

Air quality plummets as Valley temps soar

By Eddie Jimenez, The Fresno Bee
Tuesday, Sept. 28, 2010

Poor air quality is likely in the Valley this week because of an expected string of 100-degree days and pollution worsened by smoke drifting in from the Sheep fire in Sequoia National Forest and Kings Canyon National Park.

Adding to the unhealthy mix are fall pollens and the arrival of the cold and virus season, said Dr. A.M. Aminian, a Fresno allergist.

"When you put all these things together, everyone needs to be very careful," Aminian said.

But compared to Southern California and even the nearby Central Coast, the Valley is getting off relatively easy. A blistering fall heat wave sent temperatures to an all-time record high of 113 degrees in downtown Los Angeles on Monday and roasted even coastal cities in triple digits.

San Luis Obispo's official high temperature of 109 degrees Monday at Cal Poly broke a record for a second straight day, beating the 104 degrees recorded in 1993, according to local weather forecaster John Lindsey. The early fall blast of intense heat follows an unusually cool summer.

A high of 103 is predicted for Fresno today and 101 for Wednesday, said the National Weather Service in Hanford. Both forecast temperatures are one degree below records for those dates. Thursday's high is expected to be 100. A high of 97 is forecast for Friday.

A ridge of high pressure over the western U.S. is driving Valley temperatures well above the normal mid-80s highs for this time of year, the weather service said.

Overnight lows will be in the mid-60s this week.

Aminian said conditions over the next few days will create health risks for older adults, children, asthmatics and allergy sufferers. He also warned that respiratory problems can aggravate symptoms in people with other health issues, such as heart conditions and diabetes.

Aminian advised some precautions:

- Limit outdoor activity, especially during the air pollution peak hours between noon and 7 p.m.
- People should shower and wash their hair at the end of the day to cleanse themselves of exposure to particulate matter that can lead to respiratory problems.
- Make sure medications for chronic conditions are taken as prescribed.
- Drink plenty of water.

Education Roundup

Bakersfield Californian, Tuesday, Sept. 28, 2010

Students in Laurel Glen Elementary School in the Panama-Buena Vista Union School District will take the bus to school Oct. 8, but the wheels on the bus will be their sneakers.

That's because the students will be boarding "walking school buses" to celebrate International Walk to School Day to bring awareness to physical activity, pedestrian safety, traffic congestion and to build community connections.

Teams of volunteer parents and district staff will walk students to class, picking them up at stops along the way. The school will hold a celebration when they arrive to campus.

In March, The Californian reported that districts throughout Kern County were looking at transportation costs in making budget cuts. Panama officials said they came across the "walking

school bus" idea when searching for ways to trim costs. They found it would not. The district has a one-mile walking rule for all grades -- students past one mile can ride a bus.

In the United States, International Walk to School Day is expected to include 5,000 schools from all 50 states.

Bad air quality forecast today

Hanford Sentinel, Tuesday, Sept. 28, 2010

The Sheep Fire in Fresno County is adding to poor air quality in Kings County this morning.

Exposure to particulate pollution can cause serious health problems, according to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. These can include aggravated lung disease, asthma attacks and acute bronchitis.

Older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure to the bad air quality, and strenuous activities or heavy exertion should be avoided.

[Merced Sun-Star editorial, Tuesday, Sept. 28, 2010:](#)

Our View: Prop. 23 deserves to go down

California needs to have a reasoned debate about how to best implement AB 32, not to delay it.

California has a long history of enacting groundbreaking environmental laws that come under fierce attack from polluters and outside corporations.

The state's 1966 limits on tailpipe emissions, its 1976 restrictions on lead in gasoline, its 1999 regulations on volatile organic compounds and its 2004 limits on greenhouse gases from automobiles -- all were fought by oil companies, automakers or other industries.

Eventually, California's laws became the national standard, helping to produce a cleaner environment for hundreds of millions of people.

So it shouldn't come as any surprise that oil companies from Texas and Kansas are bankrolling the campaign to suspend Assembly Bill 32, the 2006 state law that seeks to limit greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

These are industries that find it cheaper to finance lawsuits and initiatives than to help share in the cost of a cleaner world.

This time, the stakes are much higher.

If Proposition 23 were to pass on Nov. 2, it would be a major setback to state, national and international efforts to fight global warming, which the National Academy of Sciences and other groups have deemed a threat to the planet.

It would also send a positive signal to out-of-state companies who might want to reach into California and overturn all kinds of state laws -- ranging from consumer protection to insurance regulation.

Three oil companies, Valero, Tesoro and Koch Industries, have so far pumped \$8 million into the Proposition 23 campaign. They are the major forces behind a misleading effort to persuade voters that AB 32 is harming the state's economy and is a threat to economic recovery.

There are two big problems with this argument.

The California Air Resources Board has yet to implement AB 32, so the law's pending regulations have had no impact on the state's economy.

If anything, AB 32 has helped grow some jobs, encouraging an influx of investment by companies developing solar power, wind power and businesses promoting energy efficiency.

If Proposition 23 were to pass, AB 32 would be put on hold until unemployment falls to 5.5 percent for a full year. That has happened three times since 1976. In effect, the law would indefinitely be suspended, forcing clean energy businesses to rethink their investments.

One of these is Propel Fuels, which moved to Sacramento to develop low-carbon fuels.

"If there is a major change in the regulatory environment, that could cause us to reconsider, and we'd scale back the speed and size of our build-out," said Chief Executive Matt Horton in an interview published in The Sacramento Bee in May.

Will AB 32 eventually impose costs on certain industries? Undoubtedly it will.

Cities and industries that depend on cheap, imported coal power will have to pay more for their electricity, giving them an incentive to be more efficient in their power use. But businesses and regions that are already making a transition to cleaner energy will be rewarded for their efforts.

Proponents of Proposition 23 say it makes no sense for a single state to control greenhouse gases. After all, they note, California's emissions are just a small slice of the emissions that are building up in the atmosphere.

While it's true that California can't go it alone, it also can't skirt its responsibility, especially in the face of disingenuous arguments by outside oil industries.

These are some of the same companies that have funded efforts to block a climate change law in Congress and spread doubts about the science of global warming. Now they are hoping to derail California's law. They are coming in for the kill.

California needs to have a reasoned debate about how to best implement AB 32 -- at what pace, and with what mechanisms. The goal should be to get the quickest emissions reductions at the lowest cost, creating a model for the nation as a whole, and other nations.

Yet suspending AB 32 is not the answer. Quite the opposite. It would be a disaster.

So think about that when you cast your vote-by-mail ballot or go to the polls on Nov. 2. Your decision, and the decision of all Californians, will be watched across the globe.