

Spare the Air today

Modesto Bee, Thursday, August 24, 2006

The air quality in Merced County is expected to be unhealthy today for sensitive groups — children, older adults and those with lung diseases. For that reason, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has declared a Spare the Air day, asking people to limit outdoor exertion, especially from 3 to 7 p.m., when ozone levels usually are highest. People also are asked to carpool, postpone using gas-powered yard equipment and refrain from igniting charcoal grills with lighter fluid. No alert has been issued for Stanislaus or San Joaquin counties. On the Net:

www.valleyair.org

Air board declares Spare-The-Air day

Visalia Times-Delta, Thursday, Aug. 24, 2006

Today is a Spare-The-Air day.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District forecast an air quality index of 156, considered unhealthy for everybody.

Valley residents can help reduce and control air pollution levels by:

- Doing all your errands at once.
- Bringing your lunch to work.
- Carpooling or vanpooling.

Bills to Watch

Bills opposed by the California Farm Bureau Federation

Capital Press Ag Weekly Fri. Aug. 18, 2006

SB1205 - Escutia, D-Whittier; Boosts fines for air quality violations beyond those raised in 2000 and greatly expands the reasons for which penalties may be assessed. "The benefit of that one is just about every industry across the board is arguing against it, but ag will probably face a disproportionate impact on that because of the increase in penalties for Title V violations, so that is going to be a big issue," said Brown.

New diesel fuel promises cleaner air starting Sept. 1

Regulators say switch should save 8,300 lives per year

by Douglas Fischer

Tr-Valley Herald, Wednesday, August 23, 2006

Starting in September, that choking haze of exhaust from diesel trucks and buses may be no more.

The U.S. Environmental Agency, state air regulators and fuel refiners announced Tuesday that new, ultralow sulfur fuel available at pumps across the nation will transform "dirty diesel" into a relatively clean-burning fuel.

Regulators compare the switch to the stripping of lead from gasoline 25 years ago, saying it should prevent nearly 8,300 premature deaths and "tens of thousands" of cases of respiratory ailments a year nationwide.

"The diesel rules will provide even more public health benefits than when we took the lead out of gasoline," said EPA regional administrator Wayne Nastri in a statement.

The new diesel contains 97 percent less sulfur than today's fuel — 15 parts per million compared with national standard 500 parts per million. Diesel sold in California, with stricter pollution rules, averages about 140 ppm.

The benefits don't stop there. Much as lead-free gasoline allowed engine manufacturers to produce cleaner-burning, more efficient automobiles, diesel fuel without corrosive sulfur lets engineers bolt more traps, filters and other clean-air devices to diesel trucks, buses, ferries and locomotives.

Indeed, when the cleaner fuel is combined with those new engines, the EPA expects pollution reductions equivalent to taking 90 percent of the nation's trucks and buses off the road — some 13 million vehicles.

"You get a substantial benefit in air quality just by burning this fuel," said Tupper Hull, spokesman for the Western States Petroleum Association. "You get enormous benefit when you marry this fuel to technology that's coming to the market 2007."

Under the new rules, clean diesel will be available at retail pumps starting Sept. 1, though a loophole allows refiners to continue to produce the dirtier diesel — up to 20 percent of their supply — until 2010.

Some of that diesel is available now. In the Bay Area, nearly 1,700 buses run on clean diesel and have been retrofitted with traps and filters. Diesel engines on San Francisco Bay ferries have been fueling with low-sulfur diesel for a year, and railroads have agreed to start using the new fuel, said Luna Salaver, spokeswoman for the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

But an effort to pay truckers to retrofit their engines has stalled amid resistance from owner-operators to leaving trucks in the shop for a week for the necessary work, Salaver said.

And the fuel comes at a cost. Prices at the pump could rise from 2 cents to 7 cents a gallon or more if supply falls short of demand, according to a federal Energy Information Administration study. Refineries have spent \$8 billion nationwide retrofitting their plants.

And it doesn't solve other problems associated with burning oil.

"This is a good step forward," said Tim Carmichael, president of the Coalition for Clean Air. "But I don't want you or your audience to think we've done this, problem solved.

"It's a reminder of how inherently dirty the petroleum fuels are, and the fact that we need to continue to invest in alternative fuels."

Briefs

S.F. Chronicle, Thursday, August 24, 2006

WATSONVILLE, Calif. (AP) — Biodiesel school buses are coming to the Pajaro Valley Unified School District.

The Monterey Bay Air Pollution Control District awarded \$40,000 to the school district to buy biodiesel for the county's largest school bus fleet and \$150,000 to equip aging buses with new, cleaner-burning engines.

"Our job is to clean up the air, and school buses are terrible polluters," board member and Supervisor Ellen Pirie said.

The push for biodiesel began earlier this year, when Watsonville High student Roxie Brown inspired the school board to conduct a pilot project to test the fuel on two of the district's 100 buses.

Made from vegetable oil, it burns cleaner than diesel.

"It's hats-off to the powers that be for recognizing that biodiesel can have a significant benefit on air quality," said Michael Drury, biodiesel project manager with Ecology Action, a nonprofit environmental consulting group in Santa Cruz.

Alaska's clear air may have dark cloud

Pollutants from oil production facilities are hard to see -- but crucial

By David R. Baker, staff writer

S.F. Chronicle, Thursday, August 24, 2006

Deadhorse, Alaska -- Scan the landscape surrounding Alaska's northern oil fields and you won't see much obvious pollution.

Litter is scarce. Pipeline leaks, like the one that shut half of the Prudhoe Bay oil field this month, tend to be small. An intricate network of pipes crosses the land, but much of it hangs suspended several feet above the tundra, propped up on supports.

Yet the North Slope operations -- like oil production facilities everywhere -- taint the environment in a more substantial, but invisible, way.

They release into the air a steady stream of pollutants and greenhouse gases, spewed by vehicles, power generators and the drilling process itself. Estimates vary, but the North Slope oil fields probably produce more smog-forming nitrogen oxides than Washington, D.C., and more carbon dioxide than San Francisco.

Air pollution, to a certain extent, is an inevitable product of any large industrial operation, just as it is with a city. Air pollution on the North Slope, home to herds of caribou and vast flocks of migrating birds, riles some environmentalists but rarely gets the attention of people outside Alaska, even those caught up in the debate over expanded drilling in the Arctic. Spills and caribou are easier to understand -- and make better photos.

Environmentalists insist that air pollution must be part of the debate over drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

"The difficulty with air pollution is it's not tangible unless there's black smoke," said Mike Frank, senior staff attorney with the Trustees for Alaska environmental law firm. "It's difficult for people to get their minds around as an environmental problem. But it's probably more intractable and more difficult to deal with than oil spills, at least spills on land."

The state of Alaska recognizes the pollution, but says the oil companies are staying within government-imposed limits. And those limits should protect the health of the people who live on the slope.

"As far as the department can tell, the companies are generally in compliance with their legal limits or taking steps to correct any exceedances," said John Kuterbach, air permits program manager for the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

Oil standards met

A spokesman for BP PLC, which runs Prudhoe Bay, said the company has complied with pollution limits that "should eliminate health risks associated with air emissions from our facilities."

ConocoPhillips Inc. spokeswoman Natalie Knox said the company had recently agreed to use lower-sulfur diesel in its North Slope vehicles as a way of cutting pollution. The company monitors pollution levels in the area.

"Monitoring indicates that the air quality on the North Slope is consistently better than national standards," Knox said.

Pollutants that can harm human health aren't the only issue. The oil field operations pump the greenhouse gases carbon dioxide and methane into the air, contributing incrementally to global warming -- which is having serious effects in the Arctic, where permafrost is thawing and sea ice is melting ever earlier.

"We're at ground zero here in Alaska," said Pamela Miller, Arctic coordinator for the Northern Alaska Environmental Center in Fairbanks. "We're already seeing changes in the plants, the wildlife, the ocean. To add even more greenhouse gases here just doesn't make sense."

The exact amount of emissions on the North Slope is difficult to determine.

The state doesn't measure air pollution from the oil fields. Instead, it calculates estimates based on data submitted by the oil companies.

Complicating matters, currents of air in the atmosphere take some pollution generated in lower latitudes -- the lower 48 states, Europe and Asia -- and dump it in the Arctic. In other words, the air over Prudhoe Bay likely contains pollution from faraway sources as well as from the oil field itself.

Data from the Department of Environmental Conservation suggest the North Slope operations each year emit about 41,408 tons of nitrogen oxides and 779 tons of sulfur dioxide, a key cause of acid rain. The department data also show 3,223 tons of particulate matter emissions, essentially, small airborne soot particles that can cause breathing problems.

Those numbers, however, do not include any mobile sources of air pollution, such as trucks, aircraft and drilling rigs. Environmentalists say the data also don't include several oil field facilities.

Other studies, from government and independent researchers, have arrived at different numbers, using several methods. Earlier state figures quoted by the National Academy of Sciences in a landmark report on the North Slope environment showed 70,000 tons of nitrogen oxides emitted in 1999, again excluding mobile sources and several oil field facilities. Another study quoted by the National Academy found 1,334 tons of sulfur dioxide and 5,400 tons of particulate matter emitted in 1994 and 1995.

Variety of statistics

Emissions of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, were estimated at 24,000 tons in 1995. As for carbon dioxide, the gas most frequently blamed for global warming, estimates vary widely. A 1995 study that calculated emissions based on the amount of fuel burned on the slope estimated 7.3 million tons of carbon dioxide were produced annually. A 1997 study in which researchers flew downwind from the oil fields suggested a far higher number -- 40 million tons.

By comparison, San Francisco emits about 9.7 million tons of carbon dioxide, almost 23,800 tons of nitrogen oxides and 540 tons of sulfur dioxides annually, according to city and federal data.

Just as in the Bay Area, the North Slope's air pollution sometimes becomes visible. The sight of it in a remote and largely pristine environment angers environmentalists.

"It's a band of yellowy smog," Miller said, "It's disturbing that with an oil field over a hundred miles away, you can see the effect on the horizon in what is normally a beautiful place."

State officials, however, say the air pollution appears to be within legal limits. The state grants permits for the amount of air pollution oil field facilities are allowed to emit. Although the emissions data the state uses are collected by the companies, they are reviewed by state workers, Kuterbach said.

The permit process itself has become a source of conflict. Environmentalists complain that the state looks at oil field operations piecemeal, considering emissions from individual facilities rather than the whole.

That allows the government to avoid acknowledging the full extent of air pollution and applying more-stringent limits, environmentalists argue. A former permit manager for the state says he was forced out of his job for trying to make the same point.

Kuterbach says that viewing everything together would be too complex a process for the state to administer.

"If you considered it all in one plan, someone would have to know everything going on everywhere on the entire North Slope in order to determine permit compliance," he said. "It was just not a tenable solution."

Measuring results

The state's process, he said, should result in roughly the same amount of pollution allowed from the oil fields.

"The equipment you're going to need is going to be the equipment you're going to need, and the pollution it's going to emit is the pollution it's going to emit," Kuterbach said. "My gut

[Visalia Times-Delta, Letter to the Editor, Thursday, Aug. 24, 2006:](#)

Human race squanders its resources

This was the hottest July ever in the Central Valley, and this year is predicted to be the hottest ones, not only locally but throughout the entire country.

There is a lot of debate as to the meaning of this climate change, with some people saying that this is not abnormal, while many reputable scientists (and they are the majority) stating emphatically, and based on very solid evidence that this is mostly due to global warming.

The question is what is causing this and what can be done to reverse it or at least trying to prevent such a rapid progression, as seen with the accelerated melting of the Arctic ice cap which is increasing the level of the oceans and even threatening the life of the polar bears, whose population is decreasing at an alarmist pace.

In the meanwhile, the human race continues to burn fossil fuels, and in spite of the increase in the price of gasoline total miles driven have not diminished in our country (analysts are predicting that when the price of gasoline reaches \$4 a gallon, people are going to conserve more - I doubt this will happen). Technology is available for alternative sources of energy, as is currently shown in Brazil, that has quit importing petroleum, and runs almost all its cars on alcohol (General Motors, I have been told, manufactures most of their cars). Even if we reduce consumption, there is still pollution caused by many industries whose main purpose is obtaining increasing profits without concern for the environment.

The U.S. population will reach 300 million in the very near future, and it is primarily because of illegal immigration. The entire world population is also increasing at an alarming rate, and the two

most populous countries of the world, China and India, have an insatiable appetite for fossil fuels (urban pollution in China is reaching alarming proportions).

Can the most selfish living species do something to try to give our heirs the possibility of a better life? The solution is relatively straightforward: We have too many people in the world. Am I advocating euthanasia or abortion? Of course not. ... Most people have good intentions when it comes to these controversial subjects, and many have moral or religious objections when it comes to birth control, and I understand their feelings.

Birth control methods and easy to use, they are cheap and extremely safe. The argument that oral contraceptives have very rarely caused a stroke or contributed to certain types of cancer are negated by the fact that even aspirin or certain antibiotics can provoke an allergic reaction that may kill an individual.

Machines and fossil fuels do not cause pollution or global warming, human beings do; if I could use a magic wand to change human behavior I would not hesitate to use it at once.

ROBERTO F. GLUCKMANN, M.D.
Visalia

[Guest Commentary in the Sacramento Bee, Wednesday, August 23, 2006](#)

Matthew Auer: Nuclear isn't panacea for energy crisis

By Matthew Auer

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. — Nuclear power is getting its best press in years. More pundits are warming up to the peacetime atom than at any time since the 1970s.

As was the case 30 years ago, nuclear energy is gaining converts as energy prices spiral ever upward and America's reliance on Middle East oil goes unchecked. But the current swell of support for nuclear has more to do with the perils of coal than with oil.

Coal is America's most important fuel source for electrical power generation and it is responsible for more than one-third of the nation's carbon-dioxide emissions — pollution that promotes global warming.

When it comes to emitting carbon, nuclear power is cleaner, and that's just the first of many reasons to love nuclear, so say its backers. Patrick Moore, co-founder of Greenpeace, and an unlikely convert to the nuclear cause, urges that mining uranium is much safer than in years past, and that spent nuclear fuel is not so much waste as it is "potential energy" available for extra rounds of power generation. What waste remains, Moore contends, is not nearly so risky as commonly assumed.

"In 40 years," Moore and former EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman write in a Washington Post Op-Ed, "used fuel has less than one-thousandth of the radioactivity it had when it was removed from the reactor. ... Imagine if the ratio of coal to nuclear were reversed so that only 20 percent of our electricity was generated from coal and 60 percent from nuclear." Imagine indeed. For ample imagination is needed to embrace a plan that costs so much, promises so little in clean energy, and risks so perilously the country's national security.

More nuclear plants in the United States will not alleviate the global warming problem, so long as other countries roll out new coal-fired power plants. By some estimates, China commissions a new coal-fired power station every 10 days, even as it moves forward on ambitious plans to open new nuclear plants.

In the United States, hundreds of nuclear plants would be required to replace the current supply of electricity generated from coal.

Siting even a handful, not to mention hundreds, of new plants would send attorneys on both sides of the debate back to school for refresher courses on plant commissioning; no nuclear power station has been commissioned in the United States in more than 25 years. Imagine nuclear waste stored at hundreds of surface sites at new nuclear plants around the nation.

The probability for a serious accident grows as opportunities to mishandle radioactive materials increase. More plants mean more chances for waste to seep out of temporary storage sites, or that somewhere, sometime, mistakes will be made processing, transporting, or simply keeping track of fissile materials. It's the latter problem that gives most grave pause.

As the United States ramps up nuclear power production, thereby generating greater amounts of reusable nuclear fuels and radioactive wastes, nuclear proliferation risks mount. The thousands of new jobs created to mine and process uranium, manufacture, load and unload fuel rods, and transport and store waste represent thousands of additional people with discretion over potent and greatly feared forms of energy.

A full-steam ahead plan for nuclear energy means millions of additional chances for radioactive products and by-products to end up in the wrong hands. Nuclear power plants offer one-stop shopping for terrorists: they can be sabotaged or their radioactive contents can be siphoned for weapons.

These risks should urge us to keep developing alternatives to nuclear, be it wind energy, fuel cells, biofuels, reduced energy demand, deep injection of carbon dioxide, or any number of other plausible options. None of these options, alone, will solve the global warming problem, but nuclear power does not belong on the option list, period.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses that ultra-low sulfur diesel \(ULSD\) will be available in California in September. When fully implemented, this will prevent nearly 8,300 premature deaths. For more information, contact Maricela at 559-230-5849.](#)

Listo el lanzamiento de diesel menos tóxico

El nuevo combustible "ultra bajo en sulfuro" podría prevenir hasta ocho mil 300 muertes prematuras por contaminación anuales en Estados Unidos y decenas de miles de casos de enfermedades respiratorias: EPA

Noticiero Latino, Aire Libre, Radio Bilingüe, Fresno, CA
Wednesday, August 23, 2006

En septiembre estará disponible en California y el resto del país un nuevo tipo de diesel que es menos tóxico.

El nuevo combustible "ultra bajo en sulfuro" podría prevenir hasta ocho mil 300 muertes prematuras por contaminación anuales en Estados Unidos y decenas de miles de casos de enfermedades respiratorias, de acuerdo con la Agencia federal de Protección Ambiental, la EPA, por sus siglas en inglés.

En California, autoridades ambientales, la EPA y corporaciones propietarias de refinerías colaboran para lanzar el primero de septiembre el nuevo combustible, que reduce en 97 por ciento la emisión de sulfuro asociada con el diesel.

[The articles below address global warming and other environment-related issues.](#)

Warming bill debate heats up

Written by Tracy Press/Associated Press

Tracy Press and Tri-Valley Herald, Thursday, August 24, 2006

The state Legislature is still hammering out details of what would be a landmark cap on greenhouse emissions.

SACRAMENTO — A week away from their deadline, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and legislative Democrats remain apart over key elements of a landmark global warming bill that would make California the first state to cap greenhouse gas emissions from industries.

The stakes are high for both sides. The Democrats supporting the bill want to toughen California's already stringent emission standards, while Schwarzenegger is seeking to burnish his environmental credentials as he seeks re-election.

Differences remain over how industries would reduce their emissions by as much as 25 percent in the next 14 years.

Democrats released their latest compromise proposal this week, saying they had incorporated suggestions from Schwarzenegger officials to make the bill more palatable to businesses without weakening it.

"It's not going to be everything everyone wants," said the bill's author Fran Pavley, D-Agoura Hills. "If it passes, it will be the strongest reduction law in the country."

Environmental Protection Agency Secretary Linda Adams on Wednesday said the bill as currently written lacks a key Schwarzenegger principle — a flexible market-based program that would allow businesses to trade, sell and buy emission credits rather than reducing their own emissions.

It's an idea being tested in Europe and one that Schwarzenegger officials say must be in the bill. Democrats said they fear it could prove unworkable for one state.

"The governor has been clear on this issue from day one," Schwarzenegger spokesman Adam Mendelsohn said. "He is committed to working with legislators to find a compromise on (the bill). However, we must have legislation that creates a market-based system so we do not endanger consumers or open the door for another electricity crisis."

Democrats say they support a market concept, but say the California Air Resources Board should not be told to launch a program that may not work. At issue is how regulators would monitor a market-based system and be assured that plants in other states or countries that are trading credits with California companies are actually reducing their emissions.

"Philosophically, trading I think is the way other states and the world is going, and I'm fine with that," Pavley said. "But we've got to make sure it's workable and doable."

Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez said he wants to work out differences with Schwarzenegger but said Democrats would take a hard line on the market-based amendments sought by the governor.

Governor, lawmakers differ on greenhouse gas measure

Conflict over how industry should reduce emissions

By Mark Martin, Chronicle Sacramento bureau
S.F. Chronicle, Thursday, August 24, 2006

Sacramento -- With just a week to go before the end of the legislative session, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Democratic lawmakers remain divided over key details of legislation that would make California the first state in the country to cap greenhouse gas emissions.

Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez said Wednesday there are fundamental differences on the bill between the governor and Democrats, and Schwarzenegger's lead negotiator said the administration would insist on changes to the legislation before the governor would agree to sign it.

The disagreements center on specific requirements for how industries should reduce emissions of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and demands by the governor that the law contain provisions for delaying reduction deadlines in case of natural disasters or other circumstances.

The conflict comes despite agreement among the governor, Democrats and environmentalists on the overall proposal, which would require a 25 percent cut in greenhouse gases by 2020 that would affect companies from automakers to manufacturers. While many clean-air advocates believe the legislation could be a major turning point in the country's global warming policy, it also has big political ramifications in California.

Schwarzenegger is touting his environmental protection efforts as a key theme in his re-election bid; a veto of the bill would be used against him by Democratic challenger Phil Angelides.

But the governor and aides said Wednesday they have problems with the proposal, AB32 by Núñez and Assemblywoman Fran Pavley, D-Agoura Hills (Los Angeles County).

The administration wants the law to explicitly require that companies be allowed to buy and sell emissions credits, similar to markets developed to reduce smog in this country and one created in the European Union to reduce carbon dioxide. The governor also wants what the administration has termed a safety valve, which would allow future policymakers to delay deadlines.

"I think that we can protect business and also protect the environment if AB32 is written the right way," Schwarzenegger said.

Núñez and Pavley amended the bill this week to allow for a new board that would oversee the reductions to delay them in case of "extraordinary circumstances, catastrophic events or the threat of extreme economic disruption."

Núñez said he was hesitant to change the section much more for fear of creating loopholes.

"I am not going to send the governor a bill the environmental community doesn't support," he said.

With lawmakers scheduled to leave Sacramento for the year by next Thursday, the legislation is expected to be approved by the Democrat-dominated Legislature, but negotiations were expected to continue today between lawmakers and the administration.

Chronicle staff writer Kimberly Geiger contributed to this report.

Industry starts to back rules on greenhouse gas

By Zachary Coile, Chronicle Washington bureau
S.F. Chronicle, Thursday, August 24, 2006

Washington -- When the head of the American Public Power Association spoke last week to electric utility operators in Minnesota, he had a straightforward message: Federal regulation of greenhouse gases is coming. Get ready for it.

"The issue is no longer whether there is a human contribution to global warming but the extent of that contribution," said Alan Richardson, president and CEO of the group, whose members supply 15 percent of the nation's power. There is, he added, "an emerging public consensus and a building political directive that inaction is not a viable strategy."

For years, most industry groups have fought any effort to limit carbon dioxide and other gases linked to global warming, warning of dire consequences for the U.S. economy. But with growing

public anxiety about climate change, major corporations are increasingly preparing for -- and, in some cases, lobbying for -- Congress to regulate emissions of heat-trapping gases.

The industry's response is evolving in spite of opposition by the Bush administration to new limits on carbon dioxide.

But businesses are reading the political tea leaves. Legislation to limit greenhouse gas emissions is gaining ground in Congress with members of both parties. States, especially California and those in the Northeast, are moving forward with climate-change regulations. Two top presidential hopefuls for 2008 -- Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona and Democratic Sen. Hillary Clinton of New York -- have called for reining in greenhouse gases.

California's senior senator, Democrat Dianne Feinstein, plans, in a major speech today on global warming at San Francisco's Commonwealth Club, to propose legislation to cut carbon emissions.

"The scientific evidence is real," said Betsy Moler, vice president for government and environmental affairs at Exelon Corp. of Chicago, an energy firm that supports a mandatory cap on carbon dioxide emissions. "When you have the likes of Sen. Ted Stevens of Alaska, a conservative Republican, and he says he has seen the changes in his lifetime in the Arctic, there is just no doubt that something has to happen."

The trend became clear in April, when the Senate called America's top energy companies -- including some of the nation's largest emitters of greenhouse gases -- to testify about new legislation to regulate emissions.

Six leading energy companies went on record supporting mandatory limits on emissions of CO₂, including Shell, Duke Energy, Exelon, General Electric, Sempra Energy and PNM Resources, an Albuquerque utility. Even the world's largest retailer, Wal-Mart, voiced its support for new limits on greenhouse gases.

Only two energy firms testifying opposed new regulation: American Electric Power and Southern Co., electric utilities in the Midwest and South whose power plants are the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases in the country. Both companies prefer the system of voluntary reductions by industry favored by the Bush administration.

"There is a split in industry -- there are the forward-leaners and the knuckle-draggers," said David Doniger, the top climate change official at the Environmental Protection Agency under former President Bill Clinton, now a senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council.

"The forward-leaners are looking realistically at the future. Either they agree that global warming is real and needs to be addressed -- and that means regulation -- or they see it as inevitable that it will happen even if they don't agree," Doniger said. "Then you have the knuckle-draggers who are just trying to use their political force to put it off as long as possible."

BP, formerly British Petroleum, the London-based energy giant, cut its carbon emissions by 10 percent across its refineries and plants. The firm's chief executive, Lord John Browne, set the goal in 1997 when he gave a speech at his alma mater, Stanford University, that marked the first time an oil company chief had acknowledged that the burning of fossil fuels was contributing to global warming.

BP announced plans in February to build a \$1 billion plant at its refinery in Carson (Los Angeles County) to convert petroleum coke, a byproduct of oil refining, into hydrogen. The plant will generate 500 megawatts of power, but 90 percent of the carbon emissions will be pumped underground into nearby oil fields -- boosting oil recovery while preventing the release of 4 million tons of CO₂ a year into the atmosphere.

Critics have noted the contrast between BP and another oil giant, ExxonMobil, which has spent millions of dollars in recent years funding groups that question global warming science and oppose carbon regulation.

The auto industry also has resisted climate-change legislation and is battling California in federal court over the state's landmark law limiting tailpipe emissions of greenhouse gases. But, as in the oil industry, there are divisions among the automakers.

In a speech at the National Press Club on Friday, Jim Press, president of Toyota North America, challenged other automakers to work with Congress to set reasonable goals for boosting fuel efficiency and curbing greenhouse gases.

"It's time for us to stop being the 'against' industry and to come out strong for something important, like a better Earth and a better quality of life," Press said.

Corporations are keenly aware that lawmakers' views on climate change are shifting. For years, hearings in Congress focused on whether global warming was real. But in June 2005, the Senate passed a nonbinding sense of the Senate resolution stating that human activity is contributing to rising temperatures and that Congress should enact legislation to "slow, stop and reverse the growth" of greenhouse gas emissions.

While Congress has yet to pass legislation, many states are rushing to fill the void. Last week, seven northeast states reached an agreement to cap carbon dioxide emissions from their power plants at current levels from 2009 to 2015 and gradually reduce them by 10 percent by 2019.

California also is considering legislation to require all businesses in the state to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It's another reason industry groups want federal regulation: They fear a patchwork of state rules, some of which could be tougher than any future federal standard.

Not surprisingly, the views of many companies on climate change depend on how new regulations would affect their bottom lines. Utilities with nuclear, natural gas or other power plants with low CO₂ emissions could profit from a "cap and trade" system in which they could sell carbon credits to firms with traditional coal-fired plants, which produce huge quantities of greenhouse gases.

One utility, Dallas-based TXU, recently announced plans to build 11 new coal-fired plants, more than doubling its CO₂ emissions by 2011. Critics say TXU hopes to get the coal plants grandfathered in, before new climate change rules take effect, a claim the company denies.

Feinstein criticized TXU's plans to build more traditional coal plants as exactly the wrong way to go for business to address the climate crisis.

"Instead they should really be putting the effort into seeing if coal gasification can work and if you can sequester carbon sufficiently," Feinstein said, citing new technologies to cut emissions. "That's what has to be looked at, and very quickly. These coal plants have to change."

Emission Bill Sets Off Clash in Sacramento

The governor and the Democrats say they are at loggerheads over details in the proposal to curb greenhouse gases.

By Marc Lifsher, staff writer

L.A. Times, Thursday, August 24, 2006

SACRAMENTO — Democrats in the Legislature and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Wednesday acknowledged that they were at loggerheads over details in a pioneering bill to combat global warming.

The dust-up, if unresolved, could lead the governor to veto a bill that he's hoping to make the environmental centerpiece of his bid to win a second term. Veteran statehouse watchers caution that the global warming bill is too important to the governor, Democrats and, ultimately, California voters to let die.

"Both sides have every incentive to figure out a compromise on this one," said Dan Schnur, a Republican political consultant. "If it takes a little bit of chest beating before they make a deal that's just how life in the Capitol works."

The bill, AB 32, is being hailed by both the environmentalists and the Schwarzenegger administration as possibly the most far-reaching initiative of the year.

They stress that California, which produces about 12% of the world's greenhouse gases, could become a model for the rest of the country and the world in finding ways to avoid the effects of climate change, such as coastal flooding, melting snowpacks and stunted agriculture.

Businesses are split over the proposal. Some fear it would raise costs and destroy jobs. Others see opportunities to profit from developing new technologies.

For now, Schwarzenegger is insisting that any measure to curb greenhouse gases contain mandatory provisions to let industries buy and sell credits allowing some companies to pay for the right to pollute.

He also is pushing to add a provision that would allow the governor to suspend the global warming program if disasters, health problems or economic crises threaten the state.

Schwarzenegger said at a news conference that he "didn't want to talk about what I'd veto." Rather, he said he preferred signaling that he'd sign a bill that would put caps on greenhouse gas pollution and create a market for trading pollution credits.

Industries that reduce emissions to levels below their limits could sell credits to firms that want to exceed their designated cap. The governor said such a "market-based system" would clean the air more quickly because it "makes money" for businesses.

But critics say such systems are bureaucratically unwieldy, financially unworkable and could accomplish little.

Assembly Speaker Fabian Nuñez (D-Los Angeles), the author of the global warming bill, conceded that there are "some hiccups" in the nearly round-the-clock negotiations between him and the governor's office.

Democrats and environmentalists said they supported the concept of trading pollution credits. But at a news conference Wednesday they said they didn't want to lock the pollution credits into law before more traditional ways of curbing carbon, such as conservation and energy efficiency, had an opportunity to work.

Environmentalists fear that too much reliance on trading carbon dioxide pollution credits could backfire by delaying efforts to reduce emissions of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and other better-known toxins.

The governor's pollution credit trading plan "may be what big business wants, but it will mean more pollution, asthma and cancer for California's most vulnerable communities," said Angela Johnson Meszaros a lawyer with the California Environmental Rights Alliance in Los Angeles.

But many mainline business lobbying groups say they're unhappy with the governor's plan. They

fear that the buying and selling of scarce credits could increase California's already high price for electricity.