

Tejon expansion tops meeting agenda

Bakersfield Californian, Monday, Nov. 7, 2005

Expansion of a Tejon Ranch Co. industrial development, decried by environmental groups, will be on the agenda at the Board of Supervisors meeting Tuesday. The Tejon Industrial Complex-East project will take about 1,100 acres on the east side of Interstate 5 across from Swedish housewares retailer IKEA's warehouse.

The company recently added flatware and dish maker Oneida Ltd. to its existing complex, and IKEA will also lease more space at its site, according to Californian archives.

Environmentalists are concerned that more trucks in the area will generate traffic and [air pollution](#).

In other business, the board will vote on:

- A three-year, \$330,000 grant to hire a nurse in eastern Kern County who will assist low-income mothers.
- Funding the continued development of a vaccine for the fungal disease valley fever to the tune of \$50,000.
- The acceptance of donated art projects at the new terminal at Meadows Field. The art is valued at \$157,000.

Environmentalists: Tejon project may hurt condors

SARAH RUBY, Californian staff writer

Bakersfield Californian, Saturday, Nov. 5, 2005

Tejon Mountain Village, a tony resort development proposed near Lebec, could harm the endangered California condor and other species, environmentalists say. Consultants are about to examine the environmental impact of this 28,253-acre development sprinkled with 3,450 homes, 160,000 square feet of commercial space and up to seven spas and hotels. Roughly 23,000 acres of the project would become a nature preserve, according to county documents.

The proposed location sits in the way of condors and other wildlife trying to get from the Coastal Range with the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains, said John Buse, staff attorney for the Center for Biological Diversity.

A hit to condor recovery is a hit to taxpayers, Buse said, because his organization estimates the public has spent more than \$35 million to help the struggling species.

"(Condors) need lots and lots of space without people and the problems that they bring," he said. "As configured I think the impact to the condor will be unavoidable and severe."

All potential impacts on wildlife will be studied in the next six months, said Barry Zoeller, a spokesman for Tejon Ranch. The initial layout of the project was configured with condor protection in mind, he said.

"The center has made no secret of the fact it's opposed to any and all development on the ranch," he said. "They're just looking for reasons to oppose it."

Comments from the Center for Biological Diversity and others were gathered by the county to help figure out what more to analyze than traffic, [air quality](#), biological and other impacts of Tejon Mountain Village.

The deadline to speak up was Friday, but the public will have another chance when the first wave of environmental studies are finished, likely this spring.

Panel to Target Air Pollution at Southland Ports

By Deborah Schoch, staff writer
L.A. Times, Saturday, Nov. 5, 2005

The head of the region's smog-fighting agency, calling air pollution from the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles its "single most important challenge," threatened Friday to clamp down on toxic emissions from ships, trains and trucks serving the ports.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District will develop new rules "to the maximum extent of its authority" to force those reductions unless port officials move more swiftly on their own, Chairman William A. Burke said.

Burke announced the new initiative to clean up the nation's two largest seaports and said a comprehensive plan for that cleanup will go before the board in early January.

Ships, trucks and trains serving the ports produce more than 100 tons daily of nitrogen oxides, more than the combined emissions of all 6 million cars in the region, Burke said. They also produce 20% of the region's diesel emissions, which in total have been blamed for 1,700 premature deaths a year, he said.

The agency's planned action is the latest volley in an effort among governments and regulators to stem emissions from the Los Angeles-Long Beach port complex, which now ranks as the single largest air polluter in Southern California. The state Air Resources Board is due to act in December on rules to control emissions from port yard equipment and the auxiliary engines of oceangoing ships.

Recent studies on port air pollution have heightened health fears among residents living close to transportation corridors across Southern California, from the harbor to the rail yards and the warehouses of Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

A state draft study in October found that diesel emissions from within the boundaries of the two ports are increasing human cancer risk as far as 15 miles inland, and other studies have linked air pollution to asthma and stunted lung growth among children.

The air district has traditionally had little control over port pollution because it largely regulates stationary sources, such as refineries and chemical plants. Ship and train emissions are generally a federal responsibility.

In the past two years, however, the agency has acted aggressively on a number of port matters, strongly criticizing a proposed Long Beach port expansion and taking a lead role in the design of a Los Angeles port anti-pollution plan.

Agency officials said Friday that their attorneys would help determine how much authority the agency has in port matters. Spokesman Sam Atwood said that the plan now being prepared could include these steps to regulate port emissions:

- Treating the ports as a single stationary source and setting an overall emissions limit for the entire complex.
- Setting speed limits on ships approaching the ports because emissions climb as speed increases.
- Limiting the sulfur content of fuels used in any equipment at the ports, including ships.
- Applying a current rule that prohibits a facility from becoming a public nuisance. For example, the agency used that rule in issuing a notice to the Exxon Mobil refinery in Torrance after its Oct. 20 release of sulfur dioxide.

"These sources have gone relatively uncontrolled for way too many years," AQMD executive officer Barry Wallerstein said after the Friday meeting in Long Beach. "The governing board was quite clear that port emissions are near or at the top of AQMD's agenda."

Burke said he wants to meet with S. David Freeman, president of the Los Angeles Harbor Commission, and Doris Topsy-Elvord, his counterpart at the Long Beach port, to discuss expedited measures to improve air quality.

In the past, the two ports have operated semi-autonomously in developing clean-air programs, but Burke said they must coordinate their strategies to prevent one port from gaining a competitive edge by imposing weaker controls.

Bob Kanter, planning director at the Long Beach port, said the initiative could be positive. "I don't think we can just keep going off on divergent paths," he said.

To make sure that the ports take steps to mitigate pollution from their expansion projects, Burke said the agency "will make full use" of the state environmental review process. The district used that process last year when it sharply criticized the Long Beach port's proposed Pier J expansion project.

The agency also plans to work with major ports in Asia to develop a plan for joint emission reduction measures, Burke said.

The Los Angeles and Long Beach ports are the major U.S. entry point for Asian goods.

Southern California anti-smog agency unveils plan to reduce port pollution

The Associated Press

in the Fresno Bee, S.F. Chronicle and other papers

Saturday, November 5, 2005

LONG BEACH (AP) - Southern California's smog-fighting agency said it will make new rules and even approach Congress, if necessary, to reduce air pollution from the nation's largest port complex.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District unveiled an initiative Friday to cut emissions created by ships, trucks, trains and cargo-hauling equipment at the adjoining Los Angeles and Long Beach ports.

A comprehensive plan will go to the AQMD governing board in January.

Together, the ports are the largest source of air pollution in Southern California. They produce more than 100 tons of nitrogen oxides daily - more than the daily emissions of all 6 million cars in the region combined, AQMD Chairman William A. Burke said.

Last month, a draft of a state study concluded that air pollution from the ports creates a potential risk of 50 additional cancer cases per million people within 15 miles of the facilities.

Because of growing trade with the Pacific rim, nitrogen oxide emissions at the Port of Los Angeles alone are projected to increase by 40 percent in the next 20 years, the AQMD said.

The AQMD's "clean port initiative" called for port officials and the agency to meet and coordinate "fast-track measures" for reducing emissions.

The AQMD would create new rules "to the maximum extent of its authority" to force reductions if port officials failed to move swiftly, Burke said.

Bob Kanter, planning director at the Long Beach port, said the initiative could be positive.

"I don't think we can just keep going off on divergent paths" in fighting port air pollution, he said.

The initiative also called on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to adopt strict air pollution standards for ships. If the EPA failed to act, the AQMD said it would ask California's congressional members to force the issue through legislation.

The AQMD also said it wants to work with major Asian ports on a joint plan to reduce emissions.

[Fresno Bee and Modesto Bee editorials, Monday, Nov. 7, 2005:](#)

Natural gas challenge

West needs more terminals — but where should they be built?

For residents with heaters fueled by natural gas, this winter's bills will teach a painful lesson about supply problems with this energy source.

Pacific Gas and Electric is bracing customers for prices that are 50% higher than last year. Part of the problem is hurricane-related, with production in the Gulf of Mexico running at about half of pre-hurricane levels. But part of the problem has nothing to do with hurricanes and everything to do with a lack of capacity in California to import natural gas.

North America contains only about 4% of the world's known gas reserves. Like it or not, this fuel is increasingly going to come from somewhere else and arrive in tankers filled with gas that has been super-chilled to the point that it is liquefied.

The high winter heating bills may coincide with some red-hot politics over proposals to site liquefied natural gas terminals in California. There is one proposal to construct a large terminal in the port of Long Beach and two proposals to construct offshore facilities off the coast of Oxnard.

Ironically, California may have more say over facilities constructed offshore than on land. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has the authority to veto offshore terminals, but not proposals onshore. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has the lead authority to approve onshore liquefied natural gas terminals. The Coast Guard reviews the offshore proposals.

A coalition of firms (including Mitsubishi and ConocoPhillips) is preparing the final environmental paperwork for the Long Beach facility. FERC will likely be prepared to approve or reject the proposal early next year.

If FERC does approve the Long Beach facility, the state has some leverage, but not a lot. The facility would have to meet regulations relating to coastal protection, air pollution and water quality.

But California can't simply say no because of some risks, even though these risks are real and should be taken very seriously. Liquefied natural gas is a highly explosive fuel, and thus vulnerable to an accident or an act of terrorism. While FERC must make safety its top priority, the best proposal can only minimize the risk.

These terminals are essential to improving the reliability of supplies and preventing the same price gyrations that plague oil and gasoline. While high natural gas prices can raise the home heating bill, they can affect the electricity bill as well. The state is increasingly dependent on a new generation of efficient, low-pollution power plants that are fueled by natural gas.

So long as natural gas is the cornerstone of the state's electricity policy, an adequate supply of natural gas is essential. Some of this supply will come in the belly of large ships, and must be transferred to shore with the utmost of care.

[Bakersfield Californian, Editorial, Monday, Nov. 7, 2005:](#)

High-speed rail project slowly pulling out of the station

If the Chinese proverb that a journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step is true, California's 700-mile high-speed rail project is off to a good, but slow start. The California High-Speed Rail Authority last week approved an overall environmental report that examined the impact of 220-mph trains, including energy efficiency and [air pollution](#). The approval means the board can start

site-specific EIRs for location of tracks and other facilities. Those EIRs could take three more years to complete.

More importantly, it means the authority can begin acquiring rights of way -- well, sort of. There's a flaw. The board has no money.

A \$9.9 billion bond issue to help pay for the first stage of the project is slated for next November's ballot, but the Legislature wants to delay the vote until 2008.

Ultimately, the project would link San Francisco with San Diego through the San Joaquin Valley. The first phase of the project would be from San Francisco to Los Angeles, with stops in Fresno and Bakersfield. From here, the tracks could go through the Tehachapis to Palmdale and Los Angeles.

The second phase would add Riverside and San Diego to the route.

Despite the slow pace of progress of the long-sought plan, it remains a vital component to the Central Valley's future. All aboard