

News Release

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For Immediate Release



San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution
Control District

TO:

Local news sections

North District Media Contact – Modesto
Anthony Presto
(209) 557-6400

Central District Media Contact - Fresno
Jaime Holt or Kelly Hogan Morphy
(559) 230-6000

South District Media Contact - Bakersfield
Brenda Turner
(661) 326-6900

Air basin reaches another clean-air milestone

Data shows San Joaquin Valley meets federal 24-hour particulate standard

(Fresno, CA) - Air-monitoring data from 2003 through 2005 shows that the San Joaquin Valley air basin now meets a federal health-based standard for fine-particle pollution, called particulate matter 2.5 microns and smaller, or PM2.5. The data shows that the air basin meets the 24-hour standard, which takes into account fine-particle concentrations averaged over daylong periods.

Under current federal law, the District could have until 2015 to meet the fine-particle standard.

“This unprecedented accomplishment was made possible only by bold and innovative actions by the local air district’s governing board, major investments in clean-air technology by Valley businesses, and support from the general public,” said Seyed Sadredin, air pollution control officer and executive director for the Air District.

Fine particles include soot, dust, nitrates, smoke, salts and other chemicals. The tiny particles can aggravate lung disease, trigger asthma attacks and acute bronchitis, and increase risk of respiratory infections. The major sources of PM2.5 in the San Joaquin Valley are internal-combustion engines, such as those in diesel trucks, passenger cars, stationary pumps and other equipment; fireplaces and woodstoves; prescribed burning, such as wildland fires and range improvement, and farming operations.

The recent PM2.5 success comes on the heels of other reports revealing major progress in cleaning the Valley’s air. In July, the EPA announced a preliminary decision to reclassify the air basin as meeting the federal standards for larger particles, or PM10. Air-monitoring data also shows that Valley smog has been cut in half in recent years.

Despite the progress, Sadredin cautions that major work lies ahead to meet new, federal standards for particulates and ozone.

“Our unique geography and meteorology pose a tremendous challenge for the Valley in meeting the new, more stringent ozone standard and the soon-to-be-published, new standard for fine particles,” Sadredin said.

Later this month, the Air District will publish a draft plan for meeting the eight-hour ozone standard. The plan will include four strategies to reduce smog levels to meet current federal standards by the end of 2012. A workshop on the first draft is planned for mid-October. The plan must be submitted to the federal government by June 15, 2007. The Air District is required to issue a similar plan by April 2008 for meeting the current fine-particles standard.

The Valley Air District covers eight counties including San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the valley portion of Kern. For more information, visit www.valleyair.org or call the nearest District office: Modesto (209) 557-6400, Fresno (559) 230-6000 and Bakersfield (661) 326-6900.

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