

Valley fireplaces to lose a bit of their warm glow

By Rick Elkins

Tulare Advance Register

October 22, 2003

There is change in the air, and that change will affect how people heat their homes this winter.

New wood-burning restrictions begin Nov. 1. The new rules mean Tulare county residents with fireplaces will probably be prohibited from burning wood logs in them six or eight days during the winter, said Josette Merced Bello of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.



Johanna Vossler

Larry Wildebaour, an appliance sales/service representative for Canby's on East Tulare Avenue, says the Heat-N-Glo gas insert is pretty close to wood burning in looks.

The new regulations, adopted earlier this year, are designed to reduce air pollution in the fall and winter. The rules apply to fireplaces, stoves and inserts and prohibit the use of wood, manufactured fire logs and pellets when the air-quality forecast reaches the unhealthy level (an Air Quality Index of 151 or higher).

Exempt from the regulation are:

- Gas and propane devices, or wood-burning cooking stoves.
- Homes in which wood burning is the sole source of heat
- Devices used above 3,000 feet in elevation
- Areas where natural gas service is not available.

Bruce Canby of Canby's Air Conditioning, Plumbing and Major Appliances said his customers are expressing more interest this year in furnaces that go into fireplaces.

"We're getting a number of people interested in what they can do to have some effect of a wood-burning fireplace, that gets heat into a room and looks like a fireplace," he said this week.

The gas-furnace inserts are, he said, in essence a furnace for a fireplace.

No-burn days

No longer will the air board issue burn-day status for agricultural purposes (see related story inside), but by 4 p.m. each day the status for the next day (midnight to midnight) will be issued for fireplaces.

While Tulare County is projected to have only eight to 10 no-burn days, the number in Fresno and Kern counties is expected to be 16 to 24 days. That is simply because of a higher density of homes with fireplaces that create pollution.

"There are 600,000 homes with one or more woodburning devices from San Joaquin County to the Grapevine [the southern border of Kern County]," said Bello. The bulk of those homes are in Fresno and Bakersfield.

She said most no burn days occur in December and early January. "December holidays, that's when you see the problems," said Bello.

Weather plays a major role. The more stagnant the air, which also produces the long gray foggy days, also allows pollution to settle in the Valley. Having those conditions for several days and the air quality really deteriorates.

On average, wood burning in fireplaces produces 12 tons a day of pollution. By contrast, ag burning produces on average 9 tons of pollution a day.

Furnaces

Canby said people inquiring about the furnaces are not just doing so because of the regulations.

"A lot of people have allergies and it cuts down on the smoke," he said. Others just want to do their part to clean up the air, while some are just tired of carrying wood into the house and lighting a fire.

He said the furnaces are probably more efficient than wood-burning fireplaces and they are not costly to operate.

Alexandra Picavet of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks said she did not know if the regulations are playing a role, but the sale of firewood in the park is drawing few takers.

"Surprisingly, we haven't have many requests at all," she said this week. Picavet speculated the reason could be the prolonged summer-like temperatures, the fact the price has gone back up to the normal \$15 a cord, or the no burn regulations.

Last year, because of a surplus of wood, the Parks sold firewood for \$2 a cord.

Air quality improved

Bello said the air quality in the Valley has actually improved since the 1980s.

"On a day to day basis, when you look at the readings, the air is better," she said.

"We've done really well reducing the peak, but the 8-hour average we're not doing so well."

The air district will police the new regulations.

"Our agency has an enforcement branch. This will be an added function," she said.

She said most people will get a warning the first time, but fines will range from \$50 to \$1,000 for subsequent violations.

The new rules are designed to reduce airborne solids -- called particulates -- which can be solids or liquids. She said the best remedy is rain.

One rule that was considered, but not put in place was that homeowners would have to convert their fireplaces or take them out in order to sell their homes. A rule which limits the number of wood-burning fireplaces allowed in new subdivisions was approved.

Valley changes ag-burning rules

By Rick Elkins

Tulare Advance Register

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A familiar phrase often heard throughout the year will be going away Nov. 1.

"Today is [not] a burn day for agricultural purposes" will no longer be issued every day as the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District transitions to a smoke-management system.

At the same time, the no-burn day status for woodburning fireplaces will begin, with the Air Board issuing its burn status every day after 4 p.m. for the next day for fireplaces.

Josette Merced Bello of the Air Board said ag-burning permits will be handled differently as of Nov. 1.

"Under this program, the district will evaluate air quality in nearly 100 small zones and determine how many acres and what types of agricultural waste can be burned in each zone to minimize the impact to air quality and residents," Bello said. "Because available burn allocations will be given on a first-come, first-served basis, farmers must call in to schedule the first available burning period for their crops and zones."

Farmers have always had to get a permit to burn waste, but now those permits will be regulated to control the amount of pollution in the air.

Bob Chilton, deputy agricultural commissioner for Tulare County, expects a big impact. Growers of wheat and grain, fruit and nut trees, and grapes will all be affected.

"There is some debate as to what's polluting more, the diesel tractor running up and down the field or burning," Chilton said.

Options for farmers will be to sell that waste to co-generation plants, or to shred it, something many farmers have already begun to do.

Tree fruit and grape growers prune each year; nut growers do not prune as much. In 2002, there were 246,822 acres of orchard crops and 54,000 acres of wheat and grain in Tulare County.

State Ready to OK Plan to Cut Smog

Officials admit the new strategy may fall short of meeting federal health goals.

By Gary Polakovic

Times Staff Writer

L.A. Times

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State officials are poised to approve a new master plan for combating smog across Southern California, even though they concede that the strategy probably falls short of what would be needed to achieve clean air.

The plan comes at a time when Los Angeles' half-century fight against air pollution has taken a turn for the worse. After 30 years of dramatic gains, progress appears to have stalled. The number of smoggy days is down about 70% compared with 1976, when the regional South Coast Air Quality Management District was formed, but during the last five years, air quality has shown little improvement. This summer, the region experienced its smoggiest season in six years.

"We've had years of continued progress and now we've got a reminder that we've got to be ever more vigilant and we have to do more to protect public health," said Alan C. Lloyd, chairman of the state Air Resources Board.

Despite efforts over the past week to bolster the plan, air quality officials say they have not been able to identify enough ways to cut smog to get the air in the entire Los Angeles Basin clean enough to meet federal health standards. The gap between what is needed and what is possible with current technology is a whopping 450 tons of smog-forming emissions each day, state officials say.

That gloomy forecast received additional support Wednesday from scientists at UCLA's Institute of the Environment, who warned that even if all goes well, the proposed clean-air plan will probably be sufficient only to keep pace with growth for a few more years.

Without major advances in technology, innovative strategies and less urban sprawl, the smog generated by continued growth of the region's population could overtake the area's smog-control program within a few years, the report said.

"The air was getting much cleaner up until '98, and it's ground to a screeching halt in the last five years. We are in a stall," said Suzanne Paulson, atmospheric scientist at UCLA.

"It doesn't look so great for the future for getting cleaner still," she said, adding that the proposed new control plan "will make the air a little bit cleaner, but there are nowhere near enough controls to realistically meet the air quality standard by the deadline."

Regional air quality officials and environmental groups say much of the problem is that state and federal officials have not been aggressive enough in combating sources of pollution they regulate.

"It is our firm belief that the current draft plan falls short of what is technologically feasible and cost-effective," said Barry Wallerstein, executive officer for the regional air quality district. "The easy rule-makings have already been done. The work ahead is tough, but it's necessary."

The continued shortfall is a concern for some business leaders. Factories, refineries and other large industrial facilities in Southern California - all regulated by the air quality district - have spent millions of dollars to reduce emissions. Representatives of those industries fear they could be squeezed further if the state and federal governments fail to require aggressive cleanup efforts from other sources of pollution, including consumer products and diesel-powered trucks, ships' forklifts and construction equipment, which collectively account for 80% of the region's current smog.

"The next level of pollution control will require some political will to do things that have not been done yet," said Bob Wyman, an attorney representing the Regulatory Flexibility

Group, which includes Northrop Grumman, Chevron, Texaco, Reliant Energy, Irvine Co. and Toyota.

As written, the anti-smog plan contains over 50 control measures, including new smog-check requirements for cars, controls on pleasure boats and requirements for solvent-free paints and coatings.

Environmentalists plan to ask the state air board to add more pollution-control measures to the smog-fighting plan. "If they approve the plan and don't make changes, we are doomed to dirty air," said Gail Ruderman Feuer, senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Among the changes environmentalists seek are a ban on old, polluting personal water craft; a requirement that owners of old cars retrofit them with modern pollution control devices; regulations to put catalyts and soot traps on old diesel trucks and buses; and tighter controls on machines used at the ports.

The air quality district has asked state officials to order controls on ships idling in ports at San Pedro and Long Beach.

Others are calling for using infrared technologies to spot the dirtiest cars and require owners to clean them up. Wyman said new labeling requirements might be needed to inform consumers about high-polluting products, such as hair spray, that they purchase. Others urge the government to provide subsidies that businesses and farmers can use to replace polluting equipment with cleaner machines.

"There are clearly things that can be done. The plan needs more measures and those measure are going to require us to be a little more creative," said V. John White, a Sierra Club lobbyist.

The current deadline in federal law for the region to clean up its air is 2010. If the air does not meet all federal health standards by then, the federal government could impose economic sanctions, including restrictions on business expansion and loss of billions of dollars in federal highway funds.

The main pollutant at issue is ozone, a colorless, toxic gas that is highly corrosive to rubber, metals and lung tissue. Short-term exposure causes headaches, dizziness and nausea; long-term exposure scars lungs, making them less elastic and efficient. Ozone worsens asthma, increases school absences and emergency room visits, and reduces the lung capacity of young children living in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties, health studies have shown.

The original version of the clean-air plan was crafted and approved earlier this year by the air quality district. But the plan does not become law until it is approved by the state air board. A public hearing on the matter is scheduled today in Diamond Bar before the 11-member state air board.

Southern California gets low grade for fighting smog

By JEREMIAH MARQUEZ, Associated Press Writer

Published in the Bakersfield Californian online

Wednesday October 22, 2003, 12:10:13 AM

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Southern California got a low grade for fighting smog in a new environmental study that warns air quality could worsen without better programs and technology.

The region made major progress in cutting pollution over the last several decades, but the improvement may slow in the future, according to a report card released Wednesday by the UCLA Institute of the Environment.

Ozone levels, for instance, dropped significantly before 1999 but saw no improvement over the next few years and climbed back to 1998 levels this summer. Meanwhile, the study said, particulate matter such as diesel exhaust routinely exceeds clean air standards and has seen no improvement over the past five years.

The study gave Southern California a C- for its prospects of cleaning up the air over the next decade, down from the 1998 grade of C.

"As growth continues, the existing policies may not be able to balance increases in emissions, and air quality may deteriorate," said Suzanne Paulson, a professor of atmospheric sciences at the University of California, Los Angeles who authored the study's air quality section.

Relatively inexpensive and politically feasible solutions like reformulating gasoline may no longer make a significant impact on pollution, she said.

A more rigorous and possibly more expensive approach that includes phasing out and replacing heavy polluting diesel engines is needed, Paulson said.

"We need to accept as a society that when cleaning up the air, regulators can't pull these easy answers out of a hat and that it's going to be a little more expensive and a little bit harder," she said.

Air pollution is believed to contribute to as many as 9,000 premature deaths in the Southern California basin each year, the study said.

In a separate action Tuesday, a coalition of environmental activists called on state officials to adopt tougher pollution controls at a news conference in Los Angeles.

"We must make them see that dirty air is bad for our health, it's bad for our children, and it's really bad for business," actress and activist Julia Louis-Dreyfus said at the event, organized by the Natural Resources Defense Council, Coalition for Clean Air and other groups.

Southern California earned better grades in other areas of the report.

Los Angeles scored a B- for "smart growth" policies that aim to reduce car travel, increase open spaces and promote environmentally sensitive urban areas.

The city was praised for trying to reuse older buildings and increase mixed-use zoning. But the city left it up to developers to request zone changes rather than taking steps toward rezoning areas itself, the study said.

The report also docked Los Angeles for ignoring a need for developing moderate-income housing in its general plan.

In other grades, Southern California rated a D for controlling invasive plant species and a B- for present efforts at marine preservation.

Military takes aim at Tejon development

By VIC POLLARD, Californian Sacramento Bureau

The Bakersfield Californian

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Wednesday October 22, 2003, 10:35:09 PM

SACRAMENTO -- The military has dealt a potentially stunning blow to a controversial real estate development proposed by Tejon Ranch, asking Gov.-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger to intervene because the "new town" development would pose a major threat to low-level aircraft and missile flight paths over the Tehachapi Mountains.

Navy Adm. J.L. Betancourt sent Schwarzenegger a letter and a report urging that the 23,000-home Centennial development proposed east of Gorman in northern Los Angeles County be relocated to land the company owns at the base of the mountains in southern Kern County.

Betancourt is commander of the Navy's southwestern region.

Tejon Ranch President Bob Stine said he was "surprised and disappointed" at the military's intervention, coming more than a year after preliminary plans for the development were filed with Los Angeles County officials.

Stine blamed environmental groups critical of the development for encouraging the military's belated involvement.

Nevertheless, he said the company is willing to discuss the issue.

A spokeswoman for Betancourt, Lt. Alli Myrick, said potential noise and safety issues were the military's only concern. She said military officials did not act earlier because "it was really important that we had a solid understanding of the impact before raising any concerns."

Schwarzenegger spokesman H.D. Palmer said the governor-elect had received the admiral's letter but had no response.

"He's not the governor yet," Palmer said.

The admiral's letter urged Schwarzenegger, after he is sworn in, to have the state Office of Planning and Research conduct "discussions" between the developers, local agencies and the military about "options" for the Centennial property.

He noted that a new law written by State Sen. Pete Knight, R-Palmdale, calls for state and local agencies to try to protect military flight routes when making land-use decisions.

The huge Centennial development would be located at the western end of the Antelope Valley, on Highway 138 just east of Interstate 5. At least 20 miles from the nearest city, it has drawn heavy criticism from environmentalists and other critics who say it is an extreme example of leapfrog development, which might deplete water supplies for agriculture and other cities in the region.

Adm. Betancourt's letter and the accompanying report noted that the development site is surrounded by Navy, Air Force and Marine installations in Southern and Central California as well as Nevada and Arizona.

They use the sparsely populated mountainous area as a virtual freeway for flight training as well as research and testing on missiles and experimental aircraft.

"Military training routes are crucial to maintaining highly perishable pilot skills necessary for safe execution of the most demanding phases of a combat mission," Betancourt wrote.

The report noted that fighter aircraft from carriers off the coast routinely fly as low as 200 feet off the ground over the Tehachapis to conduct training "strikes" on the sprawling Naval Air Weapons State at China Lake, and then fly back. The low flights are required to simulate realistic combat situations. The route often takes them directly over the Centennial development site.

The report noted that federal regulations prohibit military planes from flying lower than 500 feet when people or structures are present. The floor is 1,000 feet over a city or town.

The report said there are other parts of the vast Tejon Ranch where a major development could be built without interfering with flight paths, such as its farmland in the Arvin area.

"These represent potential areas where development could occur consistent with military airspace use," the report concluded.

However, that would conflict with the development's marketing strategy, designed to accommodate growth spreading outward from the Los Angeles and Palmdale-Lancaster areas.

The Navy's proposed alternative to the Tejon Ranch's current plans would create a major new development in the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley, where Tejon Ranch is already taking heat from environmentalists for its construction of the big Tejon Industrial Complex at the bottom of the Grapevine on Interstate 5.

"I wouldn't think anyone would choose to put houses there because it has the worst air quality in the valley," said Pauline Larwood, executive director of the Smart Growth Coalition.

Stine said it doesn't appeal to him, either.

He said he was skeptical about the motives of military officials because copies of Betancourt's letter to Schwarzenegger went to more than a dozen California politicians, including most of Kern County's state legislators as well as the Sierra Club and a number of other environmental groups.

"Frankly," Stine said, "this does not appear to be a let's-work-together-in-a-planning-mode proposal. It appears to be more of a political statement because he's copied every politician in California."

Nevertheless, Stine said Tejon Ranch is willing to discuss the military's problems with the development.

Military Appeals to Gov.-Elect to Intervene in Development An admiral's letter to Schwarzenegger suggests that a new city planned for Tejon Ranch be relocated so it won't disrupt flight training.

By Daryl Kelley
Times Staff Writer
L.A. Times
October 23, 2003

Fearing that construction of a new city on Tejon Ranch would end low-level training flights from six military bases, a top Defense Department official has taken the unusual step of asking Gov.-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger to intervene in the development of the proposed 23,000-home community, and perhaps move it from the Tehachapi Mountains to the southern San Joaquin Valley.

Navy Rear Adm. J.L. Betancourt, writing on behalf of military services in California, said that development of the new city of Centennial, near Gorman, would interfere with the training of Navy, Marine and Air Force combat pilots and would likely have "severe impacts" on the nation's military readiness.

Federal regulations prohibit military flights lower than 1,000 feet over cities, while military pilots often train at elevations of just 200 feet.

"The proposed Centennial development underlies a number of military training routes crucial to maintaining highly perishable pilot skills necessary for safe execution of one of the most demanding phases of a combat mission," Betancourt said Tuesday in an e-mail to Schwarzenegger.

Betancourt requested that Schwarzenegger's statewide planning office devise a regional strategy to consider Centennial and two other projects planned on sprawling Tejon Ranch along Interstate 5 in Kern and Los Angeles counties. A new law gives that office expanded powers in resolving development disputes related to the military.

Just what Schwarzenegger will do with the request is uncertain, since he is not yet governor and is only now selecting his top advisors. Until he is sworn in, Environment Now, a Santa Monica nonprofit group, is advising the governor-elect on issues concerning Tejon Ranch.

"The transition team does have the admiral's letter, and they've briefed Arnold," said David Myerson of Environment Now. "But he has no response at this point."

The Centennial project is now before Los Angeles County planners, and preliminary community meetings on its environmental effects are set for November.

Military and urban uses are not mutually exclusive at Tejon Ranch, according to an analysis that was prepared by the military and attached to Betancourt's letter.

One option, the analysis said, would be to move Centennial - planned for perhaps 70,000 residents and 13 million square feet of commercial space - from the western tip of the Antelope Valley in Los Angeles County to another part of the ranch 20 miles north in Kern County.

Tejon Ranch officials, expressing surprise at the admiral's letter, said they have tried for months to meet with military officials to discuss the Centennial project. In their only meeting months ago, Edwards Air Force Base officials said they had concerns only about high-altitude flyovers, according to Bob Stine, president and chief executive of Tejon Ranch.

"My first reaction is that this is a political letter and has nothing to do with land planning," Stine said. "It's probably being induced by some environmental groups that are trying to

stop projects at Tejon Ranch."

If the military has true concerns, Stine said, "and would like a seat at the planning table, we'd welcome them." But Stine said he found it curious that the admiral's letter had been sent not only to Schwarzenegger, but also to 24 state, federal and local elected officials and military commanders and four environmental groups.

"How often does the military engage environmental groups like that?" he said.

Stine said it was odd that the military would be so concerned about the three-by-five-mile Centennial site when pilots have millions of acres of publicly owned land over which they can train in California. "It's ironic that they identify a small, 12,000-acre patch that is somehow crucial to certain flight patterns."

Stine laughed off the suggestion that the project be moved from a temperate valley in Los Angeles County to the hot and humid San Joaquin Valley.

Navy officials said a meeting with Tejon developers before now would have been premature because they did not know the full scope of the problem until they completed a year of interviews with affected pilots.

"We wanted to make sure we talked with pilots, the people who do the testing, who run the programs, to make sure there was a real problem," said Randal Friedman, a civilian planner who works for the Navy in San Diego.

Tejon Ranch has been largely devoted to raising cattle since 1843. But over the last year, officials have outlined plans to build Centennial in northern Los Angeles County, dozens of warehouses at the base of the Grapevine mountain pass and a resort community near Lake Tejon, both in southern Kern County.

Together, the projects would effectively link urban Southern California with the rural Central Valley, filling parts of a 75-mile expanse between Santa Clarita and Bakersfield. Alone, the Centennial project would be the largest housing development in Los Angeles County history.

To allay criticism, ranch owners have agreed to sell more than one-third of their 270,000 acres to a land trust to establish a wildlife corridor of public land stretching from the Sierra Nevada to the Pacific Ocean.

Environment Now's Myerson, who is overseeing a detailed study of Tejon Ranch, said the military's objections created a rare opportunity for environmentalists to work with the Department of Defense to create a better project.

"Oftentimes, we don't find enough in common between our two perspectives, and this is certainly one instance where there is a lot of commonality," he said. "Nobody is trying to halt development. It's just a matter of where the development is most appropriate."

Environment Now has not yet weighed in on that, he said. But the approval process needs to consider the military's concerns.

"Certainly, their letter throws another huge wrinkle into the whole Tejon planning

process," he said. "I don't think anyone adequately understood or was aware of these flight corridors and their importance to all the military services. This really argues for a more regional perspective."

While not citing a new Pentagon effort to close military bases nationwide, the admiral's letter to Schwarzenegger noted the state Legislature's own research on the benefits that the U.S. military's presence brings to California's economy: \$30 billion in direct spending each year and 263,000 jobs.

Centennial is in the heart of a military training area. "The project site is the hub of a number of air routes connecting major training areas in California coastal waters with desert ranges, as well as connecting key California military airfields," said a report with the letter.

Those are naval stations at Lemoore, Point Mugu, China Lake and El Centro, a Marine base at Miramar and Edwards Air Force Base.

Betancourt asked the governor-elect to coordinate discussions with L.A. County, developers, the military and other groups.

Editorial

Burning issue

New fireplace rules will soon go into effect to reduce air pollution.

(Published in Fresno Bee - Thursday, October 23, 2003, 5:35 AM)

The rules are about to change for fireplace and wood stove use in the Valley. On Nov. 1, the Valley's air district will begin enforcing a ban on wood burning in homes and businesses on those days when climate and weather conditions make for especially bad air pollution.

On days when conditions aren't quite so bad, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District will merely discourage the use of all wood-burning fireplaces and stoves. On good air days the restrictions will be lifted.

Violators of the new rules will face fines, which will increase with each additional violation. District inspectors will be looking for violations, but will most likely depend heavily on complaints from residents.

This is an important step toward cleaner air in the Valley. Wintertime wood burning adds as much as 24 tons of particulate matter each day. That's up to 30% of the particulate matter generated in urban neighborhoods on winter days. PM pollution is known to trigger asthma and other respiratory diseases.

There are important exemptions to the rules:

Where wood burning is the sole source of heat.

Foothill and mountain areas above 3,000 feet.

Areas where natural gas service is not available.

Gas and propane devices are exempt altogether.

The Valley air district estimates the number of days with full restrictions will be somewhere between four and 25 each winter. On Feb. 28 the restrictions will lapse until the next winter.

We have always known that cleaning up our dirty air would mean sacrifices. In this case, what we're giving up is largely an aesthetic pleasure, and not a necessity. We urge all Valley residents to get with the new program and help clean up our polluted air.

Letter to Editor

'Just don't get it'

By Earl Hudson, Fresno

(Published in Fresno Bee - Thursday, October 23, 2003, 5:36 AM)

Your editorial Oct. 20 about the price of cleaner air discussed how all vehicles will be charged a fee that magically will clean up our air.

You point out that vehicles are the single biggest culprit in the Valley's dirty air, and that we all should pay to mitigate the damage we cause when we drive our cars.

That's all well and good, but why in the heck would we want to take money generated by the biggest polluters in the Valley -- cars -- and go out and replace engines on farmers' irrigation pumps?

Don't get me wrong. If these people want to replace my diesel pump engines, I will be the first in line to sign up, because I don't want to look a gift horse in the mouth. But that is like sticking a Band-Aid on a problem that needs an ambulance.

When I take a soil sample on my farm to analyze what is wrong, and it identifies that 70% of the problem is lack of potash and 30% is a lack of nitrogen in the soil, where do you think I spend my money? I spend it where I get the biggest bang for my dollar. But maybe that's why I'm just a stupid farmer. You people just don't get it.

Letter to the Editor

Words of wisdom from Modesto council members

Published in Modesto Bee: October 23, 2003, 06:40:22 AM PDT

Welcome to state of denial

No one need tell you how to vote, but there are some facts and observations that I will share.

The sky is as dirty brown these days as it was in the early '70s, before the Clean Air Act. Your community is about to be included in the No. 1 position for the dirtiest air in the nation.

The average number of cars in the average household just exceeded the average number of drivers in that household.

Your local governments have doubled and tripled fees on home and business construction to adjust for costs.

But say goodbye to revenues not garnered during the boom of the past five years. Loans for housing are near record low interest.

The price for an average home is at record highs. The state has demanded and received some phony numbers for housing compliance that if done will further distort the imbalance of jobs-housing between our county and the Bay Area.

Every transportation plan that involves state funding has been or is being delayed by two or three years.

The Needham-Kansas overcrossing nears completion and awaits the Highway 132 connection started when I was in Modesto High (Class of 1966). Look for the zigzag on the west end to connect in 10 years.

The state is draining redevelopment funds from local government. Fourteen water wells have been taken offline for contaminants with unlikely return. The city has just informed the county that it cannot provide water to areas not in its sphere of influence.

For the winners of local elections, welcome and get ready for a different kind of ride. We are bound for the state of denial!

DENNY JACKMAN

City Council member

Modesto