



VALLEY AIR NEWS

A special message from the Director

The Valley's severe air-quality problems present a unique opportunity for the Valley to shine.

We face a monumental challenge unmatched by any other area in the nation. Our climate and geography create optimal conditions for generating and trapping air pollution. Stagnant weather patterns, hot summers and cold winters leave us with a very low tolerance for air pollution and an extraordinary problem in dispersing it.

For instance, despite the Bay Area having six times more pollution per square mile than the Valley, that region enjoys good air quality most of the time because of the sea breezes that disperse its emissions. Los Angeles has a pollution density 10 times greater than ours, yet their air quality is only marginally worse – again, because of the atmospheric conditions.

With our natural low capacity for pollution, attaining the tough, new federal health-based standards may require an additional 60-percent reduction in smog-causing pollutants. Achieving these reductions in the timelines required by federal law will be a daunting task. To put this in perspective, we would not meet this goal if we in the Valley undertook any one of the following actions: shutting down all businesses; shutting down agriculture; removing all truck traffic; or removing all passenger cars. These are extreme and unrealistic measures offered only to illustrate the magnitude of our problem. Our ultimate strategy will require investment and participation from many sectors, including Valley businesses, the Air District, the general public, and state and federal air agencies.

Failure is not an option. Given our success to date in improving air quality,

plus the Valley's proven track record of hard work, I know that we have what it takes to get there.

Trust and confidence in our past efforts to clean the air are essential as we ask the public, the business community, the state and federal governments to invest in the Valley.

An assessment of our past work on air quality gives us a great deal to be proud of. By every measure, the Valley's air quality is improving. Since 1990, our smog and coarse particles have been reduced by more than half. In fact, the Valley air basin recently met a major milestone by attaining the federal coarse-particle standard.

Ours was the first region in the nation to take steps to regulate emissions from on-field agricultural operations and dairies; to require mitigation from new commercial, residential and industrial developments; and to control emissions from large wineries. The Valley Air District also was the first in the state to voluntarily expand the Smog Check II program, a model now used in the Bay Area.

We've successfully implemented some of the toughest air regulations in the nation, while offering businesses reasonable operational flexibility.

Over the next year, the Valley Air District will formulate a plan to meet the new standard. The Air District will host a series of town-hall meetings this month that will be a valuable source of information for the public and a place to generate innovative ideas. Please attend a meeting and become part of the process.

Sayed Sadredin
Air Pollution Control Officer/Executive Director

Air quality Town Hall meeting schedule

Wednesday July 26, Bakersfield
1pm to 4pm
Valley Air District Offices
2700 M St., Ste. 275

Wednesday July 26, Delano
7pm to 10pm
Cesar Chavez High School
800 Browning Road

Thursday July 27, Fresno
1pm to 4pm
Valley Air District Offices
1990 E. Gettysburg Ave.

Thursday July 27, Huron
7pm to 10pm
Huron Middle School
16875 4th St.

Friday July 28, Modesto
9am to Noon
Valley Air District Offices
4800 Enterprise Way

Friday July 28, Stockton
2:30pm to 5:30pm
San Joaquin Council
of Government Offices
555 E. Weber Ave.

EPA declares Valley's attainment

On July 6 the United States Environmental Protection Agency announced its proposal to classify the San Joaquin Valley as a federal attainment area for PM-10 (particulate matter measuring no more than 10 microns in diameter).

Data for the years 2003, 2004 and 2005 shows no violations of the federal clean air standard for this type of particle pollution.

The EPA's Clean Data Policy also shows that an area meeting attainment standards for PM10 is no longer required to have a contingency measures plan.