

News briefs from California's Central Coast

The Associated Press

S.F. Chronicle, Tuesday, July 27, 2004
(07-27) 07:30 PDT SANTA BARBARA, Calif. (AP) --

An environmental review of the 36 oil leases off the Central Coast will be conducted by the U.S. Minerals Management Service.

But the agency's environmental assessments, rather than environmental impact statements, fall short of a thorough review, according to attorney Linda Krop of the activist law firm Environmental Defense Center.

Environmental assessments, according to Krop, means potential impacts to the coastal waters off San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties will be downplayed and done piecemeal.

"The risk of oil spills, increases in air, noise and water pollution, potential harm to the southern sea otter and migrating whales, and conflicts with our tourism and fishing industries must be addressed in full," Krop said.

There was no comment from the Minerals Management Service.

A consortium of oil companies paid \$1 billion between 1968 and 1984 to buy and maintain the leases. The Minerals Management Service decision to review the leases follows a court victory by several organizations represented by the EDC. It challenged the agency's failure to conduct one when the leases were previously extended in 1999.

Officials log victory with fireplace ban

By Jim Skeen, Staff Writer

Los Angeles Daily News, Sunday, July 25, 2004

ROSAMOND -- New tract homes in Rosamond and elsewhere in eastern Kern County will no longer be built with open-hearth, wood-burning fireplaces -- a move aimed at keeping east county air clean.

Kern County Air Pollution Control District officials said the ban will help reduce microscopic airborne particles that can be inhaled and cause respiratory problems.

Estimated on the number of proposed housing developments on the books, the rule will eliminate eight to nine tons of particulates over 10 years, district officials said.

"It's not only unhealthy, it obscures vision and impacts our mission at Edwards (Air Force Base) and China Lake (Naval Warfare Center)," said Don Maben, a Kern County supervisor who sits on the air district board.

The rule is coming at a time when there are more than 3,000 homes planned for Rosamond and Tehachapi, not counting the 933-home Copa de Oro project proposed for Rosamond that is working its way through the permit process.

"It's critical we get it (the rule) in now," Maben said.

The district is banning fireplaces in new housing tracts with 10 or more homes. Only U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-certified wood-burning heaters and certified fireplace inserts are allowed.

"The main purpose of the rule is to prevent the deterioration of air quality in new home developments," said Tom Paxson, the district's air pollution control officer.

The neighboring San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, which covers Bakersfield and western Kern County, also has limitations on fireplaces in new home construction, but its rule is based on housing density. The rule bans fireplaces in tracts with three or more homes per acre.

The San Joaquin district also forbids residents in homes with existing fireplaces from using them during bad air quality days.

Answer on casino air

[Letter to the Fresno Bee, July 27, 2004](#)

An honest and sincere answer to the unhealthy problem of smoking in casinos is: Yes, it is bad for patrons and employees in a casino that does not have proper air purification installed. Mono Wind Casino does have the right kind of air purifiers, which don't just try to filter out the separate chemicals (most of which wreak havoc to respiratory systems), but actually separate the chemicals and turns most into carbon dioxide, water and hydrogen peroxide, making the air and area smell clean. The same purifiers cause the particulates to coagulate and fall out of people's breathing areas.

This is different from the HEPA, electrostatic and other filters that take some of the particulates out of the air, but don't get the smallest ones that can lodge in lungs, causing lung cancer, coughing and other problems.

Dining at Mono Wind Casino is a real pleasure, with no smoking allowed. The air is separate from the rest of the casino and the air purifier takes care of any residual odors and particulates there. Bon appetit.

Hap Wood

Clovis