the Legislature, Schwarzenegger said he was bringing the ideas back because, "We are a big state, and we have big needs. And we have made a big down payment, but the job is not finished."

The governor, who is recovering from a broken right femur, entered the ornate Assembly chambers on crutches. Although his speech was full of ambitious proposals, his delivery was subdued.

Schwarzenegger is calling for \$29.4 billion in general obligation bonds, which require voter approval, and \$13.9 billion in lease revenue and other bonds, which the administration says would not need to be approved by voters.

He said the state needs new prisons to relieve overcrowding, which he called a disgrace. The prisons are so full that the federal courts are threatening to intervene by capping the inmate population and potentially ordering early releases of criminals.

"Here are the court-ordered choices we face," Schwarzenegger said. "We build more prisons or the court takes money from education and health care and builds the prisons itself. Now I am not in favor of releasing criminals. I am not in favor of taking money from classrooms and emergency rooms to build prison cells."

Schwarzenegger also wants to spend \$4 billion to build two new dams, an idea Democrats and environmentalists vehemently oppose. He wants to spend another \$500 million on ground water storage.

Schwarzenegger said the dams are necessary to store more of the water from Sierra snowmelt, which could be reduced by global warming. Two-thirds of Californians depend on the snowmelt for drinking water. Central Valley farmers also use it to irrigate their fields.

The school bonds would build 15,000 new classrooms and renovate another 40,000, in addition to the \$10.4 billion school bond voters approved last year.

Schwarzenegger's finance director, Mike Genest, said the state can afford the new borrowing because it is paying off early the bonds voters authorized in 2004 to pay off the budget deficit that ballooned after the dot-com crash.

"We think this is affordable within the state's budget in the long run," he said.

Other independent financial experts said the proposed borrowing plan was so large that it could take days to fully analyze its impact on California's budget. Some economists immediately criticized the concept as shortsighted.

"The tendency for the state to borrow is extremely unwise," said Edward Leamer, director of the University of California, Los Angeles, Anderson Forecast. "It's pushing spending on to the next generation, and that's not fair and it's not wise ... Borrowing is not some magical way to pay for what the state provides."

Democrats reacted coolly to the idea of building more prisons.

"I think we would probably have a hard time supporting it," said Assemblyman Hector De La Torre, D-Los Angeles, because "we spend so much as it is on prisons in the budget."

They also rejected the dams. But they praised the governor for giving such a substantive speech with bold proposals meant to confront many of the state's enduring problems.

"The governor has a very ambitious agenda," said Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata, D-Oakland. "He's identified all the problems, and we're in a world of hurt."

Republicans, although they mostly opposed the governor's bond package last year, were muted in their criticism.

"I think we've got to really step back and be careful about the load of borrowing," said Assembly Republican leader Mike Villines, R-Clovis.

He and other Republicans said they supported building new dams and prisons but worried about the bonds' overall cost. Some question the need to build more schools.

Schwarzenegger also delved back into the global warming issue.

He said cars should run on cleaner-burning fuel to help reduce greenhouse gases, mostly carbon dioxide, that most experts say are warming the Earth's atmosphere. And he proposed that California become the first to develop a carbon fuel standard.

"Let us blaze the way, for the U.S., for China and for the rest of the world," Schwarzenegger said. "Our cars have been running on dirty fuel for too long. Our country has been dependent on foreign oil for too long."

Schwarzenegger wants California refiners to reduce the carbon content of passenger vehicle fuels 10 percent by 2020.

Adding more ethanol to gasoline and using cars that burn natural gas and use hybrid and electric technology could help California reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 10 percent, said Robert Sawyer, chairman of the California Air Resources Board.

That will go a long way toward meeting the requirements in the landmark global warming bill Schwarzenegger signed last year.

The governor will lay out his budget on Wednesday and promised it would “dramatically reduce” the state deficit without raising taxes. However, the governor faces a budget gap of \$5.5 billion.

He also is proposing an ambitious plan to extend health coverage to California's 6.5 million uninsured people.

[Modesto Bee editorial, Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2007](#)

Governor's latest idea could help save planet

There's something about this larger-than-life governor and his big ideas that is, well, compelling. Gov. Schwarzenegger unveiled another one Tuesday before hobbling to the front of the Assembly to deliver his State of the State address. This big idea, if everyone else in the world sees its wisdom, simply could save the planet.

Maybe that's overstating it, but his plan could help diminish greenhouse gases, slow global warming, end our dependence on Middle Eastern oil and even save us money at the gas pump. Like we said, it's a big idea.

Those who refine oil and sell gas would have to cut carbon content by 10 percent by 2020. That alone is good for the environment because it would yield a 40 percent reduction in greenhouse gases. But there are more benefits below the surface. Such reductions would push many of us to switch to alternative fuels — such as ethanol, hydrogen or electricity. As their use grows, we'll reach a tipping point that would make using such fuels as convenient as buying gas. Then even more of us will use them.

New fuels would require new technologies and refineries — and that means jobs and profits for those who develop them. We would have real choices when buying a new vehicle. Gas burner or corn burner?

Now, your only choice is which oil company gets your money. With competition, the price for all fuels should come down.

Ninety-seven percent of all of California's vehicles are fueled by oil derivatives. That leaves us vulnerable to the whims of oil producers (many of whom do not like the United States). By reducing demand for their oil, we could diminish world tensions.

That's the sunny side of the scenario; there are a few clouds, too.

Those who own oil companies won't give up their unfathomable profits (at least \$60 billion last year) without a fight, so costs might never come down. Ethanol, in meaningful concentrations, is too corrosive for cars or even gas pumps to handle — meaning we'd have to buy new cars to use it. Hydrogen takes as much energy to produce as it saves. Schwarzenegger also is proposing a credit bank, which means some of the worst polluters will be allowed to continue their wicked ways by simply paying a fee.

We'll put such fears in the "details" category, to be worked out later. We like the governor's big idea.

[Letter to the Fresno Bee, Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2007:](#)

Leave fireplaces alone until cars are outlawed

Responding to Diane Woody's suggestion that fireplaces be summarily outlawed [letter Jan. 6], I would wholeheartedly agree -- on one condition. Let's also outlaw the far greater cause of pollution, the automobile.

Surely if she deems fireplaces to be inefficient, Ms. Woody would agree that transporting one 170-pound human in a 3,000-pound vehicle is the very definition of inefficiency.

Think, too, of the obesity which would be eliminated with everyone being forced to get themselves from place to place on foot or bicycle. I speak as a non-driver. Can't do it? Then let the fireplaces alone.

David McElroy, Visalia

[Tracy Press commentary, Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2007:](#)

Uranium a big threat to Tracy

Marion Fulk/For the Tracy Press

Gary Mansfield, a health physicist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, claimed in his Dec. 27 commentary that "the use of depleted uranium in explosives testing at Site 300 presents no risks to the public." Balderdash.

Uranium-238, sometimes called "depleted uranium," poses a serious health threat, especially if inhaled in finely divided particles like those created by open-air explosives testing.

Because of its properties, uranium-238 is a triple threat to human health. Its properties as a heavy metal create health damage once inside the body. Its properties as a hazardous chemical catalyst cause additional health risks. And its properties as a radioactive material offer a third route to cellular and DNA damage, illness and premature death in humans and animals.

Uranium-238 has a radioactive half-life of more than 4 billion years. It is an alpha emitter, which means that it is particularly damaging if lodged inside the body. Uranium-238 decays with an energy of 4 million electron volts per alpha particle. The energy emitted tears up surrounding cells and may initiate a whole bunch of negative health outcomes, including, but not limited to, cancers.

Mansfield asked readers to look at the lab's Sitewide Environmental Impact Statement, although he neglected to provide any reference point in its approximately 2,000 pages. Let me remedy that. On page S-30, the document states that the planned activities at Site 300 will increase the surrounding community's exposure to radiation nearly fourfold, from 2.5 person-rem per year to 9.8 person-rem per year. The actual exposures are likely to be even more severe.

I do not write as one who is unfamiliar with either the Livermore lab or nuclear materials. I have conducted experiments with radioactive elements for the Department of Energy and its predecessor agencies since the late 1940s, and I capped my career with 18 years as a staff scientist at Lawrence Livermore National Lab.

As a scientist, it pains me when lab employees seek to understate the very real health risks that stem from inhalation of radioactive and toxic materials, including those used at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's Site 300 high explosives testing range on Corral Hollow Road.

Marion Fulk is a retired staff scientist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and was involved with the Manhattan Project.

[Letters to the Tracy Press, Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2007:](#)

Ives calm amid liberal storm

It was an interesting Tracy City Council meeting Jan. 2. It was great to see Mayor Brent Ives' calm and patient endurance of Councilwoman Irene Sundberg's lack of experience and facts and Ives' long suffering of Tracy radicals Bob Sarvey and Kleo Pullin. Sarvey carped that Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory wasn't forthcoming about explosives testing at its Site 300 even after lab officials put an explanation in the Tracy Press and came to the meeting. Then Sarvey, in a flip-flop, questioned the lab for having people attending the meeting. Typical of a liberal, Sarvey contradicted himself within minutes.

The same went for Pullin. While she held the Tracy Press clipping from the experts at the lab, she griped that the lab was not giving explanations — the clipping in her hand was an excellent one! Again, liberals can't see the answers when they are staring right at them.

All the while this was going on, failed mayoral candidate Celeste Garamendi sat in the back of the council chambers feverishly writing on a note pad. Was she munching on sour grapes?

I was most disturbed by the shabby treatment that Councilwoman Evelyn Tolbert gave the lab's representative. She endlessly browbeat her because the lab didn't hold public hearings every time it planned to set off a test blast. So what? The lab isn't even required to do such a thing, even under the liberal rules of this state. And yet, Tolbert kept griping. Tolbert needs to get new lunch friends.

Liberals will never accept any level of testing, and the Tracy Press should be ashamed of themselves with the poor quality of reporting from John Upton and the op-ed writing of Jon Mendelson. The extreme left bias of these two "journalists" is embarrassing.

Thank God, we have Mayor Ives, and the Livermore lab. Too bad we have to suffer the foolishness of tired, old hippies.

David Kerst, Tracy

Test somewhere else

It's very simple. Tracy residents do not want Site 300 to be used.

Bob Sarvey, and others, have presented the evidence. These are responsible people.

So Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, take your testing somewhere else. Go! Tracy does not want the killer poisons in our air and soil.

People of Tracy, this is an important decision. Stand up and be counted. There are already more deaths in Tracy from cancerous brain tumors than anywhere else I know.

Enough.

Mavis Roe, Tracy