

[Letter to the Bakersfield Californian, Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2013:](#)

We're improving our air quality

The author of the Aug. 8 letter "Blaming China for our bad air is misleading" does not provide all the facts.

He knows darn well that the air quality monitor at Arvin was not arbitrarily moved in 2011 by the valley air board but at the request of the property owner. Further, the monitor did not belong to the valley air board but to the California Air Resource Board. As a result, CARB moved the monitor to a location within walking distance of Di Giorgio Elementary School. (Makes sense to me to be monitoring the air our kids are breathing in their immediate area.)

The cold hard facts are that our air is getting better thanks to the hard work of all our citizens. It is interesting that the folks on the far left seem to have a problem acknowledging positive results.

As to the matter of science, I will continue to rely on the good information provided by our executive director Seyed Sadredin of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District rather than radical left-wingers from Sacramento and Washington.

The valley air board is working with the EPA with the hope that they agree, when we meet air standards, the \$29 million dollar fine will be out of our lives. We're close. Keep up the good work, Kern County. As for the letter writer, if it makes him feel better, he can go hug a tree.

Harold Hanson, Bakersfield City Council

[Sacramento Bee column, Wednesday, Sept. 11, 2013:](#)

Blazing a new trail, Sierra Club risks losing its relevancy

By Dan Morain

You'd think that the mother of landmark legislation to curb greenhouse gas and reduce tailpipe emissions might be entitled to a little respect from the most well-known environmentalist group of them all.

Sen. Fran Pavley is the gray-haired green lawmaker whose name sits atop AB 32, the 2006 bill that requires California to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels, and the 2002 bill that established tailpipe standards for this state and that Barack Obama ultimately adopted for the nation.

Now, Pavley is taking the lead with Assemblyman Adam Gray, D-Merced, on legislation to impose the toughest regulations anywhere in the nation on fracking, the technique for extracting petroleum from deep under the Earth's surface.

To no one's surprise, the oil industry is not pleased with the legislation, convinced that it would require drillers to jump through too many hoops. Senate Bill 4 also faces opposition from an unlikely source on the left, the Sierra Club.

The iconic organization has broken from most other environmentalist groups, contending that SB 4 would protect the likes of Halliburton, the oil services giants once led by Dick Cheney, and has the fingerprints of the American Legislative Exchange Council, the industry-funded group that develops conservative legislative concepts.

The claims, which have little if any basis in reality, illustrate what some legislators and veteran lobbyists and staffers are concluding: The Sierra Club is a caricature of itself and has lost relevancy inside the Capitol.

Senate Bill 4, which faces a key Assembly vote as early as today, would force companies involved in fracking to publicly list ingredients that compose the concoctions used to fracture the earth. No other state requires that, a point many environmentalist organizations hail.

But the bill would not go the next step by requiring that companies disclose the exact formula, and that runs afoul of the Sierra Club, which wants the exact recipe – which would be a recipe for protracted litigation over violation of trade secrets.

In an email blasted to Sierra Club members, chief Sacramento lobbyist Kathryn Phillips invoked the National Security Agency's spying on our phone calls, a stretch.

"At a time when the federal government has decided it has the right to monitor phone calls and emails of ordinary citizens, our state government is working to prevent ordinary citizens from knowing the contents of oil industry pollution that could leach into groundwater. What would the Founding Fathers think?" the email says,

The Sierra Club missive went on to claim that the Democratic Legislature is doing the bidding of Halliburton, whose name is designed to get a rise from the left.

"Is it wise to trust regulators and fracking fluid makers like Halliburton to protect our interests? We don't think so," the email said, concluding: "The legislature shouldn't help the oil industry hide the facts from ordinary citizens."

Questions of purity aside, the Sierra Club engaged in some real politics last month. To help fight SB 4, the Sierra Club retained the lobbying firm headed by David Quintana, a Republican. His firm is known for representing Indian tribes, which, as it happens, need not comply with California's strict environmental regulations.

The Sierra Club's stand against the Pavley-Gray bill is not unique. The organization has broken with other environmentalist groups on several other measures, including ones by Pavley and Assemblyman Henry Perea, D-Fresno, authorizing billions to be spent in the coming years on alternative energy.

The Sierra Club is aligned with the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, which views Perea's AB 8 and Pavley's SB 11 as allowing tax hikes. The legislation does raise questions about pork barrel spending.

But that's not the focus of the Sierra Club's opposition. Rather, the club frets about an arcane provision to abolish a regulation related to hydrogen fueling stations for hydrogen vehicles that don't yet exist.

"If you're an all-or-nothing person or organization, that's a difficult place to be in politics," said Pavley, a 40-year member of the Sierra Club.

Phillips, who took over the Sierra Club's Sacramento operation two years ago after working for the more moderate Environmental Defense Fund, said the club is merely following the lead of its founder John Muir, famous for refusing to compromise over the damming of Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park.

The Sierra Club's stands in California are a reflection of a view within the environmental movement that the old guard compromised too much, to what end. Climate change is upon us, despite all the past efforts. There is another change afoot: Competition is intense for membership and donors' dollars. Hard stands can help with organizing. Rigidity might help the club with fundraising, though it may not advance the democratic process.

San Joaquin Valley air district seeks kids' calendar contest entries

Staff reports

The Fresno Bee, Monday, Sept. 9, 2013

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is seeking creative student artists to submit their work for the 2014 Healthy Air Living Kids' Calendar contest.

Valley students, from kindergarten through high school, are asked to create artwork illustrating the ways Valley residents can live healthy air lives, with accompanying clean-air messages. Artwork should be in color on 8-1/2 by 11 inch paper, in landscape orientation.

Fourteen pieces of art will be selected for the calendar. Artists must include their name, address, phone and/or email contact, age, grade and school on the back of the entry.

Participants should mail art flat, not folded, to 2014 Kids Calendar, Valley Air District, 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave., Fresno, CA 93726, or submit it to the nearest district office. The deadline for entries is Oct. 7.

For more information about the air district, visit www.valleyair.org or call (559) 230-6000.

Air pollution linked to heart-disease deaths

By Stephanie M. Lee

S.F. Chronicle, Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2013

It's common knowledge that chronic exposure to air pollution is linked to respiratory problems, but a new UC Berkeley-led study of California adults now links it to deaths from heart disease.

The analysis, which was funded by the California Air Resources Board, estimated the individual air-pollution exposures of more than 73,700 California residents. Researchers looked in particular at three types of air pollutants - fine particles, such as those found in smoke and haze; ozone, a greenhouse gas; and nitrogen dioxide, a marker of traffic pollution.

After tracking the mortality of the subjects from 1982 to 2000, the team concluded that all three pollutants were associated with death from heart disease. Researchers said this study was the first to show that ozone in particular increased risk of death from heart disease.

The study was published this month in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine.