

In Brief: Workshops to cover air rules for farms

Staff reports

Visalia Times-Delta, Friday, March 3, 2006

A draft rule that would reduce air-pollution emissions from existing dairies, beef feedlots, swine farms and other animal operations throughout the Valley will be the subject of public workshops this month.

The workshops are scheduled for 1:30 p.m. March 13 and 1:30 p.m. March 14. The workshops will be held at the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's Fresno office at 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave.

The rule would apply to larger confined animal facilities. For example, the rule would affect 230 dairies in the Valley with 1,000 or more milking cows and between one and three swine farms with 3,000 or more head of swine.

Information: 230-6000 or visit www.valleyair.org.

News from the San Joaquin Valley

News Brief from the San Diego Union-Tribune

Feb. 28, 2006

FRESNO – A program that restricted wood-burning in the highly polluted Central Valley has ended.

The Air Pollution Control District issued 70 citations to people who burned wood on no-burn days, up from 28 citations during the 2004-2005 season. Fines were \$50.

More people turned to their fireplaces as alternative heating in the wake of high electricity and gas costs, air officials said.

The Central Valley has some of the nation's worst particle pollution. The microscopic specks of soot and dust can become lodged inside the lungs. Particle pollution has been linked to asthma, heart disease and early death.

Shipping's Dirty Cargo

Port pollution poses huge health threat, says union

George Raine, Chronicle Staff Writer

San Francisco Chronicle, Saturday, March 4, 2006

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union, a formidable labor group not historically associated with environmental causes, has launched a campaign to slash air pollution at West Coast ports.

The goal is to substantially reduce air pollutants at ports worldwide. The first step is to lobby shipowners to reduce harmful emissions by installing new technologies.

"Thousands of the men and women I represent and work for raise their families under the cloud of port pollution," said Jim Spinosa, president of the 60,000-member ILWU. "They have made a simple demand of their union. While they want to earn a good living, they do not want to pay with their lives and health."

Union dockworkers have benefited from a spike in trade at West Coast ports and are paid relatively handsomely. But it comes at a price for them as well as people living near harbors.

Workers and waterfront communities in such places as West Oakland, Los Angeles and Long Beach are near the sources of port-generated pollution.

Cargo ships using heavy bunker fuel are partly responsible for making ports major sources of pollution, worsened by fleets of diesel-powered trucks that carry cargo in and out of facilities. Numerous studies have associated fine particulate matter, mainly from diesel, with a variety of

respiratory and cardiovascular problems, ranging from aggravated asthma to irregular heartbeats, heart attacks and early death in people with heart or lung disease.

Some West Oakland residents are exposed to roughly five times more diesel particulates than residents in other parts of the city. The particulates are 90 times more concentrated than the state average, according to a 2003 report by the Pacific Institute, a nonprofit advocacy group.

"Goods movement," says the California Air Resources Board, is a cornerstone of the state's economy. But its own study concluded that for 2005, pollution from the trade is estimated to be responsible for 750 of California's estimated 9,000 premature deaths associated with air pollution.

The ILWU, which is based in San Francisco, says it has long advocated measures to mitigate air pollution, such as cleaner fuels for terminal equipment. Now, the union is taking a step further, planning to press its case with shipowners. The target is a 20 percent reduction of ship pollutants by 2010.

Spinosa said the effort will include lobbying shipping companies to invest in both proven and emerging pollution-reduction technologies, and to seek stronger international standards for cleaning polluting ships. It wants greater U.S. cooperation with the International Maritime Organization, a U.N. agency that coordinates anti-pollution efforts.

The ILWU said it will also seek commitments for greener cargo shipping from the Pacific Maritime Association in contract negotiations in 2008. The association represents domestic and international carriers that use the 29 West Coast ports.

The ILWU raised the issue of reducing particulate matter from diesel emissions in talks with the Pacific Maritime Association in 2002, said John Castanho, chairman of the union's Coast Safety Committee. Castanho said the ILWU advocated "biodiesel, cleaner fuels, anything that would reduce the particulate matter of diesel emissions." Nothing came of it.

"If we can't convince our employers that it's time to clean up our act in the industry, then we will turn to anyone who will listen," Castanho said. "We are going to get the community involved, we are going to get the government, anyone who will listen."

State regulatory pressure, too, seems to have spurred work on port pollution control. Legislation that provides a sanction for marine terminal operators that allow trucks to idle or queue more than 30 minutes became law in 2003. In addition, the California Air Resources Board in December approved regulations that for the first time would control pollutants discharged by container ships, tankers and cruise lines calling at the state's ports.

One set of rules would limit particulates, nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide emitted from the ships. When ships enter a boundary 24 miles from the coast, they would be required to operate on two different fuels at the same time. Smaller auxiliary engines that use a cleaner-burning distillate fuel would power radar, lights and other equipment, while the ships steam to port using heavier diesel fuel.

The second regulation requires controls on diesel exhaust from tractors, yard trucks, cranes and forklifts used at ports. Both are effective as of 2007.

"We are confident we have the authority (to impose the rules) but that does not mean they will go unchallenged" by shipping companies, said Jerry Martin, spokesman for the air board.

Shipping companies say they are dealing with the matter. The industry, responding to severe freeway congestion and worsening pollution at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, has in the past few months shifted about 35 percent of the ports' cargo traffic to off-peak hours, improving freeway flow in the region.

"Pollution is not something we are ignoring," said Pacific Maritime Association President Jim McKenna. "This is not something the ILWU is doing on its own. We are aggressively working with various agencies to improve air quality."

The ILWU has an ally in Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, who said he will join the union in contacting shipping companies and dockworkers internationally in the campaign to lower ship emissions.

"I believe we must accommodate additional trade in a way that is sustainable from an environmental and public health perspective," said Villaraigosa.

Environmental groups welcome the ILWU initiative.

"We think there is a lot of credibility to what they are doing as they are particularly well suited to push for cleaner practices because of their exposure levels," said Diane Bailey, a scientist with the Natural Resources Defense Council.

"But it is not clear anybody is listening," she added. "It is not clear that any of the public health protections that we are demanding, if not begging for, are going to be implemented. And it is not clear with all the port expansion that we are talking about that (ports) really can keep the public health protected and they really can mitigate those emissions."

In 1997, the Port of Oakland announced major expansion plans in anticipation that international trade would double by 2020. A suit was filed that year on behalf of West Oakland residents by the Environmental Law & Justice Clinic at Golden Gate University, charging violations of civil rights and state environmental law. A settlement was reached the following year in which the port agreed to spend \$9 million on air quality programs.

"We are committed to dealing with the issue as best we can and we have been doing that for going on 10 years now," said Roberta Reinstein, manager of environment and safety at the port.

She said some cleanup projects have been completed, some are in process and some are pending. A portion of the money was used to subsidize port tenants to switch dock equipment to cleaner diesel technology. The port also retrofitted 28 AC Transit buses serving the facility with clean engines.

Tugboat engines were retrofitted and, in a still-active \$3 million program, truckers receive subsidies to exchange 80 vehicles built before 1986 for equipment with newer, cleaner engines, Reinstein said.

Reinstein said she plans to carry out an emissions inventory to better understand the sources of pollution at the port, which is located at a major freeway interchange.

Shipping pollution

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union has made control of air pollution at West Coast ports a top priority.

The issue: Particles and gases emitted by ships and port equipment are major sources of air pollution and significant threats to public health.

The union: The ILWU, a waterfront power not known for environmental activism, is pressing for a 20 percent cut in ship emissions by 2010.

The industry: Shipping companies say they are already working hard to clean up operations.

The ports: Under pressure from regulators and communities, port authorities are also carrying out programs to clean the air.

Source: Chronicle research

Program rewards ships for entering Long Beach port slowly

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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LONG BEACH – Ship operators who reduce pollution by observing a speed limit while entering the Port of Long Beach will be rewarded with lower dockage rates.

The reduced dockage rates are part of the port's Green Flag Incentive Program, an annual \$2.2 million clean air initiative that provides financial incentives and recognition to those who voluntarily reduce their speeds.

The tariff reduction plan was approved Monday by the Board of Harbor Commissioners.

Under the program, carriers will qualify for a 15 percent discounted Green Flag dockage rate during the following year if 90 percent of their vessels comply with a 12-knot speed limit for a year within 20 miles of the port.

About 65 percent of all vessels now comply with the port's speed reduction program, which has been in place since 2001, according to port officials.

If all vessels comply with the program, the amount of smog-forming nitrogen oxides released by container ships would be reduced by nearly 550 tons a year, according to port officials.

The program only applies to the Port of Long Beach, not the adjacent Port of Los Angeles.

To hybrid or not to hybrid?

Sales soar, but not all agree on the benefits of these high-tech vehicles

ERIN SHERBERT

Stockton Record, Sunday, March, 5, 2006

It used to be that only the most environmentally conscious drivers had hybrid cars.

But now, commuters, soccer moms and businesspeople drive the gasoline-and-electric cars for their better gas mileage, lower emissions and federal tax credits.

And although more people than ever before are buying hybrids, new reports show it will take at least several years for most owners to recoup their investment.

Sales soared last year, with a 131 percent increase in the number of hybrid vehicles registered in California. Nationally, sales have doubled every year since 2000, according to the state Department of Motor Vehicles. The DMV estimates 100,000 hybrids will be sold in California this year.

Local car dealerships say they have waiting lists of people wanting to buy hybrid cars.

"They sell the minute they land," said Sonny Singh, sales manager at Tracy Honda.

But some say investing in a hybrid doesn't make sense.

A recent study of six hybrids by Consumer Reports magazine determined that in most cases, the hybrids wouldn't recover their extra cost after 10 years and 150,000 miles. A hybrid car generally costs from \$3,000 to \$6,000 more than standard vehicles.

"It does take long and requires certain driving habits to recoup," said Mike Chung, an auto industry analyst with Edmunds.com, an auto research Web site.

For example, hybrid-car drivers who commute both on city streets and highways can get better mileage than people who drive only on highways. And drivers who learn to accelerate and brake in ways that aid the regeneration of the cars' batteries also see higher mileage. Many hybrid cars have mileage gauges that help drivers know when they're driving optimally regarding fuel consumption.

Still, many hybrid owners argue that incentives offered to hybrid buyers offset some of the cost of purchasing a hybrid.

For Jim Lamb, a Mountain House resident, the tax incentives on top of the better gas mileage steered him to buy a Honda Civic hybrid two years ago.

"The incentives, gas savings, and certainly I want to be driving a car that is better for the environment," Lamb said of the hybrid's benefits.

This year, the federal government is offering a tax credit of up to \$3,400 to some hybrid-car owners, according to the Internal Revenue Service.

Also, hybrid-car owners in California can qualify to use carpool lanes while driving solo.

But that's not enough to convince drivers like Tony Wells.

Wells, a Tracy resident and San Jose firefighter, said he had considered buying a hybrid.

The tax incentives make it even more appealing to purchase a hybrid, but he's still not going to do it.

"It's too expensive," Wells said as he filled his truck with gas in Tracy.

In a November poll conducted by AAA of Northern California, 56 percent of survey respondents said despite higher gasoline prices, they had no plans to buy a hybrid, in part because the cars tend to cost more than what they will save on gasoline.

However, fuel savings have become more important for many drivers. In the same survey, 35 percent said they were considering buying or leasing a hybrid vehicle.

The primary reason: saving money on gas.

It didn't take much to convince Arnie and Anjelika Kaufman to buy a hybrid car. Both are Realtors who spend seven days a week on the road with clients.

Recently, the Manteca couple added up their receipts and found they were spending about \$1,000 a month on gas, they said.

So last week, they bought a Toyota Prius, which they said will cut their fuel bills in half.

"We started looking at our gas bills every month. God, it was incredible," Arnie Kaufman said. "Month after month, it really starts hurting."

Higher fuel prices will likely continue to boost hybrid sales, but it's not the only reason more drivers are buying hybrids, said Sean Comey, a spokesman for AAA of Northern California.

"People who buy hybrids also want to support the innovative technology to spur a technological answer to the challenge of high fuel prices and dependence on foreign oil," Comey said.

'Slow Growth' Has Come at a Cost in Santa Barbara

By Jeffrey L. Rabin and Daryl Kelley, Times Staff Writers

The LA Times

March 6, 2006

After a 1969 explosion beneath a Union Oil platform off Santa Barbara, stark images of dead birds and an oil-scarred coastline helped spark the nation's environmental movement.

Protecting this picturesque stretch of California's coast became a rallying cry, and it wasn't long

before this new commitment to conservation gave rise to a steely determination to keep residential developers at bay.

Three and a half decades later, the south coast of Santa Barbara County is still spectacular, a monument to the successful efforts of those who fought to control growth and its effects.

Preserving "our environment and our quality of life ... is like a mantra," said Susan Rose, chairwoman of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, who represents a district stretching from the edge of Santa Barbara to Goleta.

But now this bastion of "slow growth" is learning that it comes with some steep economic, social and even environmental costs:

- Soaring housing prices. With the supply so limited, prices last year rose faster than in any other region in the state. The median price of a single-family house is now \$1.1 million, out of reach for all but the well-to-do.
- Traffic congestion, energy consumption and air pollution. An estimated 30,000 commuters, forced by housing prices to live far from where they work, clog U.S. Highway 101 and choke side streets during peak drive times.
- An exodus of big employers. Half a dozen Fortune 500 companies have left for less costly locales. Almost every business and government agency that remains struggles with recruiting and retaining workers who cannot afford to live nearby.
- Altered communities. Poor families have been forced to double- and triple-up in rental housing. Unable to buy homes, many middle-class families with children have moved away. UC Santa Barbara economist Bill Watkins warns that parts of the south coast are at risk of becoming a "geriatric ghetto."
- Spillover growth. Seventy-five miles away, in northern Santa Barbara County, houses are engulfing farmland. Sprawling Santa Maria is soon expected to pass Santa Barbara as the county's most populous city. But prices are on the rise there, too, largely because of demand from Santa Barbara-area workers.

Many of these ripple effects could not have been foreseen 30 years ago.

"There are intended and unintended consequences to these growth policies," said Dave Davis, who retired two years ago as Santa Barbara's community development director and now heads the city's Community Environmental Council. "It's truly a mixed bag."

The area from Goleta and Santa Barbara to Montecito and Carpinteria is one of the least affordable regions in the state, according to the California Assn. of Realtors. As of December, only 6% of the county's households could afford to buy a median-price home there, less than in the San Francisco Bay Area.

But, as Rose knows firsthand, the issue of building more housing is "very contentious." Her mere suggestion that more affordable housing be built in the Goleta Valley sparked threats of a recall.

Slow-growth advocates are unapologetic, saying they are leading a fight of statewide importance.

"It's not just us," said Gary Earle, president of the Coalition for Sensible Planning, which threatened to recall Rose. "It's all of coastal California."

The Mediterranean climate, beautiful beaches, scenic views and open space make the coastal

plateau a highly desirable place to live. But from 2000 through 2004, only one in five of the housing units built or approved in the county was located there.

In the face of strong demand and a limited supply, the median price of a single-family home shot up 35% in the last year alone, from \$960,000 in December 2004 to \$1.3 million at the end of 2005, according to the California Assn. of Realtors. It has since fallen slightly.

With prices so high, said Watkins, director of the economic forecast project at UC Santa Barbara, "everybody who has a home has a financial incentive to oppose growth here."

Meanwhile, 30% of south coast workers — many shut out of the local housing market — buy homes elsewhere and commute long distances. They drive an average of 49 miles one way from northern Santa Barbara County and an average of 41 from Ventura County, according to the Coastal Housing Partnership, an employer-backed group.

From Ventura County alone, an estimated 17,000 people now commute each weekday to the Santa Barbara area. The county's housing director, Ed Moses, who lives in Oxnard, said he leaves at 4:05 a.m. to get to Santa Barbara in 35 minutes, ahead of the traffic. "If I leave at 6," he said, "it takes an hour or hour and a half."

The backup worsens near Montecito. Residents of the wealthy enclave have fought for decades against widening the freeway, which is two lanes in each direction for 13 miles between the Ventura County line and Santa Barbara.

Caltrans District Director Gregg Albright recalls what happened in 1993 — the last time the state proposed a widening.

"I was part of the project team, sitting in the Miramar Hotel, presenting a six-lane freeway.... The message was quite clear: 'This is not what we want. Please leave.' "

A decade later, traffic has grown far worse. In response, the Santa Barbara County Assn. of Governments agreed unanimously last fall on a compromise called "the lane and the train." The package calls for adding a carpool lane to the two-lane sections of freeway and commuter rail service between Ventura County and Santa Barbara.

But there is a huge potential roadblock: It would take at least \$400 million to widen the freeway and \$200 million for the rail service. And most of the money depends on an endorsement from two-thirds of the county's voters as early as this fall.

Brett Buyan, 37, a county mapping technician, lives in Ojai and commutes to work in Santa Barbara with his wife. "We wanted to stay in Santa Barbara, but couldn't afford to buy a house," Buyan said.

They are among many middle-class workers in Santa Barbara to reluctantly pick up stakes and leave.

"And that gap between the rich and the poor is just going to widen," Buyan said. "I don't think it's healthy."

Neither does Davis, the former Santa Barbara development director. Three decades ago, he said, the city's population was perfectly balanced between low-, moderate- and upper-income residents. Not anymore.

"The loss of the middle class ends up changing the culture of the community," Davis said. Little Leagues and PTAs suffer. "It's not the same."

Economist Watkins said that retiring baby boomers are likely to hang on to their homes but that nearly "every job they leave has to be filled by those who can't afford the housing."

For employers, recruiting and retaining employees are growing challenges. In the last two years, two major corporate headquarters moved out of Santa Barbara: Fidelity Title and 500 jobs went to Jacksonville, Fla. Tenet Health Care and 115 employees headed for Dallas.

"Our biggest problem in California," Fidelity chief executive William Foley told the business publication Site Selection, "is that people we wanted to move there couldn't afford to live there."

Remaining businesses have the same complaint.

"Housing problems make it difficult to recruit people here," said John Wiemann, vice chancellor of UC Santa Barbara. "It's a challenge, especially for younger faculty."

The university has been trying to build about 240 units of faculty housing on campus for years. But it's been slow going.

"The obstacles that we've encountered are the same that any developer trying to build in the coastal zone would encounter: sensitive habitat, wetlands and coastal access," Wiemann said.

Westmont College also ran into hurdles when it sought to build affordable homes for its faculty: It took seven years to win approval for 41 units, said Randy Jones, director of campus planning. The Montecito college is in "an area where growth is not appreciated," he said.

The Christian liberal arts college now wants to build an arts center, a science building and residence halls for 144 students. But that project has run into intense neighborhood opposition. One anti-growth website contains an editorial cartoon showing the Westmont College crest with high-rise buildings towering over homes. A caption reads: "God Gave Us An Inch — We Took a Mile."

Officials at Santa Barbara's Cottage Hospital, which is undergoing a \$550-million expansion, are fighting their own development battle. To help recruit nurses, technicians and pharmacists, the hospital wants to build 115 town house units where the shuttered St. Francis Hospital stands. But it faces strong neighborhood opposition.

Meanwhile, a major medical group recently proposed mortgage assistance for a group not normally in need of help: doctors.

The Montecito Fire Protection District also is in a fix. Half of its employees live outside the south coast area. The fire chief worries that far-flung employees won't be able to get to work in an emergency.

So, the district recently spent \$2.1 million for three small houses to rent to firefighters.

Possibly the greatest impact of the slow-growth movement on the south coast, however, has been elsewhere in the region.

Santa Barbara's population grew by just 400 people from January 2001 to January 2005, according to state estimates. In the same period, Santa Maria added 10,200. Santa Maria accounted for nearly half the residential units built or approved in Santa Barbara County from 2000 through 2004.

"You can't buy a home in Santa Barbara, so you buy it in Santa Maria," said Marty Mariscal, a

Santa Maria city councilman. The buying frenzy there has pushed the median price to nearly \$500,000.

The surging population in the north county area also has produced a shift in political power. Three of the five members of the county Board of Supervisors now come from the more pro-development north county.

Fearful that pro-growth supervisors could usher major developers into the Goleta Valley, west of Santa Barbara, residents in part of that area voted in 2001 to form the city of Goleta.

"We have a community that wants to be very careful about growth," said Goleta Mayor Jonny Wallis, a student at UC Santa Barbara during the 1969 oil spill.

But environmental politics have shifted. Conservation groups that were promoters of slow growth now often endorse "smart growth" — targeted development along transportation corridors or in already dense areas.

Linda Krop, chief counsel for the Environmental Defense Center of Santa Barbara, said her organization would tend to support middle-income housing if it could be built without encroaching on agricultural land or opening new areas to development.

The hard-liners are neighborhood associations, homeowner groups and umbrella organizations like the Coalition for Sensible Planning.

"To me, the Santa Barbara south coast is the last livable community on the Southern California coast," said coalition president Earle, who also was a student during the 1969 spill. "It is worth fighting to keep it that way."

On its website, Earle's group presents the choice as stark: between remaining the pristine Goleta Valley or becoming the next smog-choked San Fernando Valley.

Others say it's not that simple. Retired county Supervisor Naomi Schwartz, a leading architect of the county's slow-growth movement, now favors "smart growth." She believes construction of housing for workers makes environmental and economic sense.

But "it's not an intellectual" discussion, she said. "It's more of an emotional conversation."

Davis agreed, adding that coastal homeowners aren't looking at the big picture.

"Existing homeowners in a neighborhood don't want to see increased traffic. They would trade that for congestion on the 101 to Ventura or Lompoc. Regional congestion and pollution are out of sight, out of mind."

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Santa Barbara: shrinking and growing

The population of Santa Barbara County's south coast, a stronghold of slow-growth sentiment for years, dropped slightly in 2004. Residential development has been spilling over to the north county, led by Santa Maria, which may soon pass Santa Barbara as the county's largest city.

Population	Total	Change*	Percent change*
Santa Barbara County	419,260	+4,129	+1.0%
South County			
Santa Barbara	90,518	-51	-0.1
Goleta	30,679	-94	-0.3
Carpinteria	14,340	-38	-0.3
North County			

Santa Maria	88,793	+3,377	+4.0
Lompoc	42,320	+28	+0.1
Guadalupe	6,296	-21	-0.3
Solvang	5,429	-11	-0.2
Buellton	4,552	+91	+2.0
Countywide			
Unincorporated areas	136,333	+848	+0.6
-			

*Change in Jan. 1, 2005, estimates compared to Jan. 1, 2004.

[Sacramento Bee, Letter to the Editor, Sunday, March 5, 2006](#)

Greenhouse gas focus

Re "The carbohydrate economy," Forum, Feb. 26: "Energy security" or the need to decrease reliance on petroleum imports is one reason to increase alternative transportation fuels; another is to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Fuel-grade ethanol produced from corn requires only 5 percent to 25 percent of the petroleum needed to produce an equivalent energy-amount of gasoline (each gallon of gasoline displaced by corn ethanol displaces at least three-quarters of a gallon of oil).

However, because of substantial non-petroleum fossil energy required for growing and processing corn to ethanol (natural gas and electricity), life-cycle GHG emissions from corn ethanol are not much different compared to gasoline. Corn ethanol GHG emissions range from 30 percent less than gasoline to 10 percent more. Thus, from a GHG perspective, corn ethanol is not very "renewable."

Ethanol from ligno-cellulosic crops such as switchgrass and short-rotation willow and poplar have estimated GHG emissions about 80 percent lower than gasoline while requiring 80 percent less petroleum. If California is serious about reducing GHG emissions from transportation, then it should join efforts to develop the ligno-cellulosic ethanol route and invoke policies that recognize GHG emissions from ethanol are feedstock and process dependent.

- Rob Williams, Davis