

[Editorial, The Fresno Bee, Aug. 12, 2003:](#)

## **Stop your engines**

### **Truck stop power source aids driver comfort at far less cost.**

Idling truck engines are a small but galling part of air pollution here in the Valley and elsewhere. Sometimes those engines are idling all night long so that truckers taking their rest may run their air conditioners and enjoy television, videos or even have Internet access. But the rest of us must put up with those fumes, whether directly in close proximity, or indirectly, in the pollution they spread through the Valley's air.

IdleAire Technologies of Knoxville, Tenn., has an ingenious solution. For a mere \$1.25 per hour, truckers can shut off their own engines and hook up to IdleAire's power plant for all their amenities while at rest.

The devices are already in place at truck stops in Ripon, Santa Nella, Bakersfield and Lost Hills, among others.

Truckers work long and very hard hours, and need a restful comfort periodically.

That's also good for the rest of us, who must share the highways with truckers and their big rigs. Well-rested and alert drivers -- truckers or four-wheelers -- are much safer drivers.

In addition to causing pollution problems, the practice of idling truck engines overnight to power various accessories wears out those engines and wastes fuel that is better employed moving goods across the Valley, state and nation.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is encouraging use of the new system. "Any time an engine idles, it causes pollution," said district spokeswoman Josette Merced Bello. "This allows truckers to turn off their engines. From our perspective, it's fabulous. We'd like to see this system every five miles."

So would we.

## **Environmental report for new Delano prison challenged in court**

By Brian Skoloff, Associated Press Writer

In the Bakersfield Californian

Monday August 11, 2003, 05:20:15 PM

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) - Opponents of a new state prison in Delano told a federal appeals court Monday that the California Department of Corrections failed to adequately assess the project's effect on the region's water, air quality and farm preservation.

Although one Kern County judge previously deemed the CDC's environmental impact report for the 5,000-bed maximum-security facility to be adequate,

Friends of the Tipton Kangaroo Rat, Critical Resistance, and other groups are hoping to halt construction.

"The prison has converted 480 acres of important farm land to an industry - the prison industry," Babak Naficy, an attorney for Friends of the Kangaroo Rat, told the Fifth District Court of Appeal at Fresno Monday. Naficy said CDC should offset the loss of the prime farm land by purchasing conservation easements on surrounding farms to protect them from any future development. The institution's critics say a second court-ordered analysis showed the prison would use even more groundwater than farms do and deplete the region's aquifer.

The appeal also challenges CDC's analysis of the impact on traffic and air quality in the region.

CDC spokesman Russ Heimerich said the agency is confident the courts will allow construction to continue.

"We've been all through this. We've done the environmental reports. Everything is in order and has been in order," he said. "This is just another attempt by prison activists to further an agenda using the environment as a means to do that. They're disguising their opposition to the prison as some sort of environmental cause."

Heimerich said CDC needs more space to house a growing population of maximum security prisoners. If construction is halted at Delano, the first new state prison to be built since 1995, it could mean more violence in California's other prisons, he said.

"What we would have to do is what we've been doing, putting maximum security inmates in institutions that weren't really designed for them," Heimerich said.

The case is Friends of the Kangaroo Rat v. California Department of Corrections, F040956.

## **Environmental group takes legal action on diesel engines**

By Terence Chea, Associated Press Writer

In the Bakersfield Californian

Monday August 11, 2003, 04:30:15 PM

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) - A major environmental group is taking legal action against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to control air pollution from stationary diesel engines, a growing health hazard in California and other states.

Environmental Defense, based in New York, on Monday notified the EPA of its intent to sue the agency for its failure to establish nationwide emission standards for diesel-powered electrical generators and other stationary diesel engines.

The group also petitioned the EPA to add diesel exhaust to its list of hazardous air pollutants under the Clean Air Act. That status would require the agency to increase research and monitoring, as well as establish emission standards for

diesel exhaust. "This is one remaining loophole in the effort to control and clean up diesel," said John Balbus, Environmental Defense's health program director. "Right now, there's no real mechanism to get the EPA to address these engines."

The EPA acknowledged receipt of the group's petition and lawsuit notice, but had no comment on them Monday.

"We do view the problem of diesel engines very seriously, its damage to the environment and its effects on human health," said Mark Merchant, an EPA spokesman in San Francisco. "To that end, we've taken dramatic steps to combat them."

Numerous scientific studies have found that exposure to diesel exhaust is a likely cause of cancer, heart attacks and respiratory problems.

The EPA already has strict emissions standards for diesel trucks and buses, and recently proposed tougher standards for diesel-fueled equipment used in construction, agriculture and mining. But stationary diesel engines are not regulated.

Nationwide, companies are relying more on diesel-powered engines during periods of peak energy use, said Vickie Patton, a senior attorney at Environmental Defense.

The issue is important in California because the state increasingly relies on diesel-powered backup generators during electricity shortages, Balbus said.

It is estimated that California has more than 16,000 stationary or portable diesel engines of which 11,300 are used as backup power generators. Eight Northeastern states recently estimated they had a total of about 33,000 stationary diesel generators.

Such generators are a major health threat because they usually operate in densely populated areas. A recent Environmental Defense study found that in the South Coast, San Diego, San Joaquin and Sacramento areas, about 150,000 children attend schools in zones that use backup diesel generators.

Environmental Defense wants the EPA to require stationary diesel engines to meet stricter emissions standards.

The group filed its intent to sue the EPA in Washington, D.C., but it may file its lawsuit in California in two months. Environmental groups are required to give 60-day notice of their intent to sue the agency.

"We're hoping EPA will expand its work on diesel engines to include sources of diesel exhaust that fall through the cracks," Patton said.