

Delta offering emissions checks

By The Record

Stockton Record Wed., October 29, 2008

STOCKTON - Worried about your next Smog Check? You can learn how your car might fare at a free emissions check Saturday.

The event is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at San Joaquin Delta College parking lots near Pershing Avenue and Burke Bradley Road.

Vehicle tailpipes will be checked for emissions, and experts will conduct free under-the-hood inspections if necessary. Owners of cars that don't pass will receive a coupon for up to \$500 worth of emission-related repairs, said one of the sponsors, the nonprofit Valley Clean Air Now.

The event is also hosted by Delta College and the Advanced Transportation Technology and Energy Initiative.

Feds to challenge LA port's clean truck program

Associated Press

Modesto Bee, Tri-Valley Herald, SF Chronicle & other papers Wed., Oct. 29, 2008

LOS ANGELES—The Federal Maritime Commission voted Wednesday to seek a court order to halt portions of the clean truck program at the twin ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

The panel plans to file for an injunction in federal court in Washington, claiming the new rules governing truck emissions will reduce competition and either increase transportation costs or reduce service at the port.

The program, which began this month, retired more than 2,000 older diesel trucks from the fleet that serves the port and will phase out about 16,000 diesel cargo trucks over the next five years. Port officials have said replacing the port truck fleet will reduce truck-produced air pollution at the ports by 80 percent by 2012.

"The commission appreciates the potential environmental and public health goals" of the program, said commission press secretary Karen V. Gregory said. However, she said, removing some parts of the plan, such as the requirement for independent truckers to become employees of trucking companies, would allow the ports to reap clean air benefits without introducing anti-competitive restrictions.

The Port of Los Angeles defended its program, noting that more than 750 carriers representing more than 32,000 trucks have signed on.

"The clean trucks program has proven to be highly competitive," the port said in a statement Wednesday night. "We believe the Federal Maritime Commission fundamentally misunderstands the nature of the clean trucks program."

The American Trucking Associations, which represents 37,000 trucking companies, sought a court order to stop the plan but a federal judge denied the request and an appeals court upheld the ruling last month.

Together, the two ports handle about 40 percent of the nation's imports.

Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope defended the program and the employee requirement.

"Capitalized companies can afford to buy and maintain the clean trucks we need—individual workers cannot and that's why we need the employee requirement to sustain cleanup in the long run," Pope said.

He called the commission's vote "the Bush administration's last-ditch effort to let the nation's largest trucking lobby off the hook for the pollution they create."

Federal Maritime Commission challenges ports' clean truck program

By Ronald D. White

L.A. Times, Thursday, October 30, 2008

The Federal Maritime Commission said Wednesday that it would ask a U.S. District Court to strike down parts of a landmark pollution-control program at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, the nation's busiest international cargo complex.

Elements of the ports' clean truck program "are likely, by a reduction in competition, to produce an unreasonable increase in transportation cost or unreasonable reduction in service," the commission said in a statement.

Among the provisions to which the commission objects is the Los Angeles port's requirement that truck drivers work for approved concessionaires. Before the program began Oct. 1, port truck transportation was dominated by thousands of independent owner operators.

Long Beach still allows independent truckers to work at its port.

The commission's 2-1 vote Wednesday to ask a federal court in Washington to issue an injunction against parts of the ports' program puts the anti-pollution effort in jeopardy despite legal victories in a separate federal court battle in California brought by the American Trucking Assn.

The normally low-profile commission is perhaps one of the most powerful regulatory entities in Washington that most Americans have never heard of.

Under the federal Shipping Act of 1984, the agency has the right to intervene when it thinks unfair competitive restrictions or unduly expensive mandates have been placed on international commerce.

But the commission also made it clear Wednesday that it wasn't seeking to overturn every aspect of the plan that began this month with barring of the oldest and dirtiest trucks built before 1989. In 2012, only trucks that meet 2007 emissions standards will be allowed to enter the ports.

"The commission believes that the surgical removal of substantially anti-competitive elements of the agreement, such as the employee mandate, will permit the ports to implement on schedule those elements of the CTP that produce clean air and improve public health," the commission majority wrote.

The goal of the clean truck program is to eliminate tons of particulates and other pollution from local skies. It is a major component of the Clean Air Action Plan designed to slash overall emissions at the ports by 45% by 2012.

Officials of the twin ports hope that the pollution-control efforts will persuade environmentalists to stop throwing legal roadblocks in the way of expansion projects.

Supporters of the clean truck program reacted angrily to the maritime commission's decision.

"The commission is siding with a filthy industry and blocking the path to clean air and public health," said Peter Lehner, executive director of the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Carl Pope, executive director of the Sierra Club, said, "Two commissioners in Washington, D.C., should not make a decision behind closed doors to ruin clean air for all Southern Californians."

Geraldine Knatz, executive director of the Port of Los Angeles, said port officials were "confident that the federal court in the District of Columbia will reject the Federal Maritime Commission's attempt to block the clean truck program and allow the most ambitious air pollution cleanup initiative in the nation to continue to take dirty diesel trucks off the road and remove harmful emissions from our air."

Long Beach port spokesman Art Wong said he couldn't comment on the maritime commission's move until he saw what the agency filed in court.

"We're just not sure how this will affect us," Wong said.

At least one community activist wasn't optimistic that the cleaner trucks would reduce pollution in the long run because independent owner operators would have trouble making enough money to maintain their vehicles properly.

"That might work for a few years, but then we would be right back where we started," said Kathleen Woodfield, vice president of the San Pedro and Peninsula Homeowners Coalition.

[Bakersfield Californian Editorial Wednesday, Oct 29 2008](#)

Infant health study timely

Massive health study will give insight into the quality of care and quality of life of Kern County's children.

It's appropriate that Cal State Bakersfield has been chosen to take part in a national \$3.2 billion study designed to pinpoint the factors influencing children's health and their health care.

Kern County, the area primarily served by CSUB, is plagued by an array of negative influences on children's health, from the relative lack of health insurance and dental care to the failure of asthmatic children to receive timely emergency treatment.

Infant mortality rates continue to be unacceptably high. Kern County's 2004 rate was 7.1 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, even worse than the 2004 national rate of 6.78. (Kern County had a 6.46 average rate over a seven-year period ending in 2006.)

And U.S. infant mortality rates are practically Third-World: We're ranked 29th in the world, based on data from 2004, the last year for which comparative figures are available. That ties the U.S. with Poland and Slovakia, well behind Scandinavian and East Asian nations, which report rates below 3.5.

Shocking data like that reinforces the importance of this study.

CSUB will receive \$10.4 million from the five-year grant, the largest in school history. It represents a feather in the cap for the local university. But vastly more important, the study promises to give child advocates, both related and unrelated to the project, their best opportunity yet to follow Kern County's population.

The study will look at conditions like autism, asthma, pre-term birth, obesity and diabetes -- all issues in a county plagued by poverty and air-quality issues, two of the most significant indicators of potential problems affecting children's health.

"This should be of interest to everybody because it's focused on the effects of environment and genetics," said Peggy Leapley, the CSUB professor emeritus of nursing who is coordinating the local effort. "We've always had questions about pesticides and air quality as they pertain to our health. We'll get a snapshot of 1,000 children here in Kern County. This will help us answer some of the really important questions about the place we live."

The local effort is part of the National Children's Study, the largest such undertaking in U.S. history, coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Environmental Protection Agency. Researchers will follow 100,000 children nationwide from before birth to age 21.

Kern County is one of 105 locations nationwide to be chosen randomly and one of nine in California. Local researchers hope to follow 1,000 women who are pregnant or likely to become pregnant.

[Tri-Valley Herald Commentary Wed. Oct. 29, 2008](#)

Don't forget conservation

By Tapan Munroe

Although the economic and financial meltdown is foremost in our minds we should not forget the crucial importance of America's energy independence. We spend hundreds of billions of dollars a year for importing oil from some of the most dangerous and unstable parts of the world. This is a huge tax on Americans. Our energy dependence has adverse geopolitical, economic, national security, and environmental implications for us.

The presidential candidates consider energy independence and the shaping of our energy future to be of very high importance. The list of strategies proposed include the development of renewable energy sources (solar, wind, biomass), offshore drilling, construction of nuclear power plants, higher fuel efficiency for automobiles and trucks, and cap-and-trade system to reduce carbon emission to combat climate change. There are obvious differences in the details of strategies of the two candidates and the reader can find out more about them from the candidate's Web sites.

My concern is that we are not paying enough attention to energy efficiency as a strategy for shaping our energy future. It is the most cost-effective way of reducing our dependency on foreign oil as well as improving our environment while mitigating climate change. Energy efficiency is undoubtedly the low hanging fruit among the many options available to us in our energy options.

There is no better way for me to illustrate the enormous benefits of energy efficiency than by considering the exemplary case of California. This state in the last three decades has made enormous strides in reducing its electricity demand via energy efficiency policies. As a result, per-person electricity consumption in the state today is 40 percent less than the national average. The strategies implemented in the state via regulatory bodies include electricity efficiency standards for utilities, buildings, and appliances. As far as fuels such as natural gas and oil are concerned, utilities and buildings and the transportation sector have been important considerations.

Energy efficiency strategies not only save energy but also create significant number of jobs. In a recent path breaking study David Roland-Hoist of UC Berkeley (Energy Efficiency, Innovation,

and Job Creation in California, dwrh@are.berkeley.edu, October 2008) concludes that energy efficiency measures have resulted in household savings of \$56 billion in the 1972-2006 period. Furthermore, Californians have redirected their energy savings to the purchase of other goods and services creating nearly 1.5 million new jobs with a total payroll of \$45 billion.

What this translates into is that the state has reduced its dependence on energy imports and it has directed a large part of the savings mostly to in-state consumption of labor-intensive goods and services via their statewide supply-chain. It is important to note that the energy efficiency measures resulted in less growth in the energy supply-chain relating to oil, gas, and electricity. However, for each job lost in the energy supply chain nearly fifty new jobs were concentrated in the rest of the state economy that is less energy intensive. This undoubtedly has helped the state in reducing its carbon footprint. In this connection let us not forget that electricity savings alone translated into avoiding the construction of 24 giant power plants in the state between 1972 and 2006.

California stands out as the best example of a state with an enviable record on energy efficiency. Without its past investments in energy efficiency, the state today would have been in a more vulnerable position. Looking ahead the states' ambitious plan to reduce green house gas emissions as mandated by the California Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32) would encourage greater innovations in renewable energy technologies such as solar and biomass as well as energy efficiency. The state can become a world leader in renewable energy as well as energy efficiency technologies and develop a thriving export business while creating hundreds of thousands of new jobs in the state. These jobs do not have to be off-shored if we are smart about it.

I suggest that our country take a closer look at California's example of development of the energy efficiency industry and try to emulate it as we reshape our energy future.

Bottom line in terms of the current rhetoric of the frenzied election campaign: energy efficiency industries are not job killers but job creators.