

## **Smog: Ozone is the first priority**

By Mark Grossi, FresnoBee.com, Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Reader Alan Kandel brings up an interesting dilemma he noticed in a news story about eliminating ozone-forming gases from wood-burning stoves: There are some ozone solutions that add to the global warming problem.

My take: It's like triage. If ozone is killing you in the short term, you need to deal with it now so you can survive long enough to worry about climate change.

The wood stove solution is incinerating hydrocarbons and turning them into the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide. Here's the quote Alan sent me, describing the method.

"The afterburner, a rectangular box of metal and insulation that attaches to a wood-burning stove, works by confining and heating the exhaust gases for a brief period. This enables the hydrocarbons contained in the exhaust stream to combust and form carbon dioxide and water before release through the flue."

You can find the story by following the link above. What are your feelings about it?

## **Calif. stations face deadline for new gas pumps**

By Samantha Young and Noaki Schwartz, Associated Press Writers  
In the S.F. Chronicle and other papers, Monday, March 30, 2009

SACRAMENTO (AP) -- Service station owners throughout California face a Wednesday deadline to install gasoline pumps that reduce air pollution, a costly development that prompted a trade association to warn that thousands of stations might close.

Those fears now appear overblown. Thousands of gas stations have already complied, and those that have not are expected to be given additional time.

Lawmakers also are considering emergency legislation that would provide grant money to help ease the financial pain of a retrofit that can cost \$11,000 per pump.

"I think there are some people who probably waited because it was always difficult to do the financing and never expected the economic calamity that we have now," said state Assemblyman Ira Ruskin, D-Redwood City. "We don't want these stations to close simply because they can't get credit in these tough times."

His emergency bill would make \$8 million in grants available for the upgrades and would take effect immediately if it gets the two-thirds support in the Legislature.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has written to lawmakers urging them to pass a bill that would help financially strapped station owners defray the cost. State Sen. Dave Cox, R-Fair Oaks, is pushing legislation that would postpone implementation for a year, but it won't be heard until after the deadline passes.

Station owners have known since 2000 that they would be required to install new pumps, nozzles, hoses and other vapor-capturing devices. The requirement is expected to cut smog-causing emissions by 40 percent.

Some states have followed California by adopting part of the requirement, the nation's most stringent gas-pump regulation.

Nearly 40 percent of California's estimated 11,000 gas stations have been fitted with the new systems, leaving the majority to face potential fines for missing the April 1 deadline.

Tom Kise, spokesman for a coalition of gas stations, had warned that thousands of stations would close if owners were not given more time to secure funding.

"It's not the Chevrons of the world, or BP or ARCO," said Kise, representing the 150-member Responsible Clean Air Coalition. "These are mom-and-pop stations."

The California Air Resources Board, which is in charge of implementing the regulations, has deferred enforcement to local air districts throughout the state. Spokesman Leo Kay said those districts have pledged to act with discretion to avoid disruptions to station owners and motorists.

State and local air pollution officials said most stations have the needed permits and eventually will be operating with the new systems. Air Resources Board spokesman Dimitri Stanich said only those owners who fail to show a good faith effort to comply face substantial fines and possible closure.

In a letter to the Legislature last week, the group representing local air districts said there could be "fair and reasonable" fines for stations that failed to meet the deadline. The fines would be waived when station owners could not meet the deadline through no fault of their own.

California's 35 local air districts have been working with station owners over the last two years to avoid fines as the deadline approached, said Mat Ehrhardt, vice president of the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association.

"Station owners heard from trade associations they were going to be shut down. But when they came and sat down with their local districts, they were pleasantly surprised," said Ehrhardt, executive director of the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District. "There wasn't a station in my district that was going to be shut down."

David Berri, who owns seven gas stations in Southern California, is among those who said he would take advantage of a state grant program if the Legislature approves one.

He said his credit line had dried up and that he could not afford the new systems. He was worried about potential fines that could reach \$10,500 a month for failing to comply.

"This is very stressful on me and my family," he said. "Getting money has been the whole issue."

Competitors who invested tens of thousands of dollars to meet the deadline have little sympathy.

"There was a ton of time to do this at a time when loans were easier to get, margins were better and business was really good," said station owner Sunny Goyal, who thinks many owners didn't take the new rule seriously.

Goyal spent about \$75,000 per station on the estimated 50 facilities throughout the state that he operates under the Shell and Chevron brands.

## **Governor urges delay on gas station regulations**

By Brian Joseph, Sacramento Correspondent  
O.C. Register Blog, Monday, March 30, 2009

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger wrote the California Air Resources Board on Friday urging it to delay implementation of costly regulations that could close thousands of independently owned gas stations across California, including at least 51 in Orange County.

By April 1, the air resources board wants California gas stations to install new gas-dispensing nozzles that reduce smog-causing pollution. The nozzles, however, cost about \$11,000 each and gas stations typically need six to eight of them. In this economy, the owners of these mom and pop shops can't afford it.

"I am not writing to argue against the value or soundness of the measure," Schwarzenegger said in his letter to board chairwoman Mary Nichols, "but I am writing to suggest that more time is needed before it can be successfully enforced without significant negative effects on our state's economy.

"The equipment upgrades called for in this regulation require a significant investment by small station owners. The difficulty of obtaining financing in this economic climate is well documented, and CARB just six months ago certified some of the most cost-effective equipment available."

Schwarzenegger concluded his letter by recommending that the board delay implementation by six months to a year. His suggestion echos calls by State Sen. Dave Cox R-Fair Oaks, who has proposed legislation to delay the regulations until April 1, 2010, and by several lawmakers who protested the new regulations outside the Capitol last week.

The governor also wrote the four legislative leaders on Friday urging them to pass a bill by the end of next month to provide financial assistance for gas station owners unable to comply with the new clean air regulations.

"Because of air quality improvements required by federal and state law, the Air Resources Board might only be able to delay the effective date of these regulations for so long. Significant delays in the effective date put in jeopardy our state's ability to meet air quality mandates and punish station owners who have already

complied with the law," the governor said in his letter to Senate Leader Darrell Steinberg, Assembly Speaker Karen Bass, Senate Republican Leader Dennis Hollingsworth and Assembly Republican Leader Mike Villines.

I put a call into board spokesman Dimitri Stanich to get his reaction but he hasn't called back yet. Earlier, Stanich told me the board wouldn't delay the regulation unless directed by the Legislature.

The regulations go into effect on Wednesday.

## **EPA to test air around 62 schools in 22 states**

By Dina Cappiello, Associated Press Writer

In the S.F. Chronicle, Contra Costa Times and other papers, Tuesday, March 31, 2009

WASHINGTON (AP) -- The air around 62 schools in 22 states will soon be tested for toxic air contaminants.

The Environmental Protection Agency said Tuesday it will work with state and local agencies to begin monitoring outdoor air at the selected schools. They were chosen because of their nearness to industrial facilities or other sources of pollution.

Some testing will start immediately. Other schools would not see testing for 60 to 90 days.

Testing will focus on toxic chemicals that are known to cause cancer, respiratory and neurological problems — especially in children, who are more susceptible than adults.

The list of schools that will be monitored can be found on the EPA's Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/schoolair>.

## **EPA to monitor 62 schools' air**

By Blake Morrison and Brad Heath

USA Today, Tuesday, March 31, 2009

WASHINGTON — In its most sweeping effort to determine whether toxic chemicals permeate the air schoolchildren breathe, the Environmental Protection Agency is expected to announce plans today to monitor the air outside 62 schools in 22 states. Texas and Ohio have the most schools on the list, with seven each; Pennsylvania has six.

The plan will cost about \$2.25 million and includes taking samples outside schools in small towns such as Story City, Iowa, and Toledo, Ore., and in large cities such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Houston. It comes in response to a USA TODAY investigation that used the government's own data to identify schools that appear to be in toxic hot spots.

"Your stories raised important questions that merit investigation and that's what we're doing," EPA administrator Lisa Jackson said Monday. "We want parents to know that the places their children live, play and learn are safe."

USA TODAY's investigation, published in December, used a government computer simulation that showed at least 435 schools where the air outside appeared to be more toxic than the air outside Meredith Hitchens Elementary, an Ohio school closed in 2005. At Hitchens, the Ohio EPA found levels of carcinogens 50 times above what the state considered acceptable.

Children are especially susceptible to toxic chemicals; they breathe more air in proportion to their weight than do adults, and their bodies are still developing. Long exposures to some chemicals can exacerbate asthma, trigger learning disabilities or lead to cancer years later.

EPA spokeswoman Adora Andy said the agency also used computer modeling, information from state and local air agencies, and USA TODAY's findings to choose the 62 schools.

Based on the model USA TODAY used, 28 of the 62 schools appeared to have air more toxic than the air outside the Ohio school that was shut down. Outside others on the EPA list, the model indicated fewer problems. At Enterprise Elementary in Enterprise, Miss., for instance, the government model shows less exposure to industrial pollution than at 81% of the rest of the nation's schools.

Some of the schools, such as Soto Street Elementary School in Los Angeles, are in urban areas close to major roadways, where pollution from industries and automobiles might be most pronounced. The Soto Street school lies within a few blocks of three freeways.

Monitoring will begin as early as mid-April and be "phased in over the next three months," Andy said. She said regulators will sample for gases such as benzene and particulates such as hexavalent chromium, both of which are carcinogens. Monitoring will last at least 60 days. Based on what is found, Andy says the agency will evaluate the health risks students at each site might face.

## **EPA proposes stricter standards for cargo ships**

By Victor Epstein, Associated Press

In the S.F. Chronicle, N.Y. Times and other papers, Tuesday, March 31, 2009

Newark, N.J. -- The head of the Environmental Protection Agency wants to limit emissions along the nation's coastline and within its seaports, just as the agency does along highways, with tougher pollution standards on large commercial ships.

EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson said Monday that the United States and Canada have applied to the International Maritime Organization to create a 230-mile emissions control area around much of their coastline.

The move is intended to ensure the shipping industry does its part to improve the air quality of major seaport communities. Ships moving through the zone would be subject to the tougher emissions standards.

"This is an important and long overdue step to protect the air and water along our shores," Jackson said, speaking in front of a row of cranes at a news conference in Port Newark.

Jackson estimated that 40 of the 100 largest U.S. ports are located in metropolitan areas that fail to meet federal air quality standards. One of them is the Port Newark facility, which is part of the Port of New York and New Jersey - the East Coast's largest port complex.

In California, where Los Angeles, Long Beach and Oakland are among the nation's largest ports, air-quality regulators said they were pleased the EPA had applied for the emissions-control areas.

But the officials cautioned that the reductions wouldn't equal those required by a California rule until 2015. Last year, the state passed a rule requiring ships within 24 nautical miles of the coast to use low-sulfur fuel.

The EPA estimates that 90 percent of the ships carrying cargo in and out of U.S. coastal ports are based in other countries.

Ships operating in the proposed zone would face stricter limits on the sulfur content of their fuel beginning in 2015, and new ships would be required to incorporate advanced emission-control technologies beginning in 2016, Jackson said. Sulfur content is directly related to the soot, or pollution, emitted after fuel is burned.

EPA estimates the new emission-control technology will cost shipping companies \$3.2 billion. Jackson said that translates into an increased cost of about 3 cents for each pair of sneakers shipped into the United States.

### **EPA proposes cuts in air pollution from foreign ships**

**The agency wants the U.N.'s International Maritime Organization to create a 230-mile Emissions Control Area on the coasts of the U.S. and Canada. Foreign vessels comprise 95% of calls to U.S. ports.**

By Louis Sahagun

N.Y. Times, Tuesday, March 31, 2009

The Environmental Protection Agency said Monday that it has submitted a proposal to the International Maritime Organization that would create tougher emission standards for foreign vessels in the coastal waters and ports of the United States and Canada.

The proposal would create a 230-mile Emissions Control Area along the nations' coastlines as a "step to protect the air and water along our shores, and the health of the people in our coastal communities," EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson said at a news conference in New Jersey.

The International Maritime Organization is the United Nations agency concerned with maritime safety and security and the prevention of pollution from ships.

The proposal could have a significant effect on air pollution in Southern California, where the Los Angeles and Long Beach port complex remains the region's major source of carcinogenic diesel emissions.

Port authorities in Los Angeles and Long Beach endorsed the action. "It sounds to me like the EPA is rising up from the dead and beginning to live again," said S. David Freeman, president of the Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners. "In the meantime, we'll continue to do things

our way. We've gotten a lot done already, but if we can get help from the EPA, well, that's a change for the better."

However, foreign ships, which account for 95% of all calls to port nationwide, are largely beyond the jurisdictional reach of state and federal air pollution regulations. This plan would regulate the emissions of foreign vessels under the auspices of the U.N. agency.

The 360 ports along the Atlantic, the Great Lakes, the Gulf of Mexico and Pacific coasts drive both local and global economies, moving billions of dollars in raw materials and products, and creating thousands of jobs. Some of these ports, including the Los Angeles-Long Beach complex, are expecting to double their traffic in coming years.

Yet more than 40 U.S. ports in metropolitan areas fail to meet federal air quality standards, officials said. As a result, cities that rely on port and shipping industries tend to experience inordinately high rates of cancer, asthma and other illnesses, Jackson said. Under the proposal, beginning in 2011, nitrogen oxide emissions would be cut by 20% from vessels built since 1990. By 2016, new engines would see a cut of 80%. By 2015, sulfur emissions from fuel would be cut 95%, and small particulate matter by 85%.

"EPA's announcement today is music to my ears because it means the United States is stepping forward to take a strong leadership role on clean air around ports," Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, said.

## **EPA spokeswoman Cathy Milbourn said the U.N. agency would begin reviewing the proposal in July.**

### **U.S. Seeks to Reduce Emissions From Ships in Coastal Areas**

By Cornelia Dean

N.Y. Times, Monday, March 30, 2009

The United States and Canada have asked the International Maritime Organization to designate their coastal regions as areas where oceangoing ships would face strict controls on emissions of sulfur, particulate matter like soot and other pollutants that endanger human health.

Lisa P. Jackson, administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, announced the action Monday at a news conference in Newark.

The agency said the maritime organization, the United Nations agency that regulates international shipping, was expected to consider such a designation in July. Approval could come next year, and the limits could go into effect as early as 2012.

The proposal calls for a 200-mile buffer zone in which shippers would be required to make large reductions in the pollutants they emit. For example, they would have to cut sulfur emissions 98 percent by 2015, by burning cleaner fuel or through a process of "scrubbing" exhaust gas to remove sulfur.

Ms. Jackson said the emission-control areas were "long overdue" and would save many lives. The agency said that oceangoing vessels dock at more than 100 coastal and Great Lakes ports in the United States and that 40 were in metropolitan areas that did not meet federal air quality standards.

Environmental groups estimate that 87 million Americans live near ports.

Calls and e-mail messages to the International Maritime Organization's headquarters in London were not returned.

On its Web site, the agency said creating the control areas would be unlikely to prompt shippers to divert cargo to ports in other countries because proximity to inland transportation routes in the United States and Canada would be considered more important. Still, Ms. Jackson said discussions intended to bring Mexico into the agreement were under way.

Environmental groups applauded the announcement. In a report issued Monday, the Environmental Defense Fund said container ships, tankers and other large oceangoing vessels burning low-grade fuel were a major source of pollution. Andrew H. Darrell, a vice president of the group, called oceangoing ships "floating smokestacks that deliver soot and smog straight into the heart of our most crowded coastal cities."

*Nate Schweber contributed reporting from Newark.*

## **House Democrats to unveil pollution reduction plan**

By H. Josef Hebert and Dina Cappiello, Associated Press  
In the Modesto Bee and other papers, Tuesday, March 31, 2009

WASHINGTON -- House Democrats outlined a plan Tuesday to cut greenhouse gases by 20 percent over the next decade and 83 percent by mid-century, proposing a speedier ramp-up of emission limits than urged by the White House.

But the draft proposal to be taken up by the House Energy and Commerce Committee leaves to further negotiations one of the most contentious issues: It does not say how pollution allowances would be distributed or whether they will be sold by auction or given away to polluting industries.

President Barack Obama has called for auctioning off all emission credits and using the billions of dollars to help people pay for higher energy costs and development of new, more climate friendly energy sources.

Still, the so-called "discussion draft" outlines an aggressive ramp-up of limits on greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels.

It seeks to blunt some of the costs of the program to consumers by calling for tougher energy efficiency standards from appliances to cars and by requiring utilities to move toward greater use of solar, wind and other renewable energy sources to generate electricity.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., called the draft "a strong starting point" and reiterated that she plans to take up climate legislation in the full House later this year.

Unlike a Senate climate bill that failed last year, the House proposal combines broad energy programs aimed at reducing use of fossil fuels with a mandatory "cap-and-trade" system that would limit carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas releases into the atmosphere.

The draft crafted by Rep. Ed Markey, D-Mass., chairman of the subcommittee dealing with climate legislation, calls for cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by 2020, compared with 2005 levels, reflecting a view by many scientists that early action is needed to achieve the greenhouse gas reductions that will avoid serious future climate warming.

Obama, whose long-term goals on emission cuts are similar to what is being proposed by the House Democrats, has called for a more gradual ramp-up of 14 percent by 2020.

Markey and Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., the committee's chairman, sought to deflect Republican criticism that the climate legislation would raise energy prices and cause economic harm.

"Our goal is to strengthen our economy by making America the world leader in new clean energy and energy efficiency technology," said Waxman in a statement.

"We will create jobs by the millions, save money by the billions and unleash energy investments by the trillions," added Markey.

But getting the bill through the committee may be a challenge.

Republicans have criticized the cap-and-trade approach. Rep. Joe Barton of Texas, the committee's ranking GOP member, says it amounts to a huge tax on consumers because it will spawn dramatically higher energy costs.

While Democrats hold a 34-23 advantage over Republicans on the committee, a half dozen Democratic moderates also have expressed concerns over climate legislation that would increase energy costs, especially Obama's proposal to auction off all energy allowances.

Industry groups that in general embrace the need for limits on greenhouse gases, have argued that allowances should be given free to operators of coal-burning power plants and energy-intensive manufacturing to blunt the cost of cutting emissions.

Waxman and Markey hope to work out agreement on that issue as the draft proposal moves toward a vote in committee. They anticipate a committee vote on the climate legislation by mid-May.

### **New plan to reduce planes' CO2 emissions**

The Associated Press

Merced Sun-Star, Modesto Bee and other papers, Tuesday, March 31, 2009

GENEVA -- Aviation groups in Europe announced a plan Tuesday to change the way commercial planes land in order to reduce their global-warming emissions of carbon dioxide.

By 2013 some 100 European airports will allow planes to descend all the way from cruising altitude to the runway in one smooth glide, saving up to 450 kilograms (992 pounds) of CO2 per landing, the International Air Transport Association said.

In all, airlines are hoping to save 500,000 metric tons (515 US tons) of carbon gas this way each year, said IATA's head of infrastructure Guenther Matschnigg.

The measure - the first continentwide plan of its kind - is part of the airline industry's effort to combat climate change, IATA said.

It also comes amid concerns that the current global economic crisis could keep governments and businesses from transforming their carbon-dependent economies.

### **ARB sets aside mandate for 'cool paint' on cars**

By Jim Downing

Sacramento Bee, Tuesday, March 31, 2009

The California Air Resources Board has dropped – for now – a proposal to require so-called "cool paint" on new cars.

By reflecting the sun's heat, cool paints would help to keep passengers cooler, cutting air conditioning load and improving fuel efficiency.

It's possible to make even black paint cool, but the technology isn't ready for broad adoption, air board staffers said in a notice posted late Friday.

Proposed in 2007, the heat-reflecting paint mandate had been among the more controversial early strategies the agency considered in its war on global warming. The auto industry worried that the proposal would drive up costs and alter color palettes.

The air board will continue to track advances in cool paints and plans to revisit the concept in the future, according to spokesman Stanley Young.

The agency is proceeding with plans to require heat-reflective windows for new passenger vehicles. That proposal is scheduled for a board vote in June.

[Letter to the Sacramento Bee, Tuesday, March 31, 2009:](#)

### **The true climate hoax**

Cal Thomas rides against proposed limits to sources of greenhouse gas emissions as "new laws and regulations ... that have the potential to change our lifestyles and limit our freedom." He jerks our reins against censorship, propaganda and fundamentalist totalitarian control. He whips us with disingenuous journalistics. He drives his high horse into the morass of scheming intentions, so that we might lose the trail to open, scientific discourse. He wildly steers his hack using the blinders of fear and righteous opinion. At full gallop, he expects us to agree that scientific opinion is scientific evidence.

As another skeptic in this arena, I followed his lead to his "treasure trove of information" at [www.globalwarminghoax.com](http://www.globalwarminghoax.com). Finding no objective scientific evidence there (it is mostly a forum for pushing sensationalist books, ranting blogs, lurid video-snippets, and overused and patently slanted news sources), I followed my nose to the reeking stall of Heartland Institute's Web site. Here was the fodder for Thomas' manure – his tainted statement "that global warming is a fraud perpetrated by liberal politicians and their scientific acolytes" comes from drinking deeply at the poisoned trough with "hoax" as a name.

*Gene Davis, Placerville*

[Bakersfield Californian commentary, Sunday, March 29, 2009:](#)

### **Lean and green**

Green is the color on everyone's mind these days, and for good reason. Green jobs and the impact on our economy are emerging as one of the top priorities for President Obama and his new administration.

Shortly after taking office, Obama outlined his plans to achieve energy independence in the United States. In the proposed policy he stressed that our future depends on the creation of new jobs in green industries.

This isn't the first we've heard about green jobs as the key to creating a positive economic impact on our lives.

Kern County is already home to wind, solar, geothermal, biomass and dairy digester (methane) projects, and is primed to become the leader in our state as it relates to green jobs.

Wind and solar energy have been in production in Kern County since the early 1980s and have already provided hundreds of green jobs. But could it be even better? According to the recently released Green Economy Workforce Study, completed by the Centers of Excellence, the central region of the San Joaquin Valley "is beginning to see the first indicators of a blossoming green economy ..."

So what will it take to bring the blossom to full bloom?

First and most important is training and education for green jobs. A trained workforce is a key component to attracting new business to our county. Local high schools and our community college system are working hard to meet the demands of these needs.

Cerro Coso Community College, the Ridgecrest school that's part of the Kern Community College District, already offers certificate and degree programs in alternative energy disciplines such as wind, solar and power plant technicians, and Independence High School in Bakersfield has just started its first class of sophomores in their Energy and Utility Academy.

Introducing the various green energy industries to students now will help build the bridge to future employment in numerous fields, not just green jobs. We can attract all of the new alternative energy companies we want to Kern County, but without the right training and education, we could lose out.

Secondly, our mindset needs to be open to the fact that the green movement is increasingly becoming part of every industry in our county, not just those associated with alternative energy. Agriculture, Kern County's largest industry, already uses many examples of energy efficiency and alternative fuels in their daily operations.

One such project is currently happening in Delano by produce shipper Railex, a company new to Kern County. The cold-train operation takes 200 trucks off the road per week and saves 5 million gallons of diesel fuel a year. Utilities, water agencies and construction and design companies also use a myriad of examples of "green jobs."

An interesting conclusion in the study by the Centers of Excellence is that new jobs created in the green economy in the Central Region "will primarily be jobs that we already are quite familiar with." Whether it is electricians installing new solar panels, manufacturing techs assembling wind turbines, or construction managers overseeing the development of new buildings certified under LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards, these are all green-economy jobs in established occupations, the study declares.

That is where the training comes into play. We will need to take those "familiar" jobs and retrain employees to be part of the green jobs boom.

An additional component to becoming the green jobs leader in the valley is the attraction of new green businesses to Kern County. However, to attract new businesses that provide energy for our county and the state, we must construct new utility transmission lines. Wind farms in Tehachapi are already at a level that on some days they produce more power than can be carried over current congested transmission lines.

Southern California Edison and Pacific Gas & Electric are well aware of our state's transmission needs and are diligently working to remedy the crisis. The Obama Energy Plan stresses the need for construction of new transmission lines to meet future demand. Construction of transmission lines will also create hundreds of new green jobs in the future.

Green manufacturing will also play a vital role in creating a strong green work force. But attracting manufacturing to California can be tricky due to the lack of manufacturing incentives. Having the ability for ground-up green business would provide the foundation for green jobs.

Green manufacturing, research and development, education/training, and new transmission lines are all instrumental in creating a sustainable green economy, not just for Kern County but for our great state as well.

*Robin Fleming is a business developer for the Kern Economic Development Corp. Her areas of specialty are the energy, chemical, aerospace and defense industries.*

[Sacramento Bee editorial, Tuesday, March 31, 2009:](#)

### **Time to back off on new fuel nozzle rule**

Despite a request from the governor, the California Air Resources Board has not asked air pollution control districts to delay enforcement of new rules requiring gas stations to install new pollution-control nozzles on their pumps by April 1.

Wednesday had been the deadline for 11,000 gas stations statewide to install enhanced vapor-recovery nozzles. These nozzles prevent gasoline spills and control emissions of toxic fumes during fueling. As of last month, only about half the state's stations had installed the required equipment. Under the regulations, station owners who had not complied faced fines of thousands of dollars per day or even station closures.

But in his letter asking for an enforcement delay, the governor noted that the most cost-effective nozzle system was not certified by the air board until last year. Even that system costs about \$11,000 per pump, or about \$80,000 for the average station, a hefty investment for small-business owners. Because of the collapse of the credit markets, many owners couldn't obtain financing.

The governor asked the Air Resources Board to delay imposing penalties or closing stations for six months to a year. He also asked the Legislature to approve financial assistance to station owners.

Even before the governor's request, the air board had anticipated that some owners would miss the deadline and had urged them to work with local air districts to avoid fines.

In a letter to the Legislature, the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association was emphatic that "districts do not intend to shut down any stations April 1st." However, "in order to provide equity for the majority of operators who invested considerable time and money to meet the deadline ... there may be penalties assessed."

The new nozzles will eliminate 25 tons of cancer-causing, lung-searing pollution statewide every day. But the economic crisis has taken a toll on small businesses. Given that harsh economic reality, the goal of regulators must be to encourage compliance, not to close businesses and throw people out of work.

[Merced Sun-Star editorial, Tuesday, March 31, 2009:](#)

### **Our View: Get ready for denser urban environment**

Denser growth is inevitable in the Valley's future, and the policy council for the San Joaquin Valley Blueprint has a chance to set us on a path that will allow for wise planning of that future.

The policy council has been meeting in various cities up and down the Valley to choose from among several scenarios for future densities in the cities of the region.

The first -- and least sensible -- is the current status quo, which is about an average of 13 people, or four homes, per acre.

The densest scenario would yield an average of 31 people per acre, or about 10 homes -- as the goal for the Valley by 2050.

That sounds like a lot, and it is compared to the sprawl that has characterized residential development in the Valley for decades. But it isn't that high a figure compared with cities across the nation.

Nor does it mean that everyone has to crowd into tenements in cramped city cores. It's an average. It will leave plenty of housing opportunities for those who wish the suburban lifestyle.

It will also offer opportunities that don't currently exist for those who would choose a more urban lifestyle. And it would do more.

It would slow the pace at which the world's most productive farmland is paved over.

It would reduce the length of commutes, and create the need for cleaner alternatives to cars and trucks. That would reduce air pollution.

It would stretch funds for local government services That are now consumed by the vast distances of sprawling communities.

This decision won't be binding on local governments, but failing to adopt the new standards could jeopardize state transportation funds.

And it just makes sense. It's time to face the realities of the 21st century -- and get it right.

[O.C. Register editorial, Tuesday, March 31, 2009:](#)

### **Muzzle the nozzle cops**

#### **New regulations could put many gas station owners out of business.**

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, responsible for his share of California's costly, anti-business regulations, last week called on regulators to delay implementation of a new rule that otherwise could result in shutting thousands of gasoline stations unable to meet Sacramento's latest Draconian rules.

It's unclear what effect his plea will have, although a California Air Resources Board official said most stations will receive time extensions to comply, although as many as 25 percent of the 11,400 affected stations still are expected to be out of compliance even weeks after the Wednesday, April 1, deadline.

More time is needed before regulations requiring expensive new gasoline pump nozzles "can be successfully enforced without significant effect on our state's economy," the governor wrote to ARB Chairwoman Mary Nichols. He also wrote to legislators, urging them to adopt a bill delaying implementation of the rules, which were written before he was elected.

We applaud Mr. Schwarzenegger for considering Sacramento's heavy regulatory costs. He might have given similar consideration to other regulations during his tenure, including the overbearing and largely unnecessary Global Warming Solutions Act, which will impose many rigid regulations on businesses.

The new regulations require gas stations to install new nozzles that capture a greater percentage of escaping vapors. But the devices can cost as much as \$75,000 per station. Many station owners complain the state-mandated equipment only recently came on the market, and that the ongoing credit crunch makes it difficult to acquire financing to pay for the switchover.

Ironically, cash-strapped state government could hurt itself by forcing stations to close, reducing state gasoline tax revenue. Legislators have introduced bills to provide extra time or financial grants to station owners, and some local air pollution control districts, which will enforce the regulation, indicated they will give leeway and reduced fines for violators.

We hope pollution police – from Sacramento to the county level – exercise restraint. We also hope in the future the governor gives more consideration to the costs of such top-down regulatory diktats.

[Letter to the O.C. Register, Tuesday, March 31, 2009:](#)

### **Pressured by regulators**

In California, the inmates are truly running the asylum. First, the geniuses at the California Energy Commission want to ban many big screen TVs because they use too much energy. Now the brilliant minds at the Air Resources Board are mandating that vehicle repair shops check the air in our tires. Wonderful. A courtesy service that many places do for free will certainly be charged for once it becomes mandatory in 2010.

I've got a better idea, and it will help solve our rampant unemployment. Let's have the ARB hire thousands of unemployed to go through every neighborhood once a week at night with portable air compressors and check the tire pressure on all parked cars. Just think of all gas we'll save with our correctly inflated tires.

*Terry Weller, Huntington Beach*

