

Governor OKs valley air board changes

Bakersfield Californian, Wednesday, Oct. 1, 2008

The governor has signed a bill that lays the groundwork for selecting new members of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District board, according to the office of state Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter.

Senate Bill 1548 helps establish a selection committee to name five city council members from within the air district to the district board. Each city council will select one of its members to serve on the selection committee, which in turn will choose two council members from large cities and three from small ones.

"Some of our smallest cities are struggling under the dirtiest skies in the nation and need to have a voice in how we go about reversing that situation," Florez said in a news release. "I am very happy we have closed this chapter so we can move forward on the very real issues of air quality facing our communities every day."

Free event to address impacts of poor air quality on health

Bakersfield Californian, Wednesday, Oct. 1, 2008

Two medical experts will discuss the health impacts of the San Joaquin Valley's poor air quality during a talk Tuesday targeted at local doctors, nurses and medical professionals. The event, titled "Recognizing and Reducing Patient Risk Related to Air Quality," will be held from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at Bakersfield Memorial Hospital. Reservations are required for the free event, which is open to the local medical community and interested members of the public. Speakers will include John R. Balmes, M.D., a member of the California Air Resources Board who also teaches medicine at University of California San Francisco, and environmental health at the University of California Berkeley, and David Lighthall, a senior environmental health scientist at Fresno State's Central Valley Health Policy Institute. Local pediatrician and Kern County Medical Society President John L. Digges will moderate the event.

Medical professionals may be eligible to receive continuing medical education credit for attending.

To make reservations or obtain more information, call the Kern County Medical Society at 328-9372 by noon on Monday.

Company fined for pollution at wine bottle plant

The Associated Press

In the S.F. Chronicle, Contra Costa Times and other papers, Wednesday, October 1, 2008

MADERA, Calif.—One of the country's largest glass container makers has agreed to pay a \$140,000 fine for violating federal air regulations at its Madera wine bottle plant.

The fine by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency stems from a 2005 settlement in which Indiana-based Saint-Gobain Containers Inc. agreed to pay \$929,000 for air pollution violations at the bottle manufacturing plant. The company agreed to spend more than \$7 million to control emissions as part of the EPA settlement.

The EPA said Tuesday that Saint-Gobain was fined for failing to comply with monitoring, record-keeping and reporting requirements of the Clean Air Act.

Merits of renewable resources proposition debated

Staff and wire reports

Bakersfield Californian, Wednesday, Oct. 1, 2008

Opponents and supporters of Proposition 7 agree on one thing: requiring the state's utilities to generate half their power from renewable sources by 2025 is a noble pursuit.

But as evidenced when both side appeared before *The Californian's* editorial board Tuesday, the two camps sharply disagree over how to achieve it. The meeting ended with the measure's supporters accusing its opponents of "splitting hairs" and being "disingenuous and untruthful."

Proposition 7 would give California the nation's most aggressive renewable energy mandate, requiring utilities to generate half their electricity from windmills, solar panels, geothermal plants and other renewable sources by 2025.

Under a current state mandate, utilities must generate 20 percent of their power from renewables by 2010. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has called for increasing that standard to 33 percent by 2020.

Supporters say California must curb its greenhouse gas emissions and encourage other states to do the same. In the process, the initiative would also help create 370,000 jobs in the state.

"What we're doing by creating this industry and ramping up this industry is bringing in a job sector that never existed in the state," Laurette Healey, a former deputy state controller who represents backers of the measure, told the editorial board. "What's important is those jobs can never be exported."

Critics say the measure is well-intentioned but flawed.

"The challenge with Prop 7 is just about anyone who looks at it who is an expert in the field doesn't believe it can get there and do what it says it can do," said Greg Larsen, a consultant for the No on Prop 7 campaign. The measure is opposed by leading environmental groups, taxpayer advocates and much of the renewable-energy industry that say it would shut out small green-energy projects, drive up electricity prices and set back California's already aggressive alternative energy mandates.

The state's largest utilities have raised nearly \$24 million to defeat Proposition 7, with most of that coming from Pacific Gas & Electric Co. Southern California Edison Co. calls the initiative "misguided," saying it would disrupt existing renewable energy development and lead to higher utility bills.

Some renewable-energy firms say it could force them out of business because the mandate would exclude small-scale projects such as rooftop solar-electric systems, though supporters Tuesday said that's not true.

The state's utilities already are having trouble meeting California's current mandate to generate 20 percent of its electricity from renewables by 2010. A recent report by the state Public Utilities Commission projects California will miss the target by at least three years.

— *Staff writer Stacey Shepard and the Associated Press contributed to this story.*

Schwarzenegger vetoes port bill that Palin opposed

By Samantha Young, Associated Press Writer

In the N.Y. Times, S. F. Chronicle and other papers, Wednesday, October 1, 2008

SACRAMENTO—Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has vetoed legislation that would have imposed a pollution fee on cargo ships at California's ports, siding with Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin.

The fee would have paid for clean-air programs but was opposed by Palin before she became the Republican vice presidential nominee. She asked Schwarzenegger in a letter dated the day before she was named Sen. John McCain's running mate to reject the bill, saying it would lead to higher costs on goods shipped to her state.

Schwarzenegger has endorsed McCain's presidential bid.

The bill by Democratic Sen. Alan Lowenthal would have imposed a fee of up to \$60 for each 40-foot cargo container moving through the ports of Los Angeles, Long Beach and Oakland. The Southern California port complex is the nation's largest and handles more than 40 percent of the nation's goods; Oakland is the fourth busiest.

In a veto message issued late Tuesday night, the governor said he rejected the bill in part because it lacked accountability. He also said it failed to direct money to the Central Valley, which has some of the nation's dirtiest air and gets much of the truck traffic going to and from the ports.

"Given the current economic downturn, it is vitally important that the state does not worsen the situation by mandating added costs on business that do not provide any public benefit," Schwarzenegger said.

Schwarzenegger vetoed similar legislation two years ago over concerns a port fee would drive cargo ships to other states.

Lowenthal, of Long Beach, had modified his bill in hopes of winning Schwarzenegger's signature. Environmentalists had urged the governor to make good on his campaign promise to clean up the state's air.

It was among the last set of bills the governor acted on before a midnight constitutional deadline.

"I'm shocked," Lowenthal said after being told of the veto. "The governor is just wrong. He doesn't mention the thousands and thousands of people who are dying prematurely in southern California."

Supporters of the bill estimated the fee would bring in at least \$300 million a year to fund programs that clean up the lingering smog at port communities. State air regulators say 3,700 premature deaths each year can be attributed to pollution at California's ports.

Alaska and Hawaii and a host of major retailers that import goods from Asia objected, arguing that the pollution charge would have raised consumer prices.

"Shipping costs have increased significantly with the rising price of fuel, and these higher costs are quickly passed onto Alaskans," Palin wrote in her Aug. 28 letter to Schwarzenegger. "This tax makes the situation worse."

Messages left during business hours with the governor's office in Alaska and the McCain campaign were not returned.

Hawaii Gov. Linda Lingle and the congressional delegations from Alaska and Hawaii also urged Schwarzenegger to oppose the fee because of the costs. Instead, they asked Schwarzenegger to modify the bill and exclude domestic commerce between U.S. ports.

Supporters say the fee could have been used to develop cleaner truck and train engines, build railroad overpasses to avoid traffic idling for long periods as trains pass and implement other programs that reduce diesel pollution.

"There's a lot of things that take money to be realized," said Martin Schlageter, campaign director at the Coalition for Clean Air. "The bottom line is you're turning your back on an opportunity to spend money to clean up the air."

Schwarzenegger said the legislation would have allowed ports to spend money with little state oversight.

"This bill does not provide necessary assurances that projects will achieve the greatest cost-effectiveness, emission reductions, and public health protection," Schwarzenegger said.

He also pointed to bonds approved by voters in 2006 that set aside \$1 billion to improve air quality, \$2.1 billion for infrastructure improvements to trade routes and \$100 million for port security.

In his veto message, Schwarzenegger did not address the objections from Alaska or Hawaii. His communications director, Matt David, did not immediately respond to an inquiry about whether Palin's letter played any role in Schwarzenegger's veto decision.

Lowenthal accused the governor of seeking last-minute amendments to a bill he had praised the year before. He said the governor was "not paying attention" if he thought \$1 billion would solve California's port pollution problems.

"The governor has really sold us out to the large business interests," Lowenthal said. "I will never work with the governor on this bill again. I will wait until there are people who honestly want to work with me on this bill."

Greenhouse gas law among 11th-hour bill signings

Matthew Yi, Chronicle Sacramento Bureau
S.F. Chronicle, Wednesday, October 1, 2008

Sacramento -- Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, facing a midnight deadline to deal with 300 bills, signed legislation Tuesday aimed at helping the state fight global warming by better coordinating local planning efforts to curb suburban sprawl.

The governor also signed bills to fund water storage and conservation projects across the state and to require that some restaurants post nutritional information on their menus.

SB375, by Sen. Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, addresses a key piece of California's ambitious goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent by 2020 under landmark legislation the governor signed two years ago.

In a written statement, Schwarzenegger said the measure "takes California's fight against global warming to a whole new level and it creates a model that the rest of the country and world will use."

The measure directs the California Air Resources Board, which must implement AB32, to develop goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in regions of the state. The air board would work with 18 metropolitan planning agencies to reduce the distances residents drive in part by limiting sprawl.

In addition, the legislation provides financial incentives for local government agencies that embrace smart growth and develop transportation plans that help take automobiles off roadways.

Environmental groups applauded the governor's action.

"This was the missing piece in California's plan to reduce global warming pollution," said Craig Noble, a spokesman for the Natural Resources Defense Council.

SB375 was one of about 300 bills that Schwarzenegger raced to either sign or veto before the midnight deadline. Schwarzenegger had about a week to act on nearly 900 bills. During the year, the governor signed 771 bills while vetoing 415 measures, marking the highest veto rate among governors dating back to Ronald Regan.

One of the bills that the governor vetoed on Tuesday dealt with global warming. SB974 by Sen. Alan Lowenthal, D-Long Beach, would have set a \$60 per container fee on shipping traffic at the state's ports in Oakland, Long Beach and Los Angeles. The money would have been used to clean up truck and ship emissions.

But the governor, in his veto message, sided in part with the opponents of the bill who argued additional fees would hurt the economy. One prominent opponent of the measure was Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, the GOP vice presidential candidate. She wrote a letter to Schwarzenegger last month urging him to veto the bill arguing additional costs would be passed on to Alaskan residents.

Also Tuesday, the governor signed a bill authorizing the state to spend \$842 million of previously approved bond funds for water storage, levee improvement and conservation projects.

The signing of SB1XX by Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata, D-Oakland, comes after Schwarzenegger vetoed a similar bill last year, arguing that the state needed a comprehensive plan to overhaul its water infrastructure. The governor has proposed a \$9.3 billion water bond that could go to voters next year.

In a letter to lawmakers, Schwarzenegger said he is signing the bill to help the state meet immediate water needs as a result of the state's drought.

But the governor also called SB1XX a "Band-Aid measure" that will not solve the state's long-term water supply problems.

"Once again, I call on the Legislature to work with me to place a comprehensive water bond on the ballot," Schwarzenegger wrote.

Perata said he was pleased that Schwarzenegger signed the bill this year, but added that some of the water projects would be under way if the governor had signed a similar measure last year.

"I am glad the governor has come around and realizes what a mistake he made a year ago in vetoing legislation to tackle California's water problems immediately with currently available bond money," Perata said in a statement.

SB1XX will pay for projects to help stabilize the fragile Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, improve that region's levees, clean up groundwater basins in Southern California, conduct a study on dams and to help fund various conservation projects.

The governor still has to deal with five more urgency bills that he received Tuesday. Because they are urgency measures, he has until Oct. 13 to either sign or veto them.

Schwarzenegger signs anti-sprawl bill

By Kevin Yamamura

Sacramento Bee, Wednesday, October 1, 2008

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed legislation Tuesday establishing new incentives to discourage sprawl in future decades, solidifying a major deal between environmentalists, homebuilders and local governments.

Senate Bill 375 requires the California Air Resources Board to provide regional targets by September 2010 for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The state will use its \$5 billion pot of transportation money to encourage regions to account for compact development in the planning process.

The legislation also will relax California Environmental Quality Act requirements for housing projects that meet goals for reducing greenhouse-gas emissions, giving homebuilders incentive to pursue high-density projects near transit.

"What this will mean is more environmentally-friendly communities, more sustainable developments, less time people spend in their cars, more alternative transportation options and neighborhoods we can safely and proudly pass on to future generations," Schwarzenegger said in a statement.

Sen. Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, said he sees the bill as a necessary step to meet the state's greenhouse-gas reduction goals. Under 2006's AB 32, the state must reduce its greenhouse gases 25 percent by 2020, and Steinberg believes the latest bill will cut down on harmful car emissions by reducing travel time.

Proponents believe the bill will lead to more infill projects and new communities that are transit-focused, discouraging car travel despite future population growth. Transportation, including commuter and errand traffic and trucks carrying goods, accounted for 38 percent of California's greenhouse gas emissions from 2002 to 2004, according to a CARB report.

The bill is based on a "smart growth" plan adopted by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments.

"Californians will see more infill," said SACOG Director Mike McKeever. "They'll see higher density housing, particularly in transit corridors. The new areas will look more like existing neighborhoods with a mix of uses between schools, stores and housing."

Homebuilders reached agreement in August with environmentalists and local government officials after receiving a streamlined CEQA approval process for projects that meet certain environmental goals.

Other business groups, including the California Chamber of Commerce and commercial builders, remained opposed to the bill because they felt it could create two separate greenhouse-gas reduction processes with which they would have to comply, said Matthew Hargrove of the California Business Properties Association. He said the bill also gave residential builders special advantages in the CEQA process that commercial builders will not have.

"There's no guarantee within SB 375 that if you meet all of its goals you won't get sued under AB 32," Hargrove said. "We were looking for clarity on that. We also had hoped our projects would be included in the same way residential projects were."

While the California League of Cities and California State Association of Counties support the bill, some individual local officials remained opposed.

Auburn City Councilman Kevin Hanley said he fears that foothills communities such as his could lose transportation funding and suffer worse traffic than already exists. He said local governments, not CARB, should set regional targets for emissions.

Schwarzenegger signs greenhouse gas bill

By Steve Lawrence, Associated Press Writer
Tri-Valley Herald, Wednesday, October 1, 2008

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed legislation Tuesday that attempts to ease greenhouse gas emissions by giving priority to transportation projects that limit commutes and curb urban sprawl.

Supporters said the legislation is needed to help implement a 2006 law that requires California to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

The bill requires the state Air Resources Board to set regional targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks and directs regional planning agencies to develop land-use strategies to meet those targets.

Cities and counties will not have to implement those plans, but they could lose transportation funding if they don't.

"This bill is designed to have new growth be much more transit-friendly and have housing be closer to employment centers," said William Craven, an aide to bill author Sen. Darrell Steinberg. "So (transportation) projects that help to reduce commutes and sprawl are the ones that float to the top and get funded."

The bill also includes an additional incentive for cities and counties to comply. It relaxes environmental reviews for housing projects that comply with the so-called sustainable communities strategies that will be developed by regional planners.

Craig Noble, a spokesman for the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental group that supports the bill, said it is "definitely a carrot approach."

"Actual land-use zoning decisions are local decisions, so the state can't say, 'You must do this,'" he said. "What the state can do is make it very desirable for communities to plan more compact, livable development by giving them incentives."

Ban on trucks made before 1989 to take effect today

Daily News Wire Services
L.A. Daily News, Wednesday, October 1, 2008

SAN PEDRO - A ban on trucks made before 1989 will take effect today at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach as part of the Clean Truck Program, which supporters say will significantly cut pollution by 2012.

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster will mark the start of the program at a news conference this morning.

"We are proud to say that after months of intense preparation, the Port of Los Angeles Clean Truck Program will kick off as scheduled on Oct. 1, with the main elements in place," said Geraldine Knatz, executive director of the port.

"Our Number 1 goal is to keep commerce flowing while we implement the Clean Truck Program and we are confident that we will meet this goal."

The ban is expected to affect 2,000 trucks. A city ordinance signed earlier this year provides truck owners with \$5,000 if they turn in their pre- 1989 trucks.

That ordinance also required trucking companies to hire drivers as employees, rather than keeping them as independent contractors, by 2012, making the companies responsible for maintaining "green" trucks.

A \$35 fee on cargo containers, approved by the Los Angeles and Long Beach harbor commissions last year, is expected to generate \$1.6 billion to replace 16,800 trucks in the short-haul fleet. Port officials believe the clean- fuel fleet will decrease emissions by 80 percent over the next five years.

The Clean Air Action Plan is a joint effort between the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

Tesoro sues state over new ethanol rules for gasoline

By David R. Baker

S.F. Chronicle, Wednesday, October 1, 2008

Gasoline refining company Tesoro Corp. has sued a California agency over a new requirement to increase the amount of ethanol used in the state.

Tesoro reported Tuesday that one of its subsidiaries sued the California Air Resources Board, which sets regulations concerning air pollution and global warming. Last year, the board decided to increase the amount of ethanol blended into gasoline sold in California, from the current 6 percent to as much as 10 percent by the end of 2009. The board finalized the rule Monday, and Tesoro sued to block its implementation.

Tesoro argued that boosting the amount of ethanol could increase greenhouse gas emissions at a time when California is trying to cut them. Some studies have suggested the process of making ethanol from corn produces more greenhouse gas emissions than come from burning an equivalent amount of fossil fuel.

Tesoro, based in San Antonio, Texas, owns a refinery in Martinez.

Environment Department sues El Paso Electric

The Associated Press

Contra Costa Times, Wednesday, October 1, 2008

SANTA FE, N.M.—The state Environment Department has sued El Paso Electric Co. for alleged air quality violations at the utility's Rio Grande Electric Power Generating Station.

The lawsuit was filed Tuesday in state district court in Santa Fe, alleging multiple violations of New Mexico's Air Quality Control Act. The facility is located near the border between El Paso, Texas, and Sunland Park, N.M.

El Paso Electric spokeswoman Teresa Souza says the lawsuit is an old dispute about some ambiguous language in an air permit that has been clarified.

She says the plant is in compliance with the air permit.

The Environment Department claims El Paso Electric violated more than 350 of the maximum emission rates for oxides of nitrogen, carbon monoxide and sulfur dioxide and failed to report deviations from the maximum emission rates.

MID OKs \$35.9M plan to turn gas into power

By Bee Staff Reports
Modesto Bee, Wednesday, October 1, 2008

A company based in Finland will get an estimated \$35.9 million to build six engines that will generate electricity from natural gas for the Modesto Irrigation District.

The MID board voted unanimously Tuesday for the contract with Wärtsilä Corp. The engines are scheduled to be installed by early 2011 at a location yet to be chosen.

The engines will provide 49.6 of the 70 additional megawatts needed to meet peak demand by that year, the district staff said. A megawatt supplies about 300 homes in summer and 1,000 in winter.

The project is expected to cost about \$70 million, including design, construction at the plant site, and purchase of credits to offset the engines' emissions.

MID plans to arrange financing in the first half of next year. The exact cost of the engines will depend on currency exchange rates at the time the money changes hands.

The site options are still being studied. They include land next to MID's gas-fueled plants on Woodland Avenue in Modesto and on South Stockton Avenue in Ripon.

The design -- six engines operating separately -- will allow the district to add power to the grid in 8-megawatt increments. This will allow better matching of supply to demand than with MID's current, larger engines, the staff said.

Good for you, better for the Earth **Chef turned author looks to take bite out of global warming**

By Elizabeth McMunn-Tetangco
Merced Sun-Star, Wednesday, October 1, 2008

Imagine biting into a piece of cheese.

Feel the soft surrender of its heft against your teeth as your mouth fills with the creamy flavor.

Instead of swallowing right away, absorb the cheese like a fine wine as you picture how it got to your mouth.

Did the milk to make it come from a cow? A goat? When was the milk collected, and how was it nurtured into cheese? Did it travel to you from Europe? From Hilmar? From somewhere else? What was the cost of the cheese in terms of human and animal production, fuel, and carbon output?

Laura Stec, co-author with Dr. Eugene Cordero of "Cool Cuisine: Taking the Bite Out of Global Warming," due out today, was struck by these issues and more when she heard an NPR broadcast about global warming and food production.

"I had to stay in the driveway and listen in the car," she said -- the issues involved were that riveting. The unhealthy relationship with food shared by many Americans has to do with emotions, social systems, and the food system as a whole -- and better-quality food is, categorically, better for the eater. "As you deepen your relationship with food, it feeds more than your stomach," Stec said, "it feeds hearts and health and gives people a deeper sense of satisfaction in their food."

Stec is a Bay Area chef who runs her own personal chef/catering business, Laura Stec -- Innovative Cuisine, and serves as a culinary health educator for Kaiser Permanente Medical Group. She teaches cooking classes and lectures publicly about eating well and regionally responsibly. While she takes her job and the environment seriously, her sense of humor shines throughout her work. One of her lectures, for instance, is called "I Hate Cooking -- Now What?" Having been involved in food and the environmental movement since the 1980s, Stec sees her "heart song" as the use of food to make changes in peoples' lives.

When two-thirds of the people who make up a country's population are overweight, there's clearly a problem with the way they're eating. And when that same country has a food system that is built around efficiency rather than health and flavor, it's a pretty safe bet that we've identified part of the problem. It takes 500 gallons of oil per person to run the U.S. food system, and, according to Stec, this food system is not about pleasing the eater -- it's about doing things quickly and conveniently, creating an American diet that contributes to global warming. Stec calls it the Global Warming Diet. "No one likes diets," said Stec, "they're unappetizing and unappealing ... and that's how we're eating."

Everyone has to eat. With this information and her credo that "if it ain't fun, it don't get done," Stec and her co-author Cordero sought to find a way to show people that eating well not only tastes better, but is better for the world around us -- without guilt-tripping or depressing them. "We're coming from a position of pleasure," Stec said. "Eating a Cool Cuisine helps people serve themselves as much as they serve the environment."

A "Cool Cuisine" is one that actually fights against global warming -- thus the "Cool" of its title. "It's about looking at solutions," Stec said. Armed with a UC Davis study of the largest contributors to the Global Warming Diet, Stec and Cordero go through them one by one, proposing small changes everyday people can make that will help alleviate the problem. One issue, for instance, is the number of miles foods often travel before they arrive on our plates, incurring fuel and oil costs along the way. Stec and Cordero's solution to this issue is to buy things that are "shelf-stable," and to buy fresh products from a local source rather than having them sent from overseas. Additionally, [they advocate reducing the number of miles spent in the car by making one trip to cover several errands, or by riding bikes and walking instead of driving altogether.](#)

Stec believes in what she calls "high-vibe foods," meaning "foods grown with hands of loving grace, good air and good clean water." Eating these foods, she said, grants us "a strong life force from a strong, healthy way of living," and research backs her up.

Soil, for instance, has a huge impact on the quality of the food we eat. "Look at soil like making a sauce," Stec said, "putting things into the soil has hurt it -- and when you have better soil, you get better fruits and vegetables." Stec cited information from Dr. Christine Jones, an Australian scientist, who explained to her the symbiotic relationship between microbes in the soil and plant roots. When the soil is rich in minerals and microbes, plants can pull protective minerals and vitamins into their roots, meaning that when we eat the plants grown in the soil, we benefit from these healthy phytochemicals as well. Pesticide use, however, kills off these microbes, depriving the plants and the humans who eat them of these beneficial properties. "The idea is that the richer the soil, the more we can benefit from it," Stec said.

Part of the book's appeal is its positive outlook. While Stec and Cordero definitely have a message, their means of communication is more communal than heavy-handed -- and the book includes personal stories, recipes, and interviews in addition to hard scientific facts. The book's layout is full of color and charts, and it emphasizes taking change slowly. "It's important to take things step-by-step," Stec said. "People often don't make changes because they're afraid of not doing things perfectly" -- but with such small changes, it's hard to actually mess up. And luckily, the small changes Stec and Cordero suggest are actually more fun than the alternatives. Bringing your own bags to the store, for instance, cuts down on lots of waste and eliminates clutter in the home, and buying seasonal produce raised in your own country not only helps the environment -- it also tastes a lot better.

Really, it's all about people doing what they can to nourish themselves and their families today and in the future, thus ensuring a brighter tomorrow for everyone. As Stec said, "the most satisfying meal is prepared with love. That's what the book is about."

"Cool Cuisine: Taking the Bite Out of Global Warming," by Laura Stec and Dr. Eugene Cordero arrives in bookstores today (\$24.99). It will be sold at Barnes & Noble or through www.keplers.com or www.amazon.com. More information about it can be found at www.globalwarmingdiet.org. Information about Laura Stec can be found at her Web site, www.laurastec.com.

[Fresno Bee editorial, Wed., Oct. 1, 2008:](#)

Valley air board to expand

Cities get more clout at agency now dominated by counties.

The Valley air district may soon have its full complement of board members, thanks to a bill signed by the governor Tuesday. It's a welcome change in the makeup of the regional air board, which has been dominated by supervisors from the eight counties that make up the district.

Legislation last year increased the size of the governing board from 11 to 15, but there was no mechanism for appointing the five city council members from the region that bill authorized.

Under SB 1548, authored by state Sens. Dean Florez, D-Shafter, and Mike Machado, D-Linden, city councils throughout the district will appoint a member to a selection committee, which in turn will choose two council members from large cities -- those with a population greater than 100,000 -- and three council members from smaller cities in the district.

They will be joined by two new members appointed by the governor -- a doctor (already in place) and a scientist with expertise in air quality issues (still to be filled by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, an action we urge the governor take with some urgency, now that his signings and vetoes are drawing to a close).

The new lineup of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District should help redress an imbalance that has existed since the district's inception. With the board heavily weighted toward county supervisors, the cities -- large and small -- of the district have been underrepresented, despite the fact that they have the majority of the Valley's population.

Most egregiously, there have been stretches in which Fresno, Bakersfield and Stockton -- the major population centers of the Valley -- have not had their own voices on the board.

And the county supervisors, by the nature of their jobs, have often leaned toward serving the interests of business and agriculture, which aren't always in the forefront of aggressive efforts to clean the air.

The eight county supervisors on the air district board will still represent a majority, though one not quite so daunting as before. That should help make the board -- and its actions -- more representative in the future.

[L.A. Times editorial, Wed., Oct. 1, 2008:](#)

Cap-and-trade rules

A new program by California and other Western states to curb pollution will work -- if done right.

California and six other Western states are preparing to launch a dramatic campaign against global warming that will turn pollution into a commodity that can be bought and sold, and create a market for trading hot air. It's an idea that has been tested around the world and can be successful -- but only if it's done right. As the state unveils further details Friday about how the program will be structured, there are two principles that planners should keep at the top of their minds.

The first has to do with the way carbon credits are allocated. Under a cap-and-trade program like the one California is developing, a cap is placed on the amount of greenhouse gases that can be emitted from sources such as power plants, refineries and factories, with the cap steadily dropping over time. Polluters, meanwhile, get emission allowances, or carbon credits, that they can trade with one another -- it might cost, for example, \$10 to buy the right to emit a ton of carbon dioxide. The question is: How should these carbon credits be distributed initially; should they be given away or auctioned off to the highest bidder?

The clear answer is that they must all be auctioned. In Europe, where a cap-and-trade program was launched in 2005, giving the credits away proved a disastrous mistake. For one thing, a giveaway produces unfair distribution schemes in which the companies with the most powerful lobbyists get the most credits. For another, it tends to result in windfall profits for corporations at

the expense of consumers. Companies use the program as an excuse to raise prices even when it has no effect on their expenses. Auctioning is a fair way of setting a price for pollution. Moreover, the government can use the proceeds from the auction to lessen the pain for consumers. Energy bills for low-income residents might be subsidized, or more public transit could be built to make up for higher gas prices.

The second principle has to do with offsets. In many cap-and-trade schemes, polluters get credit not for cleaning up their own mess but for reducing pollution somewhere else. Instead of shutting down a coal-fired power plant in California, a utility might invest in a solar power plant in the Mexican desert, for example. Offsets pose a host of problems. There's no way to know whether that Mexican solar plant would have been built even without the utility's contribution, nor is it easy to tell whether the amount of carbon saved by that project makes up for the amount emitted by the California plant. Offsets also tend to discourage innovation -- rather than invest in new technology at home, the utility is simply buying existing technology in Mexico -- and they reduce the clean-air benefits to the state. The fewer and more restrictive the offsets allowed by California, the better.

Lobbyists for utilities, oil companies and other polluters are working feverishly behind the scenes to maximize free carbon credits and offsets. If they succeed, California's fight against global warming will be less effective and more expensive for consumers. State air regulators and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger must make sure that doesn't happen.

[Washington Post Editorial Wed., Oct. 1, 2008](#)

Drill, Maybe Drill

Don't expect much to happen for a while.

AT MIDNIGHT last night, the chanters of "drill, baby, drill" got their wish. The congressional ban on offshore drilling for oil expired after it was not included in the continuing resolution that will keep the federal government funded until March. This is a triumph for President Bush, who rescinded an executive order prohibiting exploration of the outer continental shelf (OCS) in July and who then used consumer anger over high gasoline prices to erode resistance by the Democratic leadership on Capitol Hill to lifting the 25-year-old congressional moratorium on such exploration. But the victory will not have the impact Mr. Bush implied.

Turning up the pressure on Democrats, the president and other Republicans suggested that opening coastal waters to oil drilling would lead to an immediate decline in prices at the pump. The reality is that it will be at least two years before an oil lease in a newly opened area (such as off the coast of Virginia, as could happen in 2010) is awarded and at least several more years, if not a decade, before crude makes its way from deepwater wells to your gas tank. That's because there are a number of necessary requirements that will take time to meet. The OCS Lands Act requires a five-year plan from the Interior Department that determines where and when lease sales will take place. The department is amending the current plan, which requires public comment. And there are environmental reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act and the Coastal Zone Management Act, which gives states the right to review federal actions that would affect land and water in their coastal areas.

The next president will be tasked with defining the new era in offshore drilling. To varying degrees, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.) both back offshore drilling. The Democratic majority in Congress is optimistic that an Obama victory and expected increased majorities in both the House and the Senate will lead to a reinstatement of the moratorium. House Appropriations Committee Chairman David R. Obey (D-Wis.) said last week, "At least temporarily, the moratorium is lifted." But some lasting drilling authority is needed.

Linking offshore drilling with high gasoline prices was baldly political. But it sparked a much-needed debate in this country about energy independence and how to achieve it. We need alternative sources of energy to help cure our addiction to imported oil and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. More important, in a world of skyrocketing demand for energy, it is becoming untenable for the United States to consume 20 percent of the world's oil -- including from places where environmental concerns are equally relevant -- while doing nothing to explore its own shores for resources.