

## Hopes still high for northwest interchange

By James Burger, staff writer

Bakersfield Californian, Sun., Jan. 31, 2010

Kern County Roads officials are still hopeful they can leverage \$17.5 million in bond money to build a critical \$35 million interchange in northwest Bakersfield.

Neighbors are hopeful too.

County Roads Commissioner Craig Pope said if the county can match the Proposition 1B bond grant from the Highway Rail Crossing Safety Account, the interchange that would link Hageman Road, Santa Fe Way and Allen Road could be under construction in one year.

Money is the challenge.

Purchasing property and relocating utilities alone -- before a single inch of interchange concrete is poured -- will cost \$11 million, Pope said.

So the county is looking for other sources of money to match the state bond cash and kick off construction.

"This is one of the biggest bottlenecks in that area of (Bakersfield)," Pope said.

Resident Carol Bender said the intersection -- where Allen Road bootlegs off Santa Fe Way along Hageman at one of the most congested railroad crossings in the city -- is nearly useless after 3 p.m. each weekday as school lets out at nearby Frontier High School.

"The neighbors are still anxiously awaiting," Bender said. "We would just like to see it happen."

Businesses in the area are in limbo while the county searches for funds to launch a project that will link the roads together and separate trains and vehicle traffic, she said.

"It's going to cost even more money if we have to wait," Bender said. "It's critical to get it done before the economy comes back and the building resumes."

Pope said the county will be looking to the [San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District](#), and possibly the cities of Bakersfield and Shafter, to invest in finishing the interchange -- which will go under the rail line.

Other good news came last week when construction bids on another interchange project -- the connection of Santa Fe Way and a four-lane 7th Standard Road just to the north -- came in around \$4 million lower than engineers had projected.

Pope is hoping there will be a way to shift that windfall to the southern project.

Getting that traffic problem solved will be a boon to the area.

"It would be a nice smooth transition of Santa Fe way merging into Allen Road," Pope said.

## Kettleman birth defects to be probed

**Governor orders state to investigate outbreak.**

By Eddie Jimenez, staff writer

The Fresno Bee, Fri., Jan. 29, 2010

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Friday ordered state environmental and public health officials to send experts to Kettleman City to investigate a rash of birth defects.

The governor's directive comes after months of protests by residents of the small Kings County town, who suspect the birth defects are due to toxic wastes stored at the landfill, and the same week that a top federal environmental official in California focused attention on the issue.

Jared Blumenfeld, the EPA's administrator for the Pacific Southwest region, told Kettleman City residents earlier this week that he had ordered an internal investigation to determine whether the

federal agency had properly reviewed complaints that environmental regulations have been ignored at the landfill, which is owned and operated by Waste Management Inc.

Blumenfeld said he plans next week to visit the landfill, which is about three miles southwest of Kettleman City, and also with residents in the largely Hispanic community of 1,500.

A spokeswoman for the governor said Schwarzenegger recently was briefed on the concerns of Kettleman City residents and decided to take swift action.

"There's no question that this issue has been elevated," said Amanda Fulkerson, chief deputy of communications for Schwarzenegger's office.

The state investigation will include interviews with families of children with birth defects, a scientific review of soil samples and an examination of medical records.

Kettleman City residents and advocates who have protested the landfill's proposed expansion, which was approved by the Kings County Board of Supervisors in December, said they were glad to hear the governor had ordered an expanded investigation.

"It validates the concerns we've been expressing for over a year now," said Maricela Mares-Alatorre, a Kettleman City resident and a member of People for Clean Air and Water.

Mares-Alatorre and other residents and environmental advocates have been asking county, state and federal officials to investigate why five babies were born with cleft palates in Kettleman City in a 15-month period beginning in late 2007. Three babies died, they said.

Schwarzenegger's call for an investigation is long overdue, said Bradley Angel, executive director of Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice, an environmental group based in San Francisco.

"We are thrilled that the governor has responded to the pleas for help from the mothers and families who have suffered so much," Angel said, "and this announcement is a big victory for the residents of this tiny town."

A spokeswoman for Waste Management also welcomed Schwarzenegger's call for an investigation.

"We are very, very confident that our facility protects human health and the environment, but the residents of Kettleman City deserve answers," spokeswoman Kit Cole said.

Local business and health officials say they have no evidence connecting the birth defects to toxic waste.

Last week, the Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment sued Kings County and sought a court order to rescind the county's approval of the landfill expansion permit. Waste Management has said that the landfill, which employs 60 people, will have to close if it can't expand.

The state Department of Public Health said this week that its researchers will present the results of a review of the birth defects to the Kings County Board of Supervisors and in Kettleman City on Feb. 9.

**Schwarzenegger orders state to investigate birth defects in Kettleman City**  
**The governor's directive comes just days after a regional administrator with the EPA**  
**launched a federal inquiry into whether a large toxic dump near the community caused the**  
**deformities.**

By Margot Roosevelt, staff writer

L.A. Times, Fri., Jan. 29, 2010

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger directed state public health and environmental officials Friday to visit Kettleman City to conduct "a thorough investigation" into the causes of birth defects in the San Joaquin Valley farming community.

Schwarzenegger's intercession comes more than a year after activists petitioned state agencies to investigate whether a large toxic dump near the community might be causing cleft palates and other defects among the mostly low-income Latino residents.

The dump, operated by Houston-based Waste Management, is the largest hazardous waste facility west of the Mississippi.

Earlier this week, Jared Blumenfeld, the regional administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, launched a federal inquiry, calling the situation "a human tragedy at a scale . . . none of us would want to have to endure."

"We will take our time and spend time on the ground," he said, alluding to activists' complaints that state officials had refused to visit the beleaguered enclave. "When I hear about people doing reports without going to the community, it makes my blood boil," he said.

Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice, a San Francisco-based group that has organized the community, called Schwarzenegger's action "long overdue" and urged him to order the state Department of Toxic Substances Control to suspend a permit application from Waste Management to expand the facility.

Schwarzenegger emphasized that the investigation would "include interviews with families," as well as "a scientific review of soil samples and a full examination of medical records." Officials would also review the overall birth defect rates over a 22-year period in the region.

Community members say that five babies out of 20 live births in a recent 14-month period had facial deformities. A review by the Kings County Public Health Department found that six of 63 babies born over the same period to mothers living in the town had various birth defects.

The community of 1,500 sits in a region heavily polluted by pesticides and fumes from diesel-powered trucks.

Waste Management said in a statement it is "pleased" that the state will investigate the birth defects in a "coordinated interagency approach." It added, "We believe our Kettleman Hills facility is highly protective of human health and the environment."

## **Firm is on a mission to cut diesel emissions**

**Phillip Roberts' disgust for soot inspired him to start a business that aims to make older engines run cleaner.**

By Ronald D. White, staff writer  
L.A. Times, Mon., Feb. 1, 2010

For product presentations, Phillip Roberts sometimes carries along a petri dish filled with black grit, just in case people don't believe the story about his Long Beach condominium balcony and the catalyst for the creation of his small business.

The grit is a daily gift of [air pollution](#) that comes with his otherwise spectacular view of the Port of Long Beach, on the horizon just beyond the Queen Mary. Once Roberts realized that cleaning the sooty material from his balcony tabletop was going to be a daily task, the former asthma sufferer did two things:

"I bought hospital-grade air filters for every room in the condo," Roberts said, "and I thought that maybe I ought to try to do something about it."

Roberts is the founder and chief executive and Richard Carlson is the president of Extengine Transport Systems of Long Beach. It's a five-employee business that is hoping to cash in by making older off-road and on-road diesel engines run a lot cleaner. Extengine develops and manufactures diesel retrofit emission-control systems -- a huge market since it is not uncommon for them to last 300,000 to 400,000 miles or longer.

"The good thing about diesel engines is that they last forever. That's also the bad thing about them. A 1987 diesel engine is about 50 times dirtier than one made in 2007," Roberts said. "We can reduce emissions by 90% to 95% on any on-road or off-road engine."

Extengine's timing could not have been better. It has developed its clean-air product line at a time when economic powerhouses such as seaports, construction companies and even warehouse and distribution centers are now viewed as testing grounds, business incubators and sources of venture capital.

Roberts found his clean-air calling despite an education that had little to do with cargo movement and the maritime industry. He started out hoping to become a diplomat, graduating from Georgetown University in 1979 with a degree in linguistics. His other degree was in French civilization, from the University of Paris.

"I tell people I'm not limited by my education," Roberts said.

Now, Roberts' company, which was formed in 2001, makes a variety of pollution-reduction devices. They mostly look like large mufflers or oversized catalytic converters that can either take the place of an original muffler or be placed alongside it.

One is the MaxTrap active diesel particulate filter, which is designed to reduce particulate emissions by up to 99% on older engines. One of them is running through trials on a bulldozer at the Puente Hills Landfill near Whittier for the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts.

MaxTrap sells for \$13,000 to \$15,000, which Roberts says is less than his competitors' prices. But Roberts said its best feature is that it works "like a self-cleaning oven, with a sensor that detects soot buildup and activates a heater that burns it off while you're still cooking."

Another product is a patented advanced diesel-emission-control system that sells for \$25,000 to \$35,000 and which uses the same kind of catalytic reduction often found on stationary engines. This one also uses a sensor from a Carlsbad company called Emissions & Power Solutions that allows real-time emissions monitoring.

The Port of Los Angeles has given Extengine a \$200,000 grant to help in product development, which is one way that Extengine is reducing its own costs.

Kristen Monaco, an economics professor at Cal State Long Beach who was hired by the university to study the trucking industry at the ports, said Extengine has the chance to tap into a huge market of ports nationwide and in the many diesel engines used in construction, agriculture and other industries.

"As clean-air initiatives spread from ports like Los Angeles and Long Beach, there will be many business opportunities in other parts of the country," Monaco said. The products could extend the lives of older diesels at a time when tight credit makes buying expensive new trucks even more difficult, she added.

The inspiration came from stark reminders of the Los Angeles basin's air pollution problems of

the past and present.

Roberts, for example, moved into a high-rise in 1995, where two things left a lasting impression. One was the remarkable view of giant cargo cranes at the Port of Long Beach. The second was a layer of soot on his balcony's glass tabletop.

"I remember thinking that it was just dirt," said Roberts, a former asthma sufferer from Omaha who was appalled when he saw how much pollution was generated by the operation of hundreds of diesel engines operating at the nation's busiest seaport complex.

Carlson's experiences with air pollution go back much further, to his days growing up in Pasadena when first- and second-stage smog alerts were all too common.

"There were times when we couldn't see the buildings across the street," he said.

When Roberts began noticing the port pollution, he was working as a consultant, helping about half a dozen start-up businesses raise capital and market their emission technologies.

Eventually, balcony soot persuaded him to try to start his own business. Roberts talked to experts and engineers about prospective technologies. He attended Society of Automotive Engineers conferences in the U.S. and Europe, building relationships.

To commercialize new technology required a lot of expensive testing and data compiling. To short-circuit that process and reduce costs, he put together a business plan that included building his own fee-for-service testing lab in 2001, which was recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the California Air Resources Board and the International Organization for Standardization.

Building the lab took two years but worked admirably for his own business development.

"When we weren't testing equipment for customers, we could test our own ideas," Roberts said.

In the process, he began to impress a lot of people involved in technology and business start-ups in Southern California. One of them was William F. Lyte, a business development expert and a co-founder of Technplex Group, a consulting firm in San Pedro.

"Roberts is an enormously committed guy. He's so driven that he went through this whole process of building a research lab to test his products and wound up turning it into a very strong profit center," Lyte said.

It was during the certification process for the Switzerland-based international standards organization that he met Carlson and eventually hired him. Roberts and Carlson sold the lab in 2007, with all of their own testing done and some profits in the bank. Carlson also serves as chief operating officer, managing technology installations.

Soon, Roberts said, Extengine would be moving out of its Long Beach office to a new installation and sales office and an operations center in conjunction with Cal State Long Beach and the Port of Los Angeles.

"We are hoping to get most of our employees from Cal State Long Beach," he said.

Roberts now often thinks about what he might be doing if he had ignored that balcony soot. He turned down a high-salary job at Arco to build his company.

"I wouldn't have taken advantage of this opportunity and this vision I had," he said. "I'd . . . be working for Arco. But this business was my calling. It was something I had to do."

## **Labor, environmental, neighborhood groups raise questions on weapons station plan**

By Paul Thissen, staff writer

Contra Costa Times & Tri-Valley Herald, Monday, Feb. 1, 2010

CONCORD — City leaders hope the plans for a sweeping development of homes, offices, schools and parks on the shuttered inland portion of the Concord Naval Weapons Station are nearly complete.

But a coalition of interest groups says there is more work to be done before the environmental review is complete and plans can move forward.

And one member of that group, unhappy with the plan approved a year ago, says unless the City Council changes course it will likely file a lawsuit or a ballot measure to force the council's hand.

The city completed its final environmental impact report this month. Two public City Council hearings are scheduled on the plan Feb. 9 and 23. If the report is approved, the city would start making the zoning and policy changes necessary to give the plans the force of law.

Members of the Coalition for a Sustainable Concord say the environmental report is much improved from previous drafts, but there is still work to be done.

"They really have to seriously consider traffic and [air quality](#) and climate issues, and we feel that these are inextricably linked," said Amie Fishman, executive director of the East Bay Housing Organization, which is part of the coalition. "If they neglect to put in place measures that match housing needs and jobs "... it's problematic."

Other concerns include the protection of wildlife and the restoration of Mount Diablo Creek, said Seth Adams of Save Mount Diablo, which is also a coalition member.

In its responses to the 46 comment letters, the city writes that the thousands of pages of review are more than adequate for this stage of planning, and that more specific mitigation measures will be set up as specific projects are proposed.

In January 2009, the council selected the "clustered villages" plan, which includes dense development near the North Concord BART station and three smaller "villages" along the southwest border of the property in the area known as bunker city.

That plan would add as many as 12,272 housing units, 28,800 residents and bring as many as 26,530 jobs on the inland portion of the 5,028-acre former U.S. Navy munitions depot in the northeast part Concord, extending to Highway 4 and the border with Pittsburg.

One member of the coalition, the Concord Naval Weapons Station Neighborhood Alliance, has said it wants the City Council to change its plans and select the "concentration and conservation" alternative, a second option that would set all development around the North Concord BART station and leave the rest of the base as open space.

The final environmental review names the concentration and conservation plan as environmentally superior, but notes that the council can pick another option based on non-environmental considerations.

If the city does not switch to the conservation and conservation plan, the alliance will likely file a lawsuit or referendum, said Kathy Gleason of the neighborhood group.

"We've talked and talked and I think we're done talking with the city. Nothing changes," Gleason said. "I think we're beyond frustration."

Michael Wright, the city's weapons station reuse director, said litigation or a referendum could cause delays and have unintended consequences. The concentration and conservation plan leaves much of the "bunker city" area as open space, and Wright said it's not clear that the East Bay Regional Park District would be willing to take on the responsibility of cleaning up the area.

"There's a fair amount of consensus that's been built up around the (clustered villages plan) and I'm hoping maybe calmer heads will prevail," Wright said.

Other members of the coalition, including the Greenbelt Alliance, East Bay Housing Organization and Save Mount Diablo, said they were not at the point of contemplating court or ballot action.

"I think there are ways we can try and resolve some of this, and I'm cautiously optimistic," said Melissa Hippard, campaigns director for the Greenbelt Alliance, which is also a coalition member.

The City Council should ask that the environmental review be changed to reassure the coalition — and residents — that effective mitigation measures would be put in place.

The city is close, she said, "but they're not there yet."

## **Concerns addressed in West Coyote Hills report**

By Barbara Giasone

O.C. Register, Fri., Jan. 29, 2010

FULLERTON – Potential greenhouse gases remain one of the public's major concerns over Chevron's Pacific Coast Homes proposed development in West Coyote Hills, a city consultant said.

More than 100 residents' comments – and staff responses – are listed in the latest Draft Environmental Impact Report made available to the public this week on the city Web site, at the two libraries and at City Hall.

A public hearing before the Planning Commission will be held at a later date, and ultimately the City Council will consider the proposal.

Planning Consultant Joan Wolff said residents' concerns collected in November led the staff to return to the EIR and revise four of the most controversial issues: [air quality](#); flood control; public health and safety in clearing the site; and wildlife habitats.

"Most of the findings (in the report) can be mitigated except the greenhouse gases and air quality," Wolff said.

Those will be the issues because the L.A. basin is already polluted more than environmental goals call for, she said.

Pacific Coast Homes Project Manager Jim Pugliese said Friday he had read the EIR comments and there were very few substantive comments regarding greenhouse gases.

It's going to be up to the City Council, he said, to decide if the project is right for Fullerton. "We say there's a 28 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions over 'business as usual.' We're doing our part."

Another Pacific Coast spokesman, Scott Starkey, said three city commissions have already approved parts of the plan.

The Transportation and Circulation panel voted 5-1 that the proposal adequately reduces traffic impacts. The Energy and Resource Management Committee offered a split recommendation that conservation and environmental elements were appropriate for site. And, the Parks Commission voted 4-2 that the proposed parks, open space and recreational amenities meet community needs.

Pacific Coast Homes initially submitted plans in 1997 to build out the property bounded by La Habra on the north, Euclid Street on the east, Hawks Pointe on the west and Rosecrans Avenue on the south.

By 2003, based on public input and city negotiations to reduce the number of housing units, the final plan included 760 residences on 180 acres, a 5.2-acre commercial development and 283 acres of open space.

Two years earlier, an activist group – Friends of Coyote Hills – was formed to fight the project and protect the natural open space.

This week, the Friends board met and discussed the latest EIR document.

"Our legal and professional team plan to study the final EIR and evaluate the adequacy of the comments," Friends Secretary Kathleen Shanfield said. "The group will keep the public apprised of our findings, and will be mobilizing public support in its continual effort to save Coyote Hills as a park for future generations."

Shanfield said Coyote Hills neighbors, new to the Friends group, attended Thursday night's meeting with their concerns about water shortages and soil contamination.

There are also water runoff and flood control issues, she said.

Nearby resident Bob Spurlock, who said in a 2006 interview that the project brought Los Angeles-esque traffic horrors to mind, hasn't changed his outlook.

Although he hasn't read through the more than 100 public comments in the latest document, he contends the biggest fear is the volume of automobiles and the impact on Idaho and Euclid streets and on Rosecrans Avenue.

"People around us can't even put into perspective what it will be like with all that traffic," said Spurlock, who bought his home 36 years ago.

He's also concerned about the property dedicated to open space with parks and trails.

"We've got parks that already need updates," Spurlock said. "Take a place like Laguna Lake. They still haven't finished that project, and it's used mostly by people who live outside the greater Fullerton area."

Fullerton Recreational Riders former board member Bob Hayden, who serves on the city's ad hoc Trails Committee, said the project is "extremely valuable" after more than 30 years of on-again, off-again talks about developing the property.

"Chevron presents a reasonable balance between development, trails and nature," Hayden said. "The project would provide eight miles of multi-use trails, and two miles of walking trails."

"The reality is there is no philanthropist or city funding that's been brought forward to buy or rejuvenate the land – and much less maintain it," he said.

Hayden said the developers are offering to build and maintain a trail system in perpetuity.

## **GOP: Jobs or trees? You pick**

By Adam Ashton, staff writer

Modesto Bee, Mon., Feb. 1, 2010

The GOP wants you to choose between jobs and trees this year, and it's betting you'll vote for the paycheck.

Republican lawmakers are submitting a pack of "job-generating" bills in the Legislature, some of which would roll back regulation.

"It's easy to be green when you've got food on the table," GOP Assembly-man Bill Berryhill of Ceres said. "Most of these things were passed in the good times. We're in a different time now."

He took aim at California's landmark global warming law with a measure he co-wrote that would have prevented agencies from enforcing it until the state's unemployment rate drops to the halcyon level of 5.5 percent.

In today's climate, that sounds like a death sentence for restrictions on greenhouse gas emissions.

His measure didn't make it out of the Assembly's Natural Resources Committee, where it failed on a 6-3 vote last month. It didn't have support from majority Democrats, or even Gov. Schwarzenegger.

Berryhill put it forward, anyway, touting it as a part of GOP jobs-first initiatives aimed at easing regulations on businesses.

"It's certainly a statement bill that I think most Californians would agree on," he said.

Democrats aren't about to concede that Assembly Bill 32, their 2006 effort to reduce carbon emissions to 1990 levels, is bad for business.

They point to a December study from Next 10, a nonpartisan think tank, that concluded green energy is a bright spot in today's bleak economy. It determined that the number of green jobs in the state grew by 36 percent from 1995 to 2008, while total jobs increased by 13 percent.

Next 10 also found that as the recession set in about 2007, California employment declined by 1 percent but jobs in the green sector grew by 5 percent.

Any effort to scale back the regulation, Democrats say, would scuttle that progress.

"Why would he, in the middle of this recession, send exactly the wrong signal to investors and pull the rug out from under a sector of the economy that's growing?" asked Berkeley Democrat Nancy Skinner, whose Natural Resources Committee turned down Berryhill's bill.

Expect more of the same to come. Republicans have put together some of their ideas at [www.cajobsfirst.com](http://www.cajobsfirst.com).

Berryhill is trying to get fines from regulatory agencies delivered to the state general fund instead of agency accounts, a push that he says would ease the state deficit and take some heat off of private industry.

Former Modesto City Councilwoman Janice Keating is making her concerns with the global warming law a centerpiece of her bid for the Assembly this spring.

"Even if some of these dyed-in-the-wool environmental extremists continue to do everything they can to run our jobs, economy and proud agricultural industry into the ground, I remain optimistic that we can defeat them," she wrote in a recent commentary on the conservative Flash Report Web site.

WHERE'S HEIDI? Tuolumne County lawyer Heidi Fuller dived into the race for Modestan Dave Cogdill's Senate seat last winter when he supported a temporary tax increase for a state budget compromise.

His vote cost him his leadership post in the GOP and incensed Fuller enough to challenge the incumbent.

Fuller didn't change course when Cogdill opted not to run for re-election in November. She doesn't want to be ignored and yet can't help but see the GOP lining up behind Assemblyman Tom Berryhill of Modesto, who recently moved to Oakdale to run for Cogdill's seat.

A recent Stanislaus County Republican Central Committee newsletter forgot to mention her while it discussed Tom Berryhill's shot for Cogdill's district.

County GOP Chairman Jim DeMartini says it was just an oversight.

"We try to treat everybody fairly," he said.

Fuller has fired a shot across the bow on her Web site, [www.heidi4Senate.com](http://www.heidi4Senate.com), calling Tom Berryhill a carpetbagger. She likens his move to Hillary Rodham Clinton taking up residence in New York to run for the U.S. Senate and, more surprising, President Barack Obama running for office in Illinois instead of his father's home country of Kenya.

## Massachusetts Sets Ambitious Energy Standards

By Leslie Kaufman, staff writer  
N.Y. Times, Fri., Jan. 29, 2010

Massachusetts state officials on Friday announced new energy efficiency standards for utilities that aim to be the most ambitious in the nation.

The plan calls for a statewide reduction of 2.4 percent in electricity use and 1.15 percent in natural gas use annually for three years. The savings are to be achieved largely through \$1.6 billion in incentives for utility customers who take certain steps to conserve energy, like insulating their houses or replacing conventional light bulbs with compact fluorescent ones.

The reductions were mandated by the Green Communities Act, passed by the state legislature in 2008. But the bill did not specify the reduction goals or how they were to be reached. The State Department of Public Utilities approved the specifics late Thursday.

Utilities, regulators and energy advocates haggled for months to reach the 2.4 percent annual reduction goal, a figure considered to be close to the upper limit of what can be achieved annually through such programs. The utilities' success in reaching that goal will be measured in a way that accounts for outside factors like normal growth in the demand for electricity — which averages just under 2 percent a year — and the recession, which can decrease energy use.

"The Green Communities Act established energy efficiency as the Commonwealth's 'first fuel' — what we look to first to power our homes and our economy," Ian A. Bowles, the state's secretary for energy and environmental affairs, said in a written statement.

"We are off and running," Mr. Bowles said, "pulling out all the stops to cut energy waste, save money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in buildings across Massachusetts."

At the heart of the plan is a quadrupling of annual spending for consumer outreach and conservation incentive programs to about \$600 million from \$150 million. Money will be available to consumers for services like free energy audits, and rebates will be offered for the purchase of energy-efficient appliances and air-conditioners.

Massachusetts officials say the state will surpass California in spending per person on conservation measures. It is assumed that the conservation initiatives will translate reliably into energy savings.

The nonprofit American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, ranked California No. 1 and Massachusetts No. 2 respectively in its 2009 survey of the most energy-efficient states. Steve Nadel, its executive director, said that while a switch in those rankings was not certain, it was likely.

"If Massachusetts does everything in the plan that was approved today," Mr. Nadel said, "I'll say there is a very good chance they will pass California in our score. We always like a little friendly competition between the states."

Officials in Massachusetts said that the plan's upfront cost of more than \$1 billion would be covered partly through fees paid by consumers and partly through auctioning pollution allowances and through other revenue sources. Massachusetts auctions these allowances as part of the 10-state carbon trading system called the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. Under the system, states impose caps on the amounts of carbon dioxide that power plants can emit and hold an auction for emissions permits under those caps. Eighty percent of revenue from the auction in Massachusetts is intended to go into the efficiency program.

Consumers will eventually reap \$6 billion in savings on their utility bills from the efficiency plan, even after accounting for the added fees, the officials predicted.

A study by Environment Northeast, a local advocacy group, estimated that putting the measures into effect would also create 25,000 jobs.

"The job creation and consumer savings will provide timely relief across the state, and carbon pollution will be slashed," said Sam Krasnow, a lawyer with the organization who sits on the council that helped devise the plan.

## **Old Story of Pollution; New Urgency This Time**

By Peter Applebome, staff writer  
N.Y. Times, Sun., Jan. 31, 2010

POMPTON LAKES, N.J.-- It seems every decade here has its own restaging of the same environmental horror story. It began with the old DuPont munitions plant that left behind a trail of lead and mercury, contaminated soil and water and a plume of toxic vapor still capable of leaking into at least 450 houses. The story has no end in sight.

There was the initial wave of concern in the 1970s, the first serious opposition by the borough's government in the 1980s, the \$38.5 million settlement from DuPont in the 1990s, a smaller suit and ruling against the company in 2002.

Still, the toxic legacy is as real now as it was decades ago. Hence the volatile mixture of newfound hope, raw anger and pent-up frustration Thursday night when residents gathered at the local Elks Lodge.

"DuPont will try to get away with as much as they can get away with anytime they can," John Sinsimer, the mayor of Pompton Lakes from 1988 to 1992, told the group. Citing advice he was given back then, he added: "First they try to buy you. Then they try to bully you. Then they try and bury you."

Maybe three decades on it's not exactly the same. DuPont has a full-page ad in the local newspaper citing its cleanup efforts over 20 years, its focus on removing more than 200,000 tons of contaminated soil and sediment and its plans for groundwater cleanup systems.

But at a time when everyone everywhere seems angry about something, the one undeniable lesson here, improvising on the old labor adage is: Don't vent. Don't mourn. Organize.

From 1902 until 1994, the 570-acre DuPont Works in this tiny borough of lakes and streams manufactured blasting caps and explosives. The stream near the works became known as Acid Brook, its colors changing depending on what chemicals were in the water.

People are still split between loyalty to the company that provided jobs to their community and anger at the company that polluted it. But the environmental concerns remain constant.

A report released by the state Department of Health and Senior Services in December found "significantly elevated" rates of kidney cancer in women and non-Hodgkins lymphoma in men in the area most polluted.

The report said it could not make a definitive link between the chemicals and the cancer (rates for 11 other cancers sampled were not similarly elevated), but trichloroethylene and perchloroethylene, two of the chemicals in the plume, have been found to increase the risk of kidney cancer and lymphoma.

Officials reiterated a two-year-old recommendation that residents should install vapor mitigation systems designed to remove gases seeping into homes from a toxic plume in the groundwater

under the homes. DuPont already has installed a system in about 170 of the 450 homes over the plume, but many questions and fears remain.

It is, it seems, the same story, new act. But it is not.

TWO years ago, when the dangers of the plume were identified, two friends from childhood, Lisa Riggiola and Regina Sisco, formed Citizens for a Clean Pompton Lakes, which sponsored last week's meeting. In December 2009 both United States senators and the local congressman, Representative William J. Pascrell Jr., wrote to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, calling the situation "a serious public health concern that needs immediate attention."

In another letter to the E.P.A. last week, they recommended that the agency provide resources, including a team in town five days a week and mobile laboratories to monitor air quality and chemical concentrations, as well as other measures. State and federal environmental officials said last week that they would allow residents to pick their own vapor mitigation contractors.

Solving the long-term problems, particularly the cleanup of the polluted groundwater, is a long way off. Bob Nelson, a spokesman for E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Company, said if the cleanup were a simple one it would have been done long ago.

"Our intention is to do right by the people of the town, and DuPont is not going anywhere until the contamination is remediated," he said.

But people in town can be forgiven for thinking that sitting atop a toxic plume and living with a long legacy of contamination give a sense of urgency that the company and the state environmental officials don't share. And, so, for the first time, people seem to think they have at least the potential for controlling their destiny. At the evening's end, a voice from the crowd said some in town thought the organizers of the citizen's group were loudmouths and troublemakers.

"Thank you for being loudmouths," she said, to loud and persistent applause.

## **Group files notice to sue EPA over registration of nearly 400 pesticides**

By Mitch Lies, staff writer

Capital Press, Sun., Jan. 31, 2010

A national conservation organization has filed a notice of intent to sue the Environmental Protection Agency for failing to adequately regulate nearly 400 pesticides for their effect on threatened and endangered species.

In the notice filed Jan. 28, the Center for Biological Diversity alleged EPA is violating the Endangered Species Act by failing to consult with wildlife regulatory agencies about the pesticides' impacts on hundreds of protected species.

The center also claims EPA is violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act by registering pesticides known to harm migratory birds.

"For too long, this agency's oversight has been abysmal, allowing the pesticide industry to unleash a virtual plague of toxic chemicals into our environment," said center advocate Jeff Miller in a prepared statement.

The action is considered by some as an extension of a 2002 suit brought against EPA by the Washington Toxics Coalition.

"If there was ever a doubt as to whether the ramifications of the (Washington Toxics Coalition) lawsuit decision would have national significance for all pesticides, this should clear that question up in a hurry," said Terry Witt, executive director of Oregonians for Food and Shelter, a farm and forest advocacy group.

That case resulted in a judge ordering EPA to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service on the impact of pesticides on salmon.

EPA has proposed no-spray buffers around certain waterways for the first three of 37 pesticides the agencies are scheduled to analyze.

The Center for Biological Diversity, headquartered in Tucson, Ariz., identified 887 endangered and threatened species that may be hurt by pesticides in the notice filed Jan. 28.

Among 394 pesticides identified in the notice are many commonly used pesticides, including imidacloprid, carbofuran, chlorpyrifos and pymetrozine.

EPA has 60 days to respond.

## **New study says slowdown in global warming may be the result of less stratospheric water vapor**

The Associated Press

In the L.A. Times, Thurs., Jan. 28, 2010

WASHINGTON (AP) — The slowdown in global warming in the last few years may have been caused by a decline in water vapor in the stratosphere, a new report suggests.

While climate warming is continuing — the decade of 2000 to 2009 was the hottest on record worldwide — the increase in temperatures was not as rapid as in the 1990s.

Balloon and satellite observations show the amount of water vapor in a layer about 10 miles high declined after 2000. The stratosphere extends from about eight to 30 miles above the Earth's surface.

The reason for the decline is unknown, according to researchers led by Susan Solomon of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. They report their findings in Thursday's online edition of the journal *Science*.

Water vapor is a potent greenhouse gas, and its decline in the stratosphere would reduce the rate of global warming expected from other gases such as carbon dioxide, the researchers said.

According to the researchers, water vapor enters the stratosphere primarily from air rising in the tropics.

## **Obama pushes nuclear energy to boost climate bill**

By Dina Cappiello and Matthew Daly, Associated Press

In the Merced Sun-Star, Sun., Jan. 31, 2010

WASHINGTON -- President Barack Obama is endorsing nuclear energy like never before, trying to win over Republicans and moderate Democrats on climate and energy legislation.

Obama singled out nuclear power in his State of the Union address, and his spending plan for the next budget year is expected to include billions of more dollars in federal guarantees for new nuclear reactors. This emphasis reflects both the political difficulties of passing a climate bill in an election year and a shift from his once cautious embrace of nuclear energy.

He's now calling for a new generation of nuclear power plants.

During the campaign, Obama said he would support nuclear power with caveats. He was concerned about how to deal with radioactive waste and how much federal money was needed to support construction costs. Those concerns remain; some say they've gotten worse.

His administration has pledged to close Yucca Mountain, the planned multibillion-dollar burial ground in the Nevada desert for high-level radioactive waste. Energy Secretary Steven Chu has

been criticized for his slow rollout of \$18.5 billion in loan guarantees to spur investment in new nuclear power plants, and the administration killed a Bush-era proposal to reprocess nuclear fuel.

What has changed is the outlook for climate and energy legislation, a White House priority. The House passed a bill in June that would limit emissions of heat-trapping gases for the first time. But the legislation led to a Republican revolt in the Senate, where the recent election of Republican Scott Brown from Massachusetts has made the measure even more of a long shot.

Obama reaffirmed his commitment to a bill in his State of the Union speech as a way to create more clean-energy jobs, but added that "means building a new generation of safe, clean nuclear power plants in this country."

To back that up, he is expected to seek \$54 billion in additional loan guarantees for nuclear power in his 2011 budget request to Congress on Monday, according to an administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the request has not been made public.

White House officials say Obama's actions reflect his long support of nuclear power. But lawmakers from both parties say the speech reflected a new urgency and willingness to reach out to Republicans who have criticized Obama for not talking more about the role nuclear energy can play in slowing global warming.

The 104 nuclear reactors in operation in 31 states provide only 20 percent of the nation's electricity. But they are responsible for 70 percent of the power from pollution-free sources, including wind, solar and hydroelectric dams.

Several analyses of the climate bills passed by the House and under consideration in the Senate suggest that the U.S. will have to build many more plants in order to meet the 80 percent reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050 called for in the legislation. One of those studies, by the Environmental Protection Agency, assumed 180 new reactors would come on line by 2050.

"I see an evolving attitude on energy by the president," said Sen. Lamar Alexander, who has called for 100 plants to be built in the next 20 years. Alexander, R-Tenn., said Obama's mention of nuclear energy in the address Wednesday night was the most important statement that the president has made on nuclear power.

"Up until now, the administration has been pursuing a national windmill policy instead of a national energy policy, which is the military equivalent of going to war in sailboats," he said.

Well before the speech, three senators cobbling together a Senate energy and climate bill - Massachusetts Democrat John Kerry, Connecticut independent Joe Lieberman and South Carolina Republican Lindsey Graham - were pledging to include more in the bill for nuclear energy and offshore drilling to secure the necessary 60 votes to overcome a likely filibuster from opponents.

What's unclear is whether Obama's endorsement will help. It could attract more Republican and moderate Democrats. But nuclear energy and offshore drilling may alienate some liberal Democrats and environmentalists. One environmental group, Friends of the Earth, called it "a kick in the gut."

Graham, in an Associated Press interview, said Obama's speech was an opening that he hoped to take advantage of to court more GOP support. But he said some pro-nuclear Republicans, while pleased with the president's remarks, are nervous about the other part of the bill - a plan to limit heat-trapping pollution, which will raise energy costs.

"The president did a great job putting nuclear on the table in a robust way, as well as offshore drilling for oil and natural gas," said Graham. "I hope Republicans understand we have a once in lifetime chance, but in return we have to come up with emissions standards."

Lieberman praised Obama for "reaching out beyond the Democratic Party base," but said it may not be enough to win the support of Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz. McCain criticized Obama's stance on nuclear power during the 2008 campaign, but has backed efforts to reduce global warming.

McCain spokeswoman Brooke Buchanan said that while the senator was encouraged, the administration needs to address reprocessing and disposal if nuclear power is to be a viable option.

On Friday, the Department of Energy announced a bipartisan commission to investigate alternatives to Yucca Mountain.

The nuclear energy industry is waiting to see what else the administration will deliver. Its wish list includes more financing for loan guarantees, as well as tax incentives for nuclear energy manufacturing and production facilities.

"The turnaround in the last year has just been astounding and welcome," said Jim Connaughton, the former chairman of the White House Council of Environmental Quality under President George W. Bush. Connaughton now works for Constellation Energy, the Baltimore-based energy company that owns a stake in five nuclear reactors and is seeking to build more.

"There is no question that if you look at the votes, for a majority of them that have been on the fence, restoring America's leadership in nuclear energy is an essential requirement."

### **UN says nations' greenhouse gas pledges too little**

The Associated Press

In the Modesto Bee, Mon., Feb. 1, 2010

UNITED NATIONS -- The goals set by the world's biggest polluters for emissions rollbacks will likely fall short of what many scientists say is necessary to avoid the disastrous effects of global warming.

The climate adviser to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says the U.S., China and the European Union were among the 50 nations to have submitted plans in keeping with a United Nations deadline to do so before Monday.

Janos Pasztor says the commitments so far will make it "quite difficult" to prevent temperatures from rising more than 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above preindustrial levels, a key agreement at the Copenhagen climate conference in December.

[Fresno Bee Earth Blog, Sun., Jan. 31, 2010:](#)

### **3 meetings on new ozone standard; none in Valley or LA**

By Mark Grossi

There will be three hearings on the proposed new ozone standard -- one in Virginia, one in Houston and one in Sacramento.

No hearings will be held in the nation's two most ozone-troubled places, the San Joaquin Valley and the South Coast Air Basin. Between the two, there were more than 200 ozone violations last year.

No two air basins outside of California even come close to that total. Yet, Valley and Southern California residents will have to drive for hours to speak with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The meeting will be from 9:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Thursday at the Four Points by Sheraton at Sacramento International Airport, 4900 Duckhorn Drive.

[O.C. Register blog, Thurs., Jan. 28, 2010:](#)

### **Hot deal: Switch to gas logs, get \$125**

posted by Pat Brennan, green living, environment editor

The region's smog-control agency is offering a \$125 rebate to homeowners who convert their wood-burning fireplaces to gas.

The program, meant to reduce air pollution from wood smoke, proved so popular that it sold out in December after 5,000 people used it to convert their fireplaces.

The program was recently expanded by the South Coast Air Quality Management District to cover an additional 2,500 homeowners.

Prices for such conversion sets vary, but \$125 covers most or all of the installation cost, said air district spokesman Sam Atwood.

Residents of Orange County and parts of Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside counties can go to the Healthy Hearths Initiative Web page, find out if they live in a qualifying Zip code, and locate a fireplace dealer nearby.

The \$125 is taken off the purchase and installation price at the time of sale.

Wood smoke produces fine-particle pollution, which can work its way deeply into lungs and cause a variety of health problems.

Such pollution from sources including wood-burning fireplaces has been linked to 6,200 premature deaths in California every year, according to the California Air Resources Board.

[Fresno Bee commentary, Sat., Jan. 30, 2010:](#)

### **Wood burning fires impact the neighbors**

By Gunnar H. Jensen

Thanks to the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District, this has been the best winter in years. For my family, "best" has meant the fewest number of early morning "wake-ups" caused by sore throats, coughing and difficulty breathing. It has also been the best for being able to actually go outside, hang out in the garage or backyard, all without that searing, burning in the throat and lungs associated with the acrid smell of wood smoke.

In no small part this thanks goes to the district's enforcers who have patiently, diligently and professionally responded to numerous calls for assistance. These are the men and women whose difficult task it is to talk to, cajole, and eventually cite those residents who believe their right to burn trumps regulation.

The Bee and reporter Mark Grossi also share in this gratitude for the ongoing efforts to educate us all about the complex, and difficult mission to clean up our deadly air.

However, more effort is indicated.

In a Nov. 27 story, Mr. Grossi reported 800 pre-mature deaths in the Valley are blamed on PM 2.5, a constituent ingredient of wood smoke pollution. I believe I know something about those who are dying.

I'll bet those 800 people live (or lived) down wind of smoke emitting chimneys that go unreported, or undetected. (It is nearly impossible for enforcers to "gather evidence" of smoke emitted on foggy days, or at night.) These are areas where more could be done to reduce the ill effects of air pollution.

First, it is imperative to realize that those people who live proximate to chimneys that emit wood smoke are experiencing pollution at a much higher concentration than that detected by air monitoring equipment strategically placed to gather information on "likely," area-wide, ambient air quality.

We no longer allow second-hand cigarette smoke in many venues, but do much less to respond to the dangers of wood smoke imposed on many people just trying to live in their homes.

For those of us living down wind of smoky chimneys, we truly are the "canaries in the coal mine." Why not treat us that way? I propose that, if it is not already, "human experience" ought to be factored into "No Burn Day" determinations. School districts' accounting of sick days due to respiratory ailments, reported ER visits due to asthma and other respiratory problems, and yes, complaints phoned into the district -- all these should be "weighted" in concert with ambient air quality measurements to become part of the determination process.

Enforcers should also be provided improved detection equipment to help them in their efforts to protect us from violations of wood and waste burning.

Investments should be made to augment residential adoption of cleaner heating technologies. Wood burning is expensive, labor intensive and dirty.

Finally, we are not angry with, nor do we dislike our neighbors who burn wood. To the contrary, in every other respect, ours are great neighbors. We even attempted once to coax one upwind neighbor with a six pack of Heineken. We tried to explain that we had spent thousands on new windows, HVAC "hepa" filters and systems to reduce the effects of smoke coming from his chimney.

Nothing. He said he could do nothing because he has the right to heat his home with wood. We're still hopeful he will one day see we should also have a right to breathe in ours.

*Gunnar H. Jensen is a teacher for the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and a lifelong resident of Fresno.*

[Modesto Bee and Sacramento Bee, commentary, Mon., Feb. 1, 2010](#)

### **Dan Walters: Is California green tech salvation or a pipe dream?**

By Dan Walters

As California imposes tough new emission rules – particularly on business – to reduce its carbon footprint, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger insists that "cleaning the environment, fighting global warming ... it's also great for the economy" by fostering green technology.

A few days earlier, his Employment Development Department had announced that the state's unemployment rate in December was 12.4 percent, with employers having eliminated 38,800 jobs in just one month.

Notwithstanding chronic budget deficits, the governor proposes a sales tax exemption for green technology manufacturing equipment, warning last week that as green investment expands, "it's going to be competitive, (and) California has to be competitive." California is one of only a few states without such an exemption.

Call The Bee's Dan Walters, (916) 321-1195. Back columns,

MiaSolé, a fast-growing maker of thin solar panels based in Santa Clara, is exactly what Schwarzenegger and other green dreamers have in mind.

MiaSolé, with a hefty dose of venture capital and a major recipient of Obama administration technology tax credits, has begun shipping its thin solar panels, based on "copper indium gallium selenide" rather than silicon, to customers from its Santa Clara plant, which employs several hundred workers.

"We believe the award is a reflection of the Department of Energy's confidence in MiaSolé's technology and business model," said CEO Joseph Laia when the \$100-plus million tax credit was announced, adding that "we look forward to ramping our manufacturing capacity and creating jobs aided by these funds."

The local assumption is that MiaSolé will expand operations in California. Will it? Or will it and other green tech firms emulate computer and software companies, which retain management and development operations in California but have shifted manufacturing – and blue collar jobs – to other venues with lower costs?

Take, for example, the solar panel business that Bob Hertzberg founded after ending his stint as speaker of the California Assembly. Hertzberg said he tried to establish manufacturing operations in California but, as he told one interviewer, "The government loves its cockamamie forms. With all the money and time it took us to go through the regulatory maze, we were basically chased out of the country."

Hertzberg, who also heads California Forward, a government reform group, located his solar shop in Wales instead.

A few days after MiaSolé's federal tax credit coup was announced, a brief item appeared in the Atlanta Business Chronicle, saying flatly that MiaSolé "is planning a manufacturing plant in metro Atlanta that could employ up to 1,000." The half-million-square-foot plant, the Chronicle said, "could be one of the largest solar factories in the United States."

MiaSolé is being mum, saying only that it would announce a second solar panel plant later this year.

[O.C. Register commentary, Fri., Jan. 29, 2010:](#)

### **Reader Rebuttal: Global warming law**

By Cynthia Verdugo-Peralta

Energy efficiency specialist, former board member, South Coast Air Quality Management District

As an energy efficiency specialist who has spent three decades working in the field of energy, it troubles me that a vocal chorus of critics of clean energy and energy efficiency are now actively working to dismantle California's historic energy security and climate law, Assembly Bill 32 ["Freeze global warming regulations" Editorial, Dec. 18]. These critics, buoyed by a misguided ballot measure introduced by Assemblyman Dan Logue to suspend AB32 for what would likely be an indefinite period of time, argue incorrectly that investing in clean energy, energy efficiency, and our future energy independence is bad for business in California.

So, then why are critics, like the California Small Business Roundtable, fighting AB32?

The truth is that there is money to be made and jobs to be created in the field of clean and efficient energy practices and measures. When it comes to job growth, there is substantial, irrefutable evidence that growing more efficient and greener will create jobs, not kill them in California. In addition, operating equipment more efficiently equates to saving money.

The nonprofit, nonpartisan organization Next 10 recently published the most comprehensive accounting to date of green businesses, jobs and green job growth throughout the state. The report found that California green businesses have increased 45 percent in number and 36 percent in employment from 1995-2008 while total jobs in California expanded 13 percent. Additionally, as the economy slowed between 2007-08, total employment in California fell 1 percent, but green jobs showed growth of 5 percent.

Having served seven years as the governor's air pollution control specialist on the South Coast Air Quality Management District board, it is obvious to me that the critics of AB32, also fail to recognize the serious health and air quality risks (which eventually become economic risks) of failing to clean up our emissions. The Los Angeles Basin and the San Joaquin Valley have the dirtiest air in the nation.

A perfect example of the lack of ingenuity to utilize the newest, cleanest emission control technology is the proposed Canyon Power Project, a 200-megawatt "peaker" power plant slated to be built in Anaheim. Because this plant is "meant" to supply energy only during high demand periods, it will not have to meet the same environmental requirements as other power plants. In other words, it won't need to be as "clean" and has the potential to pollute and harm residents of

the surrounding cities of Placentia, Brea and Yorba Linda. All power plants in the state of California should be made to operate at the cleanest level, which is a combined-cycle, natural-gas-fired power plant, with the cleanest emission control technology available.

Knowing what we now know about the political, economic and human cost of oil dependence and the price tag of inefficiency for homeowners and small businesses alike, how can anyone reasonably argue that waste, energy inefficiency, and polluted air will create long-term, sustainable economic prosperity?

[Letter to the Fresno Bee, Fri., Jan. 29, 2010:](#)

### **Don't blame all wood fires**

Regarding Diane Merrill's letter Jan. 19, "Unwelcome smoky air," don't lay a blanket of blame on all wood-burning residents. Blame those who do not burn cleanly.

On permissive burn days, I heat my home with an EPA-certified compliant noncatalytic combustion system wood burning stove. Properly used, this stove and others like it do not emit visible smoke. The particulate ratings on my stove are well within EPA standards. On allowable winter burn days, my home is much warmer, and I save the cost of heating with gas through PG&E.

I'm frustrated because I'm doing my part to protect our winter Valley air, yet I see copious amounts of smoke billowing from non-environmentally friendly open fireplace chimneys (which, though offering ambience, are inefficient and ineffective at heating anything more than about five or so feet away), and probably outdated, noncompliant or improperly used wood stoves all over town. Because of them, clean wood burners like me are becoming more and more limited in permissive burn days.

I don't appreciate seeing and breathing the second-hand smoke from my upwind neighbor's unclean burning either. But it isn't the fault of the wood. It is the fault of environmentally unfriendly, unclean burning by the resident.

*Susan Gorder, Fresno*

[Bakersfield Californian, Letter to the Editor, Sat., Jan. 30, 2010:](#)

### **Thanks Lois, for moxie**

Columnist Lois Henry is such a breath of fresh air (pun intended). I thoroughly delight in reading about her tireless efforts to make public agencies accountable to the people.

I hope she keeps exposing these injustices and enlightening the public. Cleaner air, lower PG&E bills and Kern River water flowing through Bako along the bike path are just a few examples of how her dedication and moxie affect us.

*Janet Andrea, Bakersfield*

[Letter to the Contra Costa Times, Fri., Jan. 29, 2010:](#)

### **Guard air law**

It's a new year, and rather than progressing on global warming and clean air, one of the Senate's first acts could do the opposite. I want our senators to oppose recent outrageous efforts to undermine the Clean Air Act.

This year should start in a way that reflects our amazing accomplishments from last year: moving the ball forward to passage of comprehensive clean energy and climate legislation.

Instead, our elected leaders are proposing policies that would set us back decades and let the worst polluters completely off the hook.

Despite the alarm bells sounding the need to address the climate crisis and stop polluting the air our families breathe and the water we drink, Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski and her polluter allies are attacking the CAA for the second time in six months.

Murkowski's proposal is nothing less than a "Dirty Air Act." It would undermine the CAA — one of the most successful public policies in history — that has greatly reduced the pollution that poisons our air and water, and protects Americans' health countrywide.

We can't let this attack on the CAA succeed. We can't let the biggest polluters off the hook and put public health and welfare at risk.

*Steve Pisani, Richmond*

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses breweries in California distill millions of tons of waste annually for a new project that will produce fuel from industry's waste. For more information on this or other Spanish clips, contact Claudia Encinas at \(559\) 230-5851.](#)

### **Cervecerías producirán gasolina de desechos**

**A partir de la levadura residual, será posible producir millones de galones de gasolina utilizando convertidores caseros**

Armando Varela

La Raza, February 01, 2010

Cervecerías californianas destinan miles de toneladas de su desperdicio anual para un novedoso proyecto de producir combustible a partir de sus desechos industriales.

Karl Strauss Brewing Company, con sede en San Diego, es una de tres cervecerías californianas que en asociación con la compañía ecológica GreenHouse provee unas 29,000 toneladas de su desperdicio anual para convertir el alcohol residual en etanol.

"Cuando se empezó este proyecto y se vio lo valioso que era la levadura residual nos preguntaron si podíamos ser unos de sus miembros fundadores", dijo Melody Daversa, gerente de mercadotecnia de Karl Strauss.

La idea es aprovechar al máximo el alto contenido de alcohol que tienen estos residuos y transformarlos en combustible para autos por medio de un convertidor conocido como Microfueler.

Se trata de un surtidor de gasolina personalizado, recientemente inventado por Tom Quinn y el científico Floyd Butterfield, que le entrega a los particulares la posibilidad de producir combustibles en su casa mediante un proceso relativamente simple y con materias primas como la levadura y la celulosa, entre otras.

"Básicamente se utiliza la levadura residual que se deja sedimentar y que tiene un 5% de etanol y se corre luego por una unidad de destilación en la planta o en las unidades de 'e-fuel', y el etanol termina siendo bombeado en un carro", explicó Shawn Steele, gerente de calidad de la cervecería.

Según cifras de Quinn, presidente de e-fuel, empresa que produce los Microfuelers y está asociada con GreenHouse, anualmente en Estados Unidos se desperdician unos 100,000 millones de galones de combustibles líquidos que podrían ser aprovechados en programas similares.

Para los procesadores iniciales como la cervecería Karl Strauss, el sistema es doblemente ventajoso, porque además ahorran recursos que antes utilizaban para deshacerse del material.

"Tiene todo el sentido, nos beneficia a nosotros en mercadeo y nos beneficia en costo. Es lo correcto", aseguró Steele.

Los camiones de GreenHouse recogen este combustible semiprocesado de la planta y lo cargan en los surtidores y el convertidor lo procesa para obtener etanol a un precio de 2 dólares el galón.

El etanol que resulta del proceso es menos eficiente que la gasolina tradicional, pero también un 38% menos contaminante, pues produce una menor proporción de monóxido de carbono, de acuerdo con datos de los productores.

El primer surtidor experimental se encuentra ubicado en el hogar de Quinn y aprovecha la legislación estadounidense que permite a un particular producir hasta 10,000 galones anuales de combustible derivado del alcohol, como el etanol, aunque le prohíbe venderlo a terceros.

Y con el fin de impulsar el desarrollo del proyecto, entre otros varios, el gobierno ofrece un incentivo crediticio de 5,000 dólares como parte de los 10,000 que cuesta el convertidor y que según los cálculos de GreenHouse, se pagaría en dos años.

El programa ha atraído además la atención de otras cervecerías como Sierra Nevada Brewing Co, una de las más grandes y poderosas de California, que anunció a mediados del año pasado un acuerdo con GreenHouse para instalar varios convertidores en su planta de Chico y utilizar su propio etanol en sus camiones distribuidores.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses bio-fuel created by bacteria. The manipulation of Escherichia Coli, which generally is found in the intestine of animals, can generate two types of high energy bio-fuels.](#)

### **Biocombustible a partir de una bacteria**

#### **Su origen sería el intestino de animales**

Univision, Monday, February 1, 2010

LONDRES- La manipulación de la bacteria Escherichia Coli, que generalmente se halla en los intestinos animales, puede generar dos tipos de biocombustible de alta energía a partir de azúcares simples.

Una biomasa derivada de plantas

Así lo indica un estudio publicado esta semana en la revista científica Nature, según el cual se trata de los ésteres grasos y los alcoholes igualmente grasos.

Un grupo de expertos de la universidad de California, en Berkeley, describe cómo mediante ulteriores alteraciones las bacterias llegan a expresar y secretar enzimas hemicelulasas.

Las alteraciones genéticas posibilitan el que las bacterias produzcan directamente esas moléculas a partir de un componente de biomasa derivada de las plantas.

El futuro de los biocombustibles

El constante incremento de los costes energéticos y las crecientes preocupaciones medioambientales han puesto de relieve la necesidad de buscar nuevas fuentes de combustible renovable.

Los expertos creen que la conversión microbiana de carbohidratos derivados de la biomasa será la ruta más efectiva y de mayor rendimiento para obtener en un futuro biocombustible.

El descubrimiento del equipo de esa universidad californiana, dirigido por Jay Kaesling, supone un paso importante hacia la consecución de ese objetivo.

Según los investigadores, este descubrimiento facilitará eventualmente la producción de biocombustibles y compuestos químicos renovables a gran escala y de manera efectiva.