

[Fresno Bee Earth Log, Wed., March 13, 2013:](#)

State Senate confirms Sherriffs as air board member

By Mark Grossi

The state Senate this week confirmed Dr. Alex Sherriffs as a governing board member on the California Air Resources Board.

Sherriffs is a Fowler physician and member of the governing board for San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. Known as a clean-air advocate, he was named to the local air board in late 2011 and the state board last year.

On the local board, he fills a seat dedicated to a health professions. On the state board, he is the Valley air district's representative. There is no compensation for either position, state officials said.

Cap and trade system lauded

Air Resources Board chief says it's working well

By Alex Breitler

Stockton Record, Thursday, March 14, 2013

STOCKTON - The head of the California Air Resources Board touted the state's controversial new carbon cap and trade program Wednesday at an annual green business and recycling exposition.

James Goldstene said the program, which had its first auction in November, gives the 500 or 600 largest facilities in California the flexibility to reduce emissions while still doing business.

Cap and trade is a key product of Assembly Bill 32, a 2006 law requiring the state to reduce carbon emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

"When we first embarked on this journey, there was a lot of question about the science of climate change, and I think since then to now, there are very, very few people who question the science," Goldstene said.

"We can see what's happening with the weather, we can see what's happening with ice melting. ...

"One of the important things we learned is that good science can drive good public policy, and that's what we have here."

Under cap and trade, businesses that emit a certain amount of carbon must either reduce emissions or purchase "allowances," or permits, from other businesses.

Some businesses have warned about the cost of complying with that regulation, but Goldstene said more than 90 percent of the needed allowances were actually given away by the state.

Auction proceeds will be used to create green jobs, he said.

"A clean environment and a good economy are not mutually exclusive," he said. "They go together well."

The REXPO exposition, hosted each year by the Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce, brought together close to 200 businesspeople, government officials and advocates to talk about ways to find that balance.

Beyond cap and trade, discussions Wednesday focused on the export of recyclable materials to China and how pollution generated there is swept over the Pacific Ocean to North America. Business owners want to create more jobs processing those recyclable materials here at home.

"We should know what's going on outside our borders and how are we being regulated because of that," said Brian Terrell, co-owner of Modesto-based American Recycling. "Many of our industrial customers have begun to invest out of California."

Diesel plant opens today at Port of Stockton

Victory Blue will produce fluid to cut pollution

By Reed Fujii

Stockton Record, Wednesday, March 13, 2013

Victory Blue, a Keller, Texas-based producer of diesel exhaust fluid used to reduce pollution from diesel engines, today will formally inaugurate its newest production and packaging facility, at the Port of Stockton.

Tom Paquin, president of Victory Blue, said Tuesday in Stockton that the new, 40,000-square-foot facility will "have the capacity of producing millions of gallons of product each year."

He cited the port's access to ocean as well as railroad transport in calling it an ideal location.

"We're pretty well-positioned to bring in urea from all around the world as well as domestically produced urea," Paquin said.

He hopes to tap the Stockton port's promised Marine Highway project to bring in shipping containers full of high-quality urea from the Port of Oakland. And Victory Blue also sees a good market in the Bay Area for diesel engine usage.

"I think it matches pretty well with everything we're looking for," Paquin said.

Port Director Richard Aschieris said he was happy to have Victory Blue lease space for its facility at the port's Rough and Ready Island.

"We are very excited to have them and have them here involved in activities that will ultimately help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in diesel engines," he said.

The port hosts other businesses benefiting the environment, including DTE Energy Co., which is converting a coal-fired power plant to a biomass facility; Community Fuels, a biodiesel producer; and Pacific Ethanol Inc.

"It's part of the port's interest in making space available for those companies that are looking to improve our environment," Aschieris said.

Paquin said the facility employs six workers, but he hopes to see that figure rise to 12 to 18 employees as demand and production increase. He declined to say how much the privately held company had invested in its Stockton facility.

DEF is used in many trucks, vans, agricultural and construction vehicles built since January 2010 that must meet the EPA's latest standards.

It is a mix of 67.5 percent deionized water and 32.5 percent urea. When sprayed into diesel exhaust in the presence of a catalyst, it breaks down oxides of nitrogen - a major component of smog - into nitrogen and water.

This so-called selective catalytic reduction technology offers many benefits, including greater fuel efficiency, improved engine reliability and a longer oil change interval, Victory Blue said in a news release.

Coalition forms to defend environmental law

Stockton Record, Tuesday, March 12, 2013

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Labor and environmental groups on Tuesday joined some of the more liberal Democrats in the state Legislature in announcing a coalition to oppose reforms sought by Gov. Jerry Brown to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Overhauling the law to prevent abuse is one of the governor's top priorities this year, but opponents say the act has served a vital role in protecting the state's air and water over its four-decade history.

The group, calling itself Common Ground, issued a report to emphasize that message. The study by a University of Utah professor points to the state's record in building alternative-energy projects and maintaining construction jobs as evidence that the law is working.

"Has CEQA actually hindered construction? Far from it," said Bob Balgenorth, chairman of the California Construction Industry Labor Management Cooperation Trust. "If anything, it's facilitated greater construction, a cleaner environment and a better quality of life for Californians."

Defense of the law comes as Brown and the Legislature's Democratic leaders are negotiating changes after an attempt to pass a bill failed last year

The governor's office had no comment on the report, but Brown has advocated for more consistent standards in reviewing development projects.

A separate coalition of business, labor and government organizations supports changes to the law that would make it easier to build.

Opponents of revising the environmental act acknowledged criticism that the law has been misused by those who want to block projects for non-environmental reasons. But they argued that the law's benefits outweigh the number of times it has been used for frivolous lawsuits.

"The question for us today as policymakers and advocates is, is this claimed abuse enough to give away the next generation's clean air and clean water and the next generation's agricultural lands and open spaces and wild places?" said Sen. Noreen Evans, D-Santa Rosa. "We must not confuse private profit with public good."

Tougher air pollution regulations coming for San Joaquin Valley farmers

Central Valley Business Times, Thursday, March 7, 2013

The California Air Resources Board is planning two workshops to discuss development of regulations to reduce emissions from farming equipment such as tractors, combines and harvesters in the San Joaquin Valley.

It says tougher controls are needed to address both near-term and long-term requirements under the Clean Air Act to reduce levels of ozone and will apply to mobile agricultural equipment.

The first workshop will be held Thursday, March 14, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District offices in Fresno.

A live video feed of the workshop is planned for the air district's branch offices in Modesto and Bakersfield.

The second workshop will be Friday, March 15, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Cal/EPA Headquarters Building in Sacramento.

CARB is proposing a two-step approach to the rule-making to address agricultural sources of diesel emissions in the San Joaquin Valley.

CARB says that to be successfully implemented, any changes will need financial incentives from federal, state and local sources to pay for equipment upgrades and replacements as well as longer-term approaches, such as an equipment trade-down program, to maximize the use of the cleanest advanced technologies available for mobile agricultural equipment.