

Push to change Clean Air Act

Air Pollution Control District wants revision

By Alex Breitler, Record Staff Writer

Stockton Record and Lodi News Sentinel, Sunday, Sept. 20, 2015

The federal Clean Air Act could spell “economic devastation” for the San Joaquin Valley unless a series of changes are made, air quality regulators say.

Health advocates, meanwhile, argue that altering the law could cause another kind of devastation for those who breathe the Valley’s notoriously dirty air.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is proposing to tweak the Nixon-era law, which hasn’t been updated since 1990. The district says the Clean Air Act has contributed to “significant improvements” in air quality but is now proving burdensome for regions that are struggling to comply, including the Valley, which could ultimately face costly sanctions.

Seeking to bolster its case, the district’s governing board on Thursday agreed to submit a series of op-eds to newspapers from Stockton to Bakersfield.

Some details from the air district’s proposal:

- Regions would be required to meet only the most recent version of each air quality standard. Those standards are only getting stricter, and as things stand today, the Valley is required to meet decades-old standards that have long since been replaced.
- “Economic feasibility” should be taken into account when establishing deadlines to meet standards. In some cases, the district’s proposal says, technology to comply with the law isn’t yet available.
- Finally, the district’s plan allows for regulators to prioritize which pollutants are most important, to avoid certain contingency requirements if standards are not met, and to avoid being penalized for pollution that occurs as a result of population growth.

“Failure to correct the structural deficiencies in the (Clean Air) Act will lead to economic devastation for San Joaquin Valley residents and businesses without commensurate benefit in improving the region’s air quality,” the district’s draft newspaper piece reads.

Clean-air watchdogs criticized the air district’s plan last week, saying it would give the district the authority to determine its own path to clean air.

“If the goal is clean air, the district needs to focus on meeting the requirements of the Clean Air Act,” said Dolores Weller, director of the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition. “These amendments would make things easier for polluters, but won’t give us clean air.”

The district’s solutions, the group said in a subsequent letter, “are not solutions to cleaning their air, but solutions to avoiding sanctions.”

An air district staff report says officials there have met with Congressional representatives and are now attempting to marshal support from the general public and policymakers.

Air district seeks entries for kids’ calendar contest

By Marina Gaytan

Visalia Times Delta, Saturday, Sept. 19, 2015

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is seeking entries for a kids calendar contest.

The deadline is Oct. 5.

Guidelines for creating a winning healthy air living calendar include:

- Paper should be placed in landscape orientation.

- Artwork should be in color. Entries can be made in paint, pen, crayon, marker, pencil or computer-generated.

- Artwork should contain a message about how to live a healthy air life.

- Bilingual and Spanish-language messages are encouraged.

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

Twenty-thousand copies are printed and distributed free to schools, community groups, healthcare facilities, churches and nonprofits.

Mail artwork flattened to Valley Air District, 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave., Fresno, Calif., 93726. For more information, visit www.valleyair.org or call 230-6000.

Tune in and tune up at free smog event

By Marina Gaytan

Lodi News Sentinel, Friday, Sept. 18, 2015

Drivers who have owned a car for more than six months may qualify for an emissions test and diagnostic inspection during a free event Sept. 26.

The Tune In and Tune Up event begins at 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., at the International Agri-Center, 4500 S. Laspina St., in Tulare. Cars enter through gate "C" on the south grounds. It is open to those that are San Joaquin Valley residents and cars that have failed emissions testing. This event only provides emissions screenings.

No smog certificates will be issued at the event. Free food and drinks will be given starting at 9 a.m. The first 25 vehicles that qualify after the free emissions test will receive a \$500 voucher for repairs at a participating STAR smog shop. For more information, email info@valley-can.org or call 1-800-806-2004.

Healthy Air calendar

Sierra Star, Friday, Sept. 18, 2015

All students, grades K-12 from throughout the San Joaquin Valley, are invited to enter the Valley Air District's 2016 Healthy Air Living Kids Calendar Contest.

Fourteen colorful drawings, showcasing the valley's greatest artistic talent will be displayed as a result of this annual contest, which chooses from hundreds of entries Valley-wide, depicting messages about how to live a Healthy Air Life.

Guidelines for creating a winning entry are:

- * White paper should be placed sideways (landscape orientation) so it is 8-1/2 inches high and 11 inches across.

- * Artwork should be in color.

- * Artwork should contain a message about how to live a Healthy Air life. Examples from past calendars are "Walk more, drive less, it's beneficial!" "Pedal out pollution!" and "Do your share... Let's clean our air!"

- * Bilingual messages are encouraged.

Artists should include their name and address, phone number and/or e-mail contact, age, grade and school on the back of the artwork.

Send art flat, unfolded, to Outreach and Communications, Valley Air District – Calendar Contest, 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave., Fresno, CA 93726

For examples of 2015's calendar: valleyair.org/kids/docs/2015/2015KidsCalendar_WEB-spreads.pdf.

Oil producer buys emissions-reducing burners for steam plant in west Kern

By John Cox

Bakersfield Californian, Friday, Sept. 18, 2015

Encouraging results from an oil field demonstration project have persuaded Bakersfield-based Aera Energy LLC to purchase combustion-improvement technology for one of its steam generation plants in western Kern County.

The burner system Aera bought from Seattle-based ClearSign will be retrofitted onto one of the oil producer's Belridge steam generators in expectations it will lower the facility's nitrous oxide emissions, improve fuel efficiency and save some \$100,000 per year.

"Aera is committed to operating in an environmentally responsible manner, and that includes continually examining emerging technology," the Bakersfield company said in a written statement. It said it has arranged to purchase more equipment from ClearSign at its discretion while it continues to evaluate the Washington company's technology.

Aera uses steam to lower the viscosity of oil and make it easier to draw from its wells.

The Duplex burner system developed by ClearSign, a publicly traded company formed in 2009, uses a porous ceramic matrix to create many small flames that burn natural gas consistently at a relatively low temperature.

The small flames replace what is typically a single, large flame burning very hot in some spots, an inefficiency that can create nitrous oxide, or "NOx" emissions responsible for air pollution.

ClearSign's chief operating officer, Roberto Ruiz, said the demonstration project Aera hosted in Belridge reduced a steam generation unit's NOx emissions from a little less than 15 parts per million to less than 5 parts per million.

Meanwhile, the Duplex burner improved the plant's combustion efficiency by about 1 percent, which Ruiz said will save natural gas and electricity.

"We're going to allow (Aera) to meet some of the strictest NOx regulations in the country," he said, "and we're going to provide them with a return on investment by improving the thermal efficiency of the system and also reduce the amount of electricity that (Aera) has to consume in the current systems."

Two refineries in the Bakersfield area have also purchased Duplex burners from ClearSign, as has a small local oil producer. The company said it is marketing the system to other companies in Kern County, as well as Canadian oil producers.

Air district seeks entries for annual kids' calendar

Lodi News-Sentinel, Friday, Sept. 18, 2015

FRESNO — The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is seeking young students to enter for a chance to see their art in the annual Healthy Air Living Kids' Calendar.

The annual, full-color bilingual wall calendar is produced with the help of Valley students who illustrate how to live "healthy air" lives. The district prints 20,000 copies to distribute throughout the Valley.

Guidelines:

- Paper should be placed sideways, in landscape orientation.
- Artwork should be in color. Medium can be paint, pen, crayon, marker, pencil or even computer-generated art. Vivid colors that reproduce well are recommended.
- Artwork should contain a message about how to live a "healthy air" life. Examples of past messages are "Less cars, more feet," "Hacer del mundo un lugar major" and "Don't pollute! Keep the air clean."

- Bilingual messages are encouraged.

Artists must include their name and address, phone and/or email contact, age, grade and school on the back of the entry. The deadline for entries is Oct. 5. Please mail art flat, not folded, to: 2016 Kids Calendar, Valley Air District, 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave., Fresno, CA 93726.

For more information, visit www.valleyair.org.

Air District opens up calendar contest for kids

Sun-Star Staff

Merced Sun-Star, Friday, Sept. 18, 2015

Students in kindergarten through 12th grade are being invited by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to enter the 2016 Healthy Air Living Kids Calendar Contest.

Fourteen colorful drawings will be chosen for publication in a calendar featuring messages about cleaning Valley air.

Artwork must be submitted by Oct. 5.

Every year, the district distributes 20,000 of the calendars free of charge to schools, community groups, libraries, health care facilities, churches and nonprofit organizations. Each contest winner also receives 50 copies to distribute to family and friends.

For contest guidelines, go to www.valleyair.org/kidscalendar.

[Click here](#) for examples from 2015's calendar.