

Aerial attack on Delta mosquitoes begins

The Associated Press

Tri-Valley Herald Tues., July 15, 2008

STOCKTON, Calif.—Mosquito populations are on the rise due to a heat wave last week that blasted the Central Valley.

San Joaquin County vector control officials began their first aerial spraying campaign this year to halt the spread of West Nile virus in the islands of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Mosquitoes, which can carry the virus, reproduce rapidly in hot weather.

Spraying takes place at sunset or sunrise when mosquitoes are most active.

One in five people bitten by an infected mosquito will develop West Nile's flu-like symptoms. In rare cases, it is fatal in humans.

Last year, 21 people died of West Nile statewide, including an 86-year-old man in San Joaquin County, where 10 of 380 cases were reported.

The neighboring Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District was forced to delay aerial spraying until Wednesday because of air quality concerns with the wildfires.

San Joaquin County adds itself to green-conscious list

By Zachary K. Johnson, Record Staff Writer

Stockton Record Wed., July 16, 2008

STOCKTON - San Joaquin County joined the cool crowd Tuesday morning when the Board of Supervisors signed onto a "Cool Counties" declaration to tackle climate change by reducing local emissions of so-called greenhouse gases.

Initiated by the National Association of Counties last year, the U.S. Cool Counties Climate Stabilization Declaration calls on counties to reduce emissions by 80 percent by 2050.

The board needs to take a responsible position to do what it can to ensure the future for generations to come, Supervisor Victor Mow said. "I think this is moving in the right direction."

County support passed with a 4-0 vote. Supervisor Steve Gutierrez was not present. With the vote, the county also joined an organization of other green-conscious counties and cities, including Stockton. Joining the Local Governments for Sustainability - better known by its former acronym ICLEI - was a necessary step in determining the size of the county's carbon footprint, according to staff.

Supervisors discussed becoming a Cool County in December and told staff to begin assessing how county operations contribute to greenhouse gases influencing global climate change, according to a staff report.

But the assessment hit a snag. It would be nearly impossible for the county to do the job without software available through ICLEI, said Senior Deputy County Administrator Chris Rose. And by signing on with the group, the county won't have to "re-create the wheel," he said.

The county already has made environmentally conscious changes and decisions, from changing to more energy-efficient light bulbs to replacing gas-burning vehicles with gas-electric hybrids to erecting buildings with high environmental standards, he said. In February, the county adopted a green-purchasing policy.

The county can further make an impact by trapping methane gas at landfills and by planning for more walking-friendly communities when it updates its General Plan, he said.

Once the county gets the software, it will be another six months before the county will be able to calculate an emissions baseline, which will be used as a starting point to set future goals, he said.

Stockton has been a Cool City since it became part of the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement and has since joined ICLEI.

Staff at the city and county have been talking in the lead-up to the county signing onto its declaration, and the two agencies can collaborate in the future on green issues, said Stockton Deputy City Manager Christine Tien. "It's got to be a regional effort."

Stockton is calculating the carbon footprint of city facilities, and the results are expected to be ready either this month or next, she said. Calculation for the entire city is next, she said.

Another driving force for the county, Stockton and other cities in the state in adopting green practices is the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, which calls on the state to reduce greenhouse emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

"It's extremely important for local governments to have a standard reporting protocol," said Annie Strickland, a +spokeswoman for ICLEI. And members can learn from the organization as well as fellow members, she said.

Nearly 1,000 cities and counties in the United States have become members, and the roll grows by three or more every week, she said.

Approval of \$30 port container fee likely

By Joe Stevens, Staff Writer

LA Daily Times Wednesday, July 16, 2008

The California State Assembly approved Sen. Alan Lowenthal's long-delayed, revenue-generating port bill on Tuesday that is expected to reach the governor for approval.

The Ports Investment Bill, SB 974, calls for a \$30 fee per cargo container to combat pollution and congestion. It was approved with a 45-23 vote and will go to the Senate for an expected concurrence.

It will then be sent to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger for his possible signature.

Lowenthal has been working on variations of the bill for more than four years and says he is "extremely optimistic" Schwarzenegger will sign it.

"It's a major step forward," Lowenthal said. "It's not over yet. When the governor signs it, then we'll celebrate. We never celebrate until it's over."

Two versions of the bill have failed, with Schwarzenegger vetoing one of them in 2006. Then last year, Schwarzenegger told Lowenthal not to bring the bill to a vote because he wanted to make sure retailers had a chance to offer alternatives before it went through the assembly.

One major change in the bill is that it includes the Port of Oakland.

The bill places a \$30 fee on shipping containers that come through the Ports of Long Beach, Los Angeles and Oakland. With 16 million containers expected to be affected, that would generate \$480 million in revenue.

Half of those funds would be spent to reduce pollution, and half would be spent to alleviate congestion and improve safety for rail systems connected to the ports.

Lowenthal and proponents of the bill see it as a major benefit for the environment. In addition, Lowenthal has worked with the governor in an effort to push through a bill that answers his concerns.

"This is a bill whose time has come," said Martin Schlageter, campaign director for the Coalition for Clean Air. "It's highly popular, broadly supported and fair. If it's approved, it will save lives. The governor can support that or veto it with no alternatives to it."

Schwarzenegger reportedly has already indicated to insiders that he will sign the bill. But he did not say that on Tuesday, and his office released this statement:

"While the governor has not taken an official position on the bill, we do support finding a solution to ensure California's air quality is protected while facilitating the movement of goods throughout the state."

If the state Senate is forced to reconvene during its recess to deal with the state budget, it is expected to concur on the bill and pass it to Schwarzenegger sometime from Monday through Aug. 4. If the state Senate does not reconvene during recess, it is expected to be passed to him on Aug. 4.

"We met with the retailers many, many times," Lowenthal said. "They were doing business as usual, saying things like, 'Why don't you have the truckers pay?' They didn't have any viable solutions."

Retailers and many supporters of private business interests are opposed to the bill. The main argument against the bill is that it could raise costs to consumers and prompt shippers to take their business to East Coast ports.

Steven Ly, vice president for public policy with the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce, says the bill is unnecessary because the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles already have measures in place to regulate themselves with pollution.

"It's not just bad for business," Ly said. "It's redundant. We've heard the governor has indicated he's willing to sign the bill, which worries us deeply."

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California port fee would fight pollution, congestion

Legislators vote for a \$60 charge on shipping containers going through Los Angeles, Long Beach and Oakland. The measure would raise at least \$400 million annually.

By Nancy Vogel, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer
L.A. Times, Wed., July 16, 2008

SACRAMENTO -- Saying California children shouldn't breathe soot so people across the country can buy cheap televisions, legislators voted Tuesday to impose a fee on every container moving through the ports of Long Beach, Los Angeles and Oakland.

The money -- at least \$400 million a year -- would be used to ease the traffic congestion and air pollution generated by the ports, which handle more than 40% of the nation's goods. Similar bills were vetoed or failed in the last two years, but this measure's author, Sen. Alan Lowenthal (D-Long Beach), said he was optimistic that his legislation would be signed into law soon.

"We have built a statewide coalition to support the container fee," he said.

SB 974 would impose on shippers a fee of \$60 for every typical-size cargo container leaving or entering the ports. The money would be used across Southern California and in the Bay Area for such projects as installing cleaner-burning truck and train engines and building roadways under or over railroad tracks to avoid long lines of idling vehicles.

The Assembly voted 45 to 24 to pass Lowenthal's bill. The Senate, which passed the legislation earlier, is expected to give final approval to amendments soon. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has offered no official position on the bill but said through spokeswoman Rachel Cameron that "we do support finding a solution to ensure California's air quality is protected while facilitating the movement of goods throughout the state."

Democrats praised the measure as a smart way to try to mitigate the foul air and clogged roads that are a byproduct of the ports' immense economic activity.

Assemblyman Hector De La Torre (D-South Gate) estimated the total value of goods shipped through the Long Beach and Los Angeles ports at \$378 billion and the total that would be generated by the fee at \$500 million a year.

"So you're going to add on 0.13% to somebody's cheap TV in Peoria, Ill. Big deal," he said.

Assemblywoman Betty Karnette (D-Long Beach) said that people are dying of pollution in her district and that shippers bringing in cheap imports from China and elsewhere should pay.

"Who is profiting? I don't think it's our workers profiting from all these imports," she said. "Other countries are profiting at our expense."

A few other California cities, including Stockton and San Diego, have ports, but most cargo containers are unloaded in Los Angeles, Long Beach and Oakland.

The fee in Lowenthal's legislation is \$30 per 20-foot-equivalent cargo containers. Most containers are 40 feet long. The fee would take effect in January.

Republicans predicted that the measure would push up the prices of many products and drive business to other ports, such as Seattle's.

"We can't be competitive, folks," said Assemblyman Rick Keene (R-Chico), "if we continue to tax the economic engine of the state."

Only one Republican member of the Assembly -- Bob Huff of Diamond Bar -- voted for the measure.

Huff said portions of eight freeways, all of them clogged with trucks hauling cargo, go through his district.

"This is huge," he said. "If we don't fund [congestion improvements] through this, what do we fund it through?"

Lowenthal said the amended bill approved Tuesday by the Assembly addresses concerns that led Schwarzenegger to veto a similar measure in 2006 and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa to withhold his support last year. In June 2007, the Senate approved the bill, but Lowenthal held it in abeyance after the governor said he wanted the concerns of Villaraigosa, environmentalists and the retail and shipping industries to be addressed.

The senator said he worked hard with opponents, who didn't propose a better plan. He also said the bill was amended to include a list of specific projects -- such as separating vehicles from trains at the Colton crossing in San Bernardino County -- to address concerns by retailers that the money would just disappear into the state general fund. "We dealt with all of the governor's issues," said Lowenthal. "We are optimistic."

Villaraigosa had withheld his support over the way the money would be disbursed, saying he wanted some to be spent replacing two bridges on Terminal Island.

The mayor supported the bill after Lowenthal agreed to have spending overseen by a joint powers authority that would include a mayoral appointee.

The fee pending in the Legislature would come on top of those recently approved by the ports of Long Beach and L.A. to pay for infrastructure improvements within port territory and the retrofitting of diesel truck engines.

The Lowenthal bill had strong support from environmental groups, which were buoyed by the Assembly approval.

"This will be the most significant investment in air quality around our ports that we have ever had," said Martin Schlageter of the Coalition for Clean Air.

Elina Green, project manager for the Long Beach Alliance for Children With Asthma, said that about one in eight children in the city have been diagnosed with asthma and that port pollution contributes to that high rate. Lowenthal's bill, she said, "is one of the things we've been supporting for a long time. All of the mitigation measures we ask for -- even if folks are supportive, it always comes down to money."

The lengthy list of opponents to the measure includes commodity growers, such as cotton and almond farmers; clothing store chains; electronics manufacturers; and the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii.

Chamber President Jim Tollefson estimated that 90% of the goods in Hawaii are shipped from the West Coast, most from Long Beach and L.A.

"The cost will be borne by the shipping company," said Tollefson, "and then it will be passed on to the ultimate consumer -- in this case, the people of Hawaii. In simple terms, it's about \$50 a year for every man, woman and child."

Port container fee passes Calif. assembly

In the S.F. Chronicle and other papers, Wednesday, July 16, 2008

Sacramento, CA (AP) --California could earn an estimated \$400 million or more annually under a bill passed by the state Assembly that would impose a fee on containers moving through the ports of Long Beach, Los Angeles and Oakland.

The funds would be used in Southern California and the San Francisco Bay area on various projects that reduce air pollution and traffic congestion generated by the ports. Combined, the ports handle more than 40 percent of the nation's cargo.

The Assembly voted 45-24 Tuesday to pass the bill. If the Senate reconvenes during its recess because of budgeting, it is expected to concur on the bill and pass it to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. If the Senate does not reconvene during recess, the bill is expected reach him on Aug. 4.

Similar measures were vetoed or failed in the past two years.

This year's version, sponsored by Sen. Alan Lowenthal (D-Long Beach), would impose a \$60 fee on every typical-sized cargo container leaving or entering the ports. He said the amended bill addresses concerns that led to Schwarzenegger's veto in 2006 and Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa withholding his support last year.

"We have built a statewide coalition to support the container fee," Lowenthal said.

Assemblywoman Betty Karnette (D-Long Beach) said people in her district are dying from pollution.

"Who is profiting? I don't think it's our workers profiting from all these imports," she said. "Other countries are profiting at our expense."

Republicans said the measure would increase prices of goods and could drive business elsewhere, like Seattle's port.

"We can't be competitive, folks," said Assemblyman Rick Keene (R-Chico), "if we continue to tax the economic engine of the state."

Steven Ly of the Long Beach Chamber of Commerce says the bill is unnecessary because the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles already have pollution measures in place.

"It's not just bad for business," Ly said. "It's redundant...We've heard the governor has indicated he's willing to sign the bill, which worries us deeply."

Arkansans paid \$126,000 in carbon credits

USA TODAY, Wednesday, July 16, 2008

LITTLE ROCK (AP) — Some Arkansas landowners have discovered that money can grow on trees.

Earl Smith of Little Rock enrolled 158 acres of loblolly pines in Izard County with a carbon-credit broker and was among the first group of forest landowners in the state to be paid for removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Ken Wiesner of North Little Rock enrolled 226 acres of loblolly pines in Saline County and Garland County, although he was dubious that would pay off.

"I was skeptical until we opened up the envelope with a check in it," Wiesner says.

The Chicago-based Delta Institute, a not-for-profit broker for the Chicago Climate Exchange, has paid 18 landowners in the state a total of \$126,000.

The exchange was established in 2003, as an experimental program to reduce greenhouse gases emitted by companies in the course of doing business. Carbon dioxide that is sequestered, or withdrawn, from the atmosphere by trees during photosynthesis can offset carbon dioxide emitted by fossil-fuel burning plants, such as coal-fired power plants.

Hundreds of companies have joined the exchange — some voluntarily, others in accordance with the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. U.S. companies also expect the federal government will soon regulate emissions.

If the member companies fail to reach their targets, they can buy carbon credits on the exchange to make up the difference.

Smith says his trees can sequester about 2.2 metric tons of carbon dioxide per acre annually, based upon their species, growing region, age and planting density. The Delta Institute, which aggregated Smith's acreage with a number of similar carbon credits, sold the entire pool on the Chicago Climate Exchange in May at a price of \$6.99 per metric ton.

Bill Schleizer, an associate with the Delta Institute, says the first payments represented up to five years' worth of carbon-dioxide sequestration. Future payments are ensured through 2010, when the exchange is scheduled to expire. Schleizer says the future of the exchange depends on what happens with federal regulations.

The first mandatory U.S. carbon cap-and-trade program, an effort by 10 Northeastern states to reduce power-plant emissions, is to begin next year.

Like Smith and Wiesner, Ken Allen of Plain Dealing, La., had doubts about whether he would earn anything by enrolling his 350 acres of loblolly pines in Lafayette County in the program.

"We were very skeptical, but we went through the Delta Institute and they made things so simple," he said. "We manage the land for wildlife and timber, and this little bit of income helps both areas."

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**[Letter to the Fresno Bee, Wed., July 16, 2008:](#)
We need a balance between freedom and safety**

I am writing in response to "Sky is falling" (letter July 10). Kenneth Farr argues for his personal freedom to use fireplaces and cook on his own (charcoal) barbecue, among other things. He writes against suggestion of a "ban" of fireworks this July 4th.

Ironically, his letter was printed on one of our very worst air days. We have had fires burning in our state for three weeks now. Children at day care centers have been confined indoors for much of the last two weeks.

"Bad air day" is part of my 4-year-old's vocabulary.

Our air quality is in a very bad state. We must take the situation seriously. Charcoal barbecues and wood-burning fireplaces do pollute our environment. Suggestions or even laws to protect our environment are sensible.

Our governor strongly advocated for no fireworks this Fourth of July, a well-founded request. Given the state of the air in the entire state of California, I would have supported a fireworks ban for this July 4th only. I worry for my child and the environment we are leaving here. Personal freedoms need to be balanced with public safety.

Wendy Wood, Fresno

[Merced Sun-Star, Editorial, Wednesday, July 16, 2008:](#)

Our View: Is clean air worth \$23?

'Mobile sources' are by far the largest contributors to the Valley's foul air.

Valley drivers would pay a little more to operate their vehicles if a bill now in the Legislature is passed and signed. That's a bitter pill to swallow in a time when gasoline costs \$4.50 a gallon and is headed higher. But it's a necessary expense if we are to address the Valley's poor air quality.

Assembly Bill 2522 would authorize the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District to increase its annual surcharge on vehicle licensing fees to a maximum of \$30. It's now at \$7. The district would be free to raise the fees incrementally, a little at a time, or move all at once to the \$30 maximum.

The money would be used to pay for programs to improve air quality in the Valley, for years one of the worst air basins in the country.

Much of the money raised by the surcharge would be used to retrofit or replace older diesel engines in use in the eight-county air district. Some of it could be used to get "gross polluters," the oldest and dirtiest cars and trucks, off the roads altogether.

So-called "mobile sources" -- cars and trucks, mostly -- are by far the largest contributors to the Valley's foul air. And diesel engines, which spew tons of particulate matter into the air each day, are the single biggest culprit.

We're responsible for our bad air. It's our cars and trucks that are polluting Valley skies. That makes a fee on each vehicle an eminently fair way to help pay for cleaning up our air.

AB 2522, sponsored by Asemblyman Juan Arambula, D-Fresno, would help us reach compliance with state and federal air-quality standards. Moreover, cleaner air will save lives and millions of dollars.

It costs us all more than \$3 billion a year in added health costs due to bad air. Thousands suffer from asthma and other conditions that are caused or exacerbated by dirty air, and hundreds die prematurely each year.

An extra \$23 a year doesn't seem like too high a price to pay to address those frightening numbers.

The measure has attracted a wide range of supporters, including many from both the agricultural industry and environmental advocates, two groups that are not accustomed to being on the same side.

Ag interests have argued that many, if not most, of the measures taken so far to clean up the air have fallen principally on the backs of farmers and related businesses. Their complaint is valid. Most of the initial legislative efforts were aimed at agriculture.

But spreading the burden of paying for cleaner air has always been a goal of clean-air advocates. No part of the economy or the community is blameless when it comes to our bad air, and no part should be excused from bearing a share of the cost. AB 2522 is an equitable approach to sharing the pain.

[Tracy Press Editorial Tues., July 15, 2008](#)

Our Voice

By Press Editorial Board

Tracy Press Tuesday, July 15, 2008

News of the sweltering heat was grim last week in Northern California: At least three people died in their overheated homes, and a 42-year-old farmworker died after loading grapes in Kern County.

High atmospheric pressure combined with hot wind and long days of sunshine led Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to enact the state's emergency plan and call for doctors and veterinarians to warn about taking precautions against heat stroke. Alerts also went out about air quality, rated as unhealthy, as smoke from coastal and northern wildfires filled the valley skies.

Two years ago, 160 people died in California during a July heat wave. But the death toll from annual hot spells has dropped ever since the state enacted a new emergency plan in 2007 that created cooling centers and set up call centers to give out information about dealing with the heat.

Here in Tracy, when the temperature reached 105, the city turned Lolly Hansen Senior Center into a cooling center for three days and nights last week. Firefighters checked on the people at the cooling center. Police officers took the temperature from inside a closed patrol car on a 106-degree day and found it to be 182 degrees. Then they sent out notices about the dangers of leaving children or pets in cars that can turn into ovens in the summer sun.

Also last week, a downtown business opened as a cooling center for people with pets but no air conditioning. The shop set up a play area for animals, played movies for their owners and served cold water and tea from another downtown store.

And, of course, there were pools for splashing. The two high school pools and the Joe Wilson Community Pool, at 900 W. Lowell Ave., are open to the public.

Triple digits will likely be back in the coming month. We applaud the cooling efforts of the city and state — and especially the businesses, churches, relatives, friends and neighbors who keep an eye out for anyone who might be suffering in the heat.

Protect yourself from the heat

- First, recognize symptoms of heat-related illnesses. Excessive sweating or suddenly stopping sweating, poor concentration, muscle pain and dizziness are all signs of heat stress.
- Get out of the sun and find a cool resting place. Drink cool, fresh water throughout the day, at least four 8-ounce glasses per hour.
- Know your rights on the job. Workers are entitled access to fresh, cool drinking water and shade throughout the day.

[Visalia Times-Delta and Tulare Advance-Register, Wednesday, July 16, 2008:](#)

Oppose race track for air pollution concerns

I read that Visalia had become a Healthy Air Living partner during Healthy Air Living Week, July 7-13. The San Joaquin Valley Air Control designated the week to improve the health and quality of life for Valley residents and reach health-based clean-air standards.

The City of Tulare, on the other hand, is pushing to build a race track and drag strip, just a few hundred yards from Sunrise Estates and very close to many other resident subdivisions and dairies. The Motorsports Complex, if it goes as planned, will bring many thousands of cars to our area, which suffers with poor air quality most of the year. Just look out your window, smoke and pollution from fires burning all over the state are pouring into our Valley, resulting in dangerous levels of pollutants.

California suffers from a fire season every year, unfortunately that season is starting earlier, lasting longer and getting worse in recent years.

The Visalia-Porterville area cities rank 3rd in the nation in ozone pollution. Tulare County ranks 5th in the nation for long-term particle pollution. Our Valley geography allows pollutants of all kinds to settle in and stay for long periods of time.

I urge citizens against this project to stand up and be heard and those in favor to look around and think twice about adding more pollution to our lungs and those of our children. We all need to be

responsible for our environment and quality of life. We have no control over the pollution from fires but we certainly have control over what we build.

PAT PHILLIPS, Tulare

[Fresno Bee commentary, Wed., July 16, 2008:](#)

JUSTIN DANHOF: Why cap and trade could backfire

Environmentalists claim that capping greenhouse-gas emissions and creating a market for emissions trading - a policy prescription called "cap-and-trade" - would reduce carbon dioxide output and with it the risk of global warming.

But it could achieve the opposite.

Here's how: By turning carbon emissions into commodities that can be bought and sold, cap-and-trade policies could remove the stigma from producing such emissions.

In the late 1990s, Israeli researchers Uri Gneezy and Aldo Rustichini performed an experiment that provides a useful model. They chose six random day-care centers in Haifa at which parents sometimes arrived late to pick up their children. Intending to reduce the frequency of tardiness, the two imposed a fine on late parents. Gneezy and Rustichini explain that, typically, "when negative consequences are imposed on a behavior, they will produce a reduction of that particular response." But the experiment did not produce the anticipated results. Instead, the incidence of late arrivals increased.

In fact, the percentage of parents who were late more than doubled.

Prior to the imposition of the fine, parents - recognizing it is wrong to make a teacher stay past normal hours with their children - experienced feelings of guilt and shame when they were late. In other words, some parents were motivated to arrive on time by the stigma attached to arriving late. Imposing the fine reduced the stigma. The fine created a good, and a market where none previously existed. Parents were no longer "arriving late," but rather, purchasing extra child-care hours.

A similar situation could occur under a cap-and-trade regime. Under cap-and-trade rules, the government places an artificial cap on the amount of carbon each regulated facility may emit. Facilities producing more carbon than they are allowed are required to purchase additional credits to make up the difference. The opportunity to purchase these credits creates a market where none previously existed.

As in the example of the fined parents, the purchase of the right to emit greenhouse gases would likely reduce any stigma associated with doing so. Emission levels, consequently, could rise.

This phenomenon is already seen on an individual level. Al Gore says the risk of catastrophic global warming is so great that Americans should act immediately to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions. Yet his home uses 20 times more energy than the average American home, according to the Tennessee Center for Policy Research. That's OK, the former vice president assures us, because he purchases offsets to ensure that he lives a carbon-neutral lifestyle.

His message - albeit unintentional - is simple: Produce carbon to your heart's content; just pay a carbon broker to "neutralize" your carbon footprint and your guilt.

If Gore could not purchase offsets, would he feel more pressure to reduce his energy use? The likely answer is "yes."

Columnist Charles Krauthammer explains in Time magazine that "purchasing carbon credits is an incentive to burn even more fossil fuels, since now it is done under the illusion that it's really cost free to the atmosphere."

Perhaps that helps explain why most European nations have increased their carbon emissions since adopting the Kyoto global-warming treaty in 1997. By most accounts, the European Union's cap-and-trade system isn't working. In its first year of operation (2005-06), emissions covered by the trading scheme rose 0.8 percent. During the same time, according to the Energy Information Agency, emissions in the U.S. - which hasn't ratified the Kyoto Protocol or adopted a cap-and-trade system - dropped 1.8 percent.

Samuel Boles, a researcher at the Santa Fe Institute, has noted that "[p]olicies designed to harness self-regarding preferences to public ends may be counterproductive. These failures occur when conventional self-interest-based policies compromise the beneficial effects of intrinsic motivation and ... a desire to uphold social norms."

The social stigma of carbon emissions grows stronger each day. As this stigma grows, companies are increasing their investments into research and technologies to reduce and store carbon. If Congress removes the stigma associated with these emissions by assigning a price to them, it may not like the results.

Justin Danhof is a research associate with The National Center for Public Policy Research, a nonpartisan, nonprofit educational foundation based in Washington.

[N.Y. Times editorial, Wed., July 16, 2008:](#)

Major Setback for Clean Air

Nobody could ever seriously accuse the Bush administration of being too aggressive when it comes to enforcing the nation's environmental laws. But it was partly on those grounds that a federal court last week struck down the Clean Air Interstate Rule, a regulation aimed at reducing soot and smog and one of the few creative initiatives to emerge from the Environmental Protection Agency in the last seven years.

The decision was an unexpected triumph for a handful of utilities, including Duke Energy, which complained that the agency had overstepped its authority. It was also an enormous setback for the nation's air quality and the health of all Americans.

In practical terms, the decision will invite power plant operators across the country to stop installing new pollution-control equipment required under the E.P.A.'s rule. To ensure that doesn't happen, the administration should move quickly to fashion a new rule that can pass legal muster. If it does not, Congress must pass legislation that would accomplish the same ends.

The 2005 rule was aimed at sharply reducing power plant emissions of sulfur dioxide, which creates acid rain, and nitrogen oxides, which create smog. The government estimated that cutting those emissions could help prevent 17,000 premature deaths annually by 2015. The rule covered emissions in 28 states east of the Mississippi River. It was aimed at pollution that blows eastward from coal-fired power plants in the Midwest, threatening not only human health but the environment — in New York's case, the streams and forests of the Adirondacks.

The unanimous ruling by a three-judge panel from the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit was murky. The bottom line, though, is that the court agreed with Duke's argument that in requiring sharper pollution reductions than those called for in the 1990 Clean Air Act, the E.P.A. had essentially usurped Congress's authority.

The overwhelming majority of utilities did not challenge the rule, nor did the industry's trade association. And some legal experts believe that the court — which has rightly struck down other

administration rules that sought to weaken the Clean Air Act — erred in this instance. But the plain fact is that the rule no longer exists, and steps must be taken to replace it.

Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses the recommendation of maintaining an alert this summer for air pollution due to the impact of smoke from fires. For more information on this Spanish clip, contact Claudia Encinas at (559) 230-5851.

Recomiendan mantener alerta de contaminación por incendios todo el verano

Manuel Ocaño

Noticiero Latino

Radio Bilingüe, Tuesday, July 15, 2008

El Servicio Meteorológico recomendó mantener durante todo el verano una alerta en la región suroeste del país por la contaminación que originaron hasta mil 780 incendios en California en las últimas tres semanas.

Según un pronóstico nacional, sólo un frente frío de considerable magnitud ayudaría a limpiar el aire en la cantidad que se necesita, pero ese frente es improbable mientras dure el verano con temperaturas elevadas.

Para ahora solamente quedan 15 incendios activos, pero algunos de ellos son considerados todavía peligrosos.