

Quality of Valley air above average

By Aaron Burgin

Porterville Recorder, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2006

Tulare County experienced a rise in Spare-the-Air days for the second consecutive summer, San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District officials said.

The 23 "Spare" days during the season that runs from June 8 to Sept. 30 were five more than the 18 days in 2005 and 15 in 2004, but the declarations -- which occur when air quality is forecast to be unhealthy -- are still far below historical averages, Valley Air spokeswoman Janelle Schneider said.

"We're continuing to see an improvement," Schneider said. "Even though we see this bump, we consider it as an improvement because how far removed it is from normal averages."

Valley air officials over the past decade have declared an average of 40 days each season, according to a statement from the agency.

In 2004 and 2005, prolonged rains and windy patterns caused exceptional clean-air conditions throughout California, Schneider said.

Because of these factors, Valley air officials are not concerned about the 2006 increase.

"There will always be fluctuation, and the fact that the number of days are still reduced compared to the historical data is positive," Schneider said. "So, no, we're not too worried. 2003 is more reflective of norms in Tulare County."

That year, there were 39 "Spare" days declared in Tulare County, bested only by Kern County's 41 days of smoggy air conditions.

The 23 days in 2006 were tied for the most in the Valley with Fresno and Kern counties. San Joaquin, which experienced 10 "Spare" days, was the lowest.

The lower number of days Valleywide point to an overall decrease in unhealthy emissions, Schneider said.

"That's the important thing," Schneider said of the lowered emissions. "I think that the Spare the Air program has helped to educate people about what creates smog, and I think that education level is pretty high right now."

During a "Spare" day, residents are advised to minimize driving, using gas-powered equipment or using lighter fluid on a barbecue, according to the release.

These efforts, combined with larger achievements -- lower-emission vehicles, air-quality regulations on construction, developers and dairies -- have led to improved Valley air, Schneider said.

This does not mean, Schneider said, that air quality cannot be improved. Valley Air is currently drafting a process to meet the new 8-hour ozone standard.

The new standard measures smog levels by averaging the highest hourly ozone levels during an eight-hour period, Schneider said.

It replaces the 1-hour standard, which Schneider said was becoming impractical.

"Nobody breathes air for an hour a day," Schneider said. "The 8-hour standard is more representative of people's breathing habits."

County had more Spare the Air days than last year

Average number of days is down from previous years

Staff reports

Visalia Times-Delta, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2006

Spare the Air season ends Saturday, and Tulare County comes out with a lower than average amount of days.

Tulare County had 23 Spare the Air days, more than the past two years — 18 in 2005 and 15 in 2004, according to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. Twenty-three days shows a positive trend when compared to having around 40 in previous years, said Janelle Schneider, spokeswoman for the air district.

The district calls a Spare the Air Day when the air quality is considered unhealthy. On those days, residents in affected counties are asked to do things like trip link or refrain from using gas-powered lawn mowers to cut down on emissions. Back in June, the district started its Spare the Air season.

Although the lower numbers this season are partly because of active wind patterns in the valley, Schneider said residents are also doing their part to help out.

"People have become much better educated," she said.

Spare the Air Days exist because the mountains inhibit large wind movement, trapping chemicals in the air, Schneider said. Those get cooked by the sun, creating ozone, which causes poor air quality, she said.

Most of the chemicals are released through vehicle exhaust, though smaller factors contribute like aerosol cans and gasoline-powered lawn mowers.

"A gasoline-powered lawn mower running for an hour produces the same amount of chemicals as 40 late-model cars running for an hour," Schneider said.

Current air problems

The good news about valley air comes as a 150,000-square-acre fire in Ventura County is pushing smoke into the area. Because of winds blowing north, meteorologists from the Valley Air District expect the smoke to cause air-quality problems in the Valley over the next few days.

The duration is dependent on wind conditions and how long the fire burns.

Making a water pump that's good for the air

By Melinda Morales, Staff writer
Visalia Times-Delta, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2006

Along the farm roads of Tulare and Kings counties are scattered evidence of Terry Kwast's contribution to farming and irrigation. His company, Sawtelle and Rosprim in Corcoran, makes irrigation pumps and tanks that dot the roads next to flooded fields as farmers prepare the land for planting.

But Kwast hopes to make a bigger contribution to farming and to a cleaner environment if he is successful in a new venture to design and build an irrigation system that runs on ammonia instead of diesel.

"[Ammonia] is safe to handle and the infrastructure for storage and delivery already exists," Kwast said. "I think it's a real-world solution."

With ammonia in common use as a fertilizer on farms across the Valley — it stores like propane and contains no carbon — Kwast and his partner, Hydrogen Engine Center in Algona, Iowa, hope that the new engine will be an easy fit.

HEC has been researching ammonia as an engine fuel for years and Kwast was looking at ways farmers, with their diesel-powered irrigation systems, could meet the new air quality standards that are just around the corner. The two teamed up and are working on a prototype system, which should be ready for testing during the spring 2007 irrigation season.

"They will build the engine and we will build the pump mechanism," Kwast said.

If the project proceeds on schedule, in 2008, ammonia-fueled engines will be available for sale. Kwast's pump systems will be right behind.

"We believe that the demonstration of this engine will complete years of development work and will allow the sale of our systems worldwide without concerns about hydrogen storage, cost, availability or permitting," HEC president Ted Hollinger said in a statement.

The ammonia-fueled system could meet the more stringent air quality standards from the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District that will take effect in 2010 under Rule 4702.

John Holbrook, a consultant from Richland, Wash., who is working with Kwast and HEC on the project that he said, "We're trying to change the world with ammonia fuel. It's clean burning, abundant and safe. The 2010 legislation that says emissions have to get down is totally driving this."

Holbrook, retired from the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, is among the guest speakers at an alternative-fuels conference sponsored by the Iowa Energy Center scheduled for Oct. 9 and Oct. 10 in Denver, Colo. The conference will focus on establishing ammonia as an alternative to imported fossil fuel.

George Heinen, supervisor of rule development for the Air Pollution Control District, said that because of the sheer number of diesel engines in use in the San Joaquin Valley, there will be significant reductions from these engines once Rule 4702 goes into effect.

"If this project pans out as far as reducing their emissions, I'm sure farmers will embrace it as a substitute to diesel fuel," he said.

Planners to hear comments on vehicle park tonight

Nov. 14 deadline looms for 11,000-acre project, but objections remain

BY JAMES BURGER, Californian staff writer
Bakersfield Californian, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2006

A state off-highway vehicle park north of Bakersfield faces the first of two critical public hearings tonight at the Kern County Planning Commission.

It looked this weekend like the 11,000-acre park would be pulled from today's agenda at the request of state officials.

But the state has agreed to withdraw that request, Kern County Planning Director Ted James said.

People who have comments about the project must attend the commission meeting tonight.

County planners say it will be a long meeting, lasting as late as midnight.

Kern County supervisors will also have to bless the project before the state makes a decision about whether to buy land for the park.

Time, project planners say, is critical in today's decision by the commission.

A city of Bakersfield purchase option on the 11,000 acres expires Nov. 14.

The commission needs to approve the project tonight and send it on for a swift approval by the Kern County Board of Supervisors or the purchase option will expire and the project will die, city of Bakersfield planner Marc Gauthier said last week.

A large pile of letters from off-highway supporters argue that now is the time for an off-highway park to be built in Bakersfield. Off-highway use is growing and the users need a legal place to ride.

But environmentalists say Wofford Ranch may not be the right place for this project.

The vehicle park's roots

The Bakersfield State Vehicular Recreation Area project was born amid a spirit of cooperation between environmentalists and off-highway rider groups.

But four years of cooperation exploded into contention this year after the city, county and state began studying the environmental impacts of putting the off-highway park on the former Wofford Ranch on Round Mountain Road north of Bakersfield.

Wofford Ranch contains wet woodlands along Poso Creek -- great habitat for plants and animals. The area also has a large number of sites used historically by the Native American tribes.

Kern County planner Cheryl Casdorff said the 11,000-acre Wofford Ranch is big enough for both an off-highway park and buffers to protect sensitive environmental areas.

But environmentalists said they feel betrayed.

Harry Love with the Sierra Club and Rich O'Neil with the Kern River Parkway Foundation, who both sat on the site selection committee, have written letters opposing the project, claiming the city and state tainted the project's environmental protections.

They want to keep off-highway riders from crossing Poso Creek and riding in the southeastern portion of the Wofford Ranch where many of the Native American areas and woodlands are located.

Casdorph said the state of California will do a full design for the park before finishing a second environmental impact report to make sure the environmental areas of the project will be protected.

Smoky air linked to Ventura wildfire

Modesto Bee, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2006

A 3-week-old wildfire in Ventura County could create air-quality concerns as far north as Merced County. The Day fire has grown to more than 150,000 acres and is 42 percent contained. Because of the fire's increasing size, combined with winds continuing to come from the south and southwest, the smoke is expected to bring bad air in the next several days to Merced, Tulare, Kings, Fresno, Kern and Madera counties. "In general, if you can smell smoke, then it's probably at a strong enough concentration to cause health effects," said Shawn Ferreira, a San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District meteorologist. He added that the duration of the problem depends on wind conditions and how long the fire burns. It might burn until rains arrive in Southern California in October or November, he said. Residents are advised to use caution when smoke is present. For more information, call the air district at 557-6400 or go to www.valleyair.org.

Fire worsens air quality, putting some at risk

More residents having asthma attacks, doctors report

BY EMILY HAGEDORN, Californian staff writer

Bakersfield Californian, Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2006

The Day fire is making an already bad time for asthma, allergies and pulmonary sufferers worse.

Smoke and ash -- which lightly covered parts of Bakersfield Tuesday but usually is undetectable -- are exacerbating sicknesses caused by hay fever, pollution, the start of cold and flu season and the dust kicked up from harvesting, wind and the Kern County Fair, many local doctors said.

About 150 more people than usual have come through the San Joaquin Valley Pulmonary Medical Group's doors in the past couple of weeks, probably due to the fire, said Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed, a physician there.

"It all depends on where the wind is blowing," Ahmed said. "We are having a lot of patients having more attacks."

Considering Bakersfield is a valley and "nothing leaves here," people's health might be affected for months to come, said Dr. Julia Bae, chief of the allergy department with Kaiser Permanente in Bakersfield.

"We're seeing a lot more people with asthma flairs and people not getting better," she said. "The effects of this fire might carry them through the whole winter."

The bad air quality is also worsening other conditions.

When asthma and emphysema flair, they can cause the heart to do more work, which can bring on congestive heart failure, Bae said.

Ahmed, who handles workers' compensation for several firefighters, has diagnosed in the past week four firefighters with valley fever, an endemic fungal disease contracted by breathing in dust. The wind and fire have stirred up a lot of soil, which has released an increased amount of valley fever spores into the air.

The physicians offered the following tips:

- Check the daily air quality report. If the air is bad, stay inside. Limit outdoor activities while the wind is blowing toward Bakersfield, said Dr. Patrick Leung, a private allergist in Bakersfield.
- Get plenty of rest and eat healthy foods, which will speed up the healing process, Bae said.
- If you have a High Efficiency Particulate Air filter, turn it on, she said.
- Keep house and car windows closed.
- If you have asthma, take your controller medicine.
- If you see ash in the air, a HEPA or disposable mask can help relieve symptoms if you have to go outside.
- If symptoms worsen, see a doctor.

New filters help area buses clean up

Retrofits on diesel exhausts cut particulate matter by 85 percent

by Michael Manekin

Tri-Valley Herald, Thursday, September 28, 2006

TREASURE ISLAND — With a hazy vista of the Bay and the city skyline as backdrop, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom climbed a ladder and stuck his face next to the tailpipe of a city bus.

As the wind blew a few strands of his gelled hair, Newsom held a white handkerchief against the tailpipe, dabbed his cheek with the spotless hankie and smiled for the cameras.

All that good-old fashioned PR was for a good cause: to celebrate the Clean Diesel Bus Program, a joint effort by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to promote the retrofit of more than 1,700 diesel buses from 13 Bay Area transit districts with state-of-the-art diesel exhaust filters.

The program is designed to reduce by 85 percent the toxic particulate matter and 25 percent of the oxides of nitrogen created by the diesel buses.

"We have to step up to the plate," Newsom told the crowd. "We've got an obligation — a moral and legal obligation — to deal with the emissions to turn the tide of global warming."

As an assembly of nine Bay Area buses — including buses from SamTrans, AC Transit, Muni and VTA — revved their engines, it was apparent the thick black emissions that many associate with diesel vehicles were not spewing from any of these particular tailpipes.

The high-tech filters — which have already been installed in 1,384 Bay Area buses and are scheduled to be placed in 340 more by the end of the year — will capture more than 50 tons of harmful particulate matter and 436 tons of nitrogen oxides every year.

While nitrogen oxides contribute to ground-level ozone (otherwise known as smog), particulate matter is a catchall term for various tiny materials, such as smoke and dust.

Diesel particulate matter — a complex blend of carbon, hydrocarbons and other material — can be particularly harmful.

Particulate matter "has been shown in numerous studies on every continent to have been linked with respiratory and cardiac distress," said Linda Citvello-Joy, president of Breathe California, a Daly City-based public health nonprofit.

Unlike larger particles, diesel particulate matter is small and doesn't get filtered out by the throat or nose, according to Citvello-Joy. As a result, she said, they enter the lungs and can get into the bloodstream.

The filters — manufactured by Cleaire, based in San Leandro — heat the particulate matter into a fine ash.

The bulk of the money for the bus conversions, which was distributed by the MTC, is \$13.8 million from the Federal Transit Administration's Congestion Management and Air Quality Improvement program. Meanwhile, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District also kicked in some three-quarters of a million dollars. The East Bay's AC Transit hopes to retrofit all 416 of its diesel buses by the end of the year. San

Francisco's Muni plans to retrofit 424 of its 495 active diesel buses. SamTrans is scheduled to retrofit 254 of its all-diesel fleet of 364.

All the retrofitted buses in the Bay Area will be well within compliance with the state's Air Resource Board regulations.

"Technology can play an important role in reducing emissions from mobile sources and to help the Bay Area to attain and maintain air quality standards," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District in a press release.

"This project represents a step towards reducing emissions from buses in our region."

Number of Smoggy Days Falls, Study Says Region Still Needs to Cut Pollution Under U.S. Clean Air Standards

By David A. Fahrenthold, Staff Writer
Washington Post, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2006; B01

The number of dangerously smoggy days in the Washington area has declined by more than 40 percent since 2003, but the region still does not meet federal standards for healthy air, according to data released yesterday.

From 2003 to 2006, the region has had 63 days in which the levels of ground-level ozone -- a harmful gas formed when the sun heats polluted air -- was high enough for Code Orange, Code Red or Code Purple warnings. From 1999 to 2002, there were 114 such days, according to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

Officials said yesterday that they were encouraged, believing the reduction in bad air days was a sign that local and national anti-pollution measures were having an effect.

"The air's cleaner," said D.C. Council member Phil Mendelson (D-At Large), chairman of COG's air quality committee. "But not clean enough."

That's because the Washington region, which has exceeded smog limits repeatedly since 1977, still hasn't improved enough to meet the smog standards the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will begin enforcing in 2009. At that point, a violation could trigger a loss of federal transportation funding.

Moreover, local environmental groups were wary of the report, wondering whether cooler weather, not reduced smog, was partly responsible for the improvement.

This might seem like an odd year to tout progress in reducing air pollution. An early August heat wave caused several Code Orange days, with residents warned against exercising or working outside. In July, the region had a Code Purple day -- the worst rating and its first in more than a year.

Jeff King, an air quality planner at COG, said this summer offered some confirmation that progress was being made: Although it was far hotter than in 2005, it had the same number of unhealthy air days -- 19. That appeared to mean that less smog was around for the sun to heat.

"We did have some pollution problems, but it wasn't as severe as we'd had in the past," King said.

The pollutants that help create bad air days come from sources as diverse as power plants, cars, gas pumps and paint fumes. In explaining the reductions in bad air, local officials cited changes almost as varied.

Mendelson credited new federal rules limiting the amount of nitrogen oxide in power-plant emissions and curbing auto pollution, as well as several local policy changes. Montgomery County bought more energy from wind power. The District required power companies to derive more of their electricity from renewable sources. Fairfax County retrofitted its school buses to produce cleaner emissions.

Mendelson said moves such as those could continue to reduce smog, even as the region adds millions of residents and thousands of miles of roads.

"So far, the region has continued to grow significantly, and yet we're polluting less," he said.

Frank O'Donnell of Clean Air Watch said the apparent good news was tempered by the fact that the Washington area still regularly suffers through Code Orange days and worse.

"If we're still seeing eight or 10 dirty air days in the area, that to me is still a sign that we're not there yet," O'Donnell said.

Governor signs measure to cap greenhouse gas emissions -- sweeping changes predicted in industries and life in cities

Mark Martin, Chronicle Sacramento Bureau
S.F. Chronicle, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2006

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed legislation Wednesday setting California on course to reduce the greenhouse gases that cause global warming, a major political victory for the governor and a step that environmental and political leaders predict will have worldwide ramifications.

In a ceremony on San Francisco's Treasure Island with the city's skyline as a backdrop, Schwarzenegger declared the beginning of "a bold new era of environmental protection in California that will change the course of history" as he approved AB32, which calls for the state to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases by 25 percent by 2020.

The new law, the first of its kind in the nation, could lead to a dizzying array of changes in industry and elsewhere that will be seen in cities, on farms and on freeways.

During the next decade, state regulators could require more public transportation, more densely built housing, a major new investment in projects that tap into the wind and sun to generate electricity, millions of new trees and even new ways for farmers to handle animal waste.

Aides to the governor said he also planned to sign legislation later this week that will prohibit the state's electric utilities from buying electricity from high-polluting out-of-state power plants, a key step toward cleaning up the state's power supply.

Schwarzenegger put his signature on AB32 a little more than a year after he made international headlines by announcing that the debate over global warming was over and that California should act. The move sets the state on a markedly different path than the federal government -- President Bush has resisted the idea of capping emissions, saying it would ruin the nation's economy.

The president's warnings were echoed this year as major business groups -- many of whom are allies of Schwarzenegger -- suggested that California would send businesses scurrying out of state if it acted alone to limit emissions of greenhouse gases.

But on Wednesday, Schwarzenegger and others insisted that the caps would spur new clean-technology businesses and that other states, and eventually the federal government, would follow California's lead.

"You are showing brilliant leadership that will inspire people around the world," said British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who predicted that the new California law would spur a larger global market that allows companies to buy and sell emissions credits. Blair noted the law could encourage similar laws in "states within the United States of America as well, and hopefully in time from the whole of America."

Blair, whose country is part of the Kyoto Protocol requiring countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, was beamed in via satellite to the morning ceremony, a well-choreographed event that was duplicated in the afternoon in Malibu. With flags from countries around the world on one side of the stage, a vast lighting system and a giant video monitor displaying Blair and images of the other speakers, it was a Hollywood-quality production.

Joining Schwarzenegger was San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsome, Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez and New York Gov. George Pataki, who helped instigate an effort by New York and seven other Northeastern states to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants.

California's law makes it the first state in the country to focus on all industries.

Schwarzenegger has built a double-digit lead over his challenger this November, state Treasurer Phil Angelides, and the signing of landmark environmental legislation was a big political achievement for the governor.

Polls show overwhelming support among California voters -- Democrats, Republicans and independents - for a broader government-led effort to combat global warming. Schwarzenegger further distanced himself from Bush, complicating Angelides' efforts to tie the governor to the unpopular president.

And Núñez, who is a co-chairman of Angelides' campaign, spoke at both ceremonies and gushed over the governor -- in two languages. He said Schwarzenegger showed both courage and leadership in setting the targets last year and signing the legislation this year, and then he reiterated the message for Spanish-language media.

When Schwarzenegger signed a copy of the legislation and handed it to the speaker, "Núñez looked so happy, like a little boy who had just been handed the biggest ice cream cone in the world," noted Sherry Bebitch Jeffe, a political analyst at USC.

"It's days like this when you have to wonder how Angelides gets out of bed," she said.

Despite a contentious legislative battle this year over the bill, the legislation leaves most of the heavy lifting to the state's Air Resources Board, which now is charged with numerous duties in achieving the state's 2020 goal -- a deadline that will occur long after Schwarzenegger and the lawmakers who voted for AB32 are out of office.

By January 2008, the board is expected to have developed new rules requiring most industries to report their current greenhouse gas emissions, a key first step. The board also must determine by that time the exact amount of gas that needs to be reduced; experts suggested it will be more than 170 million metric tons of gases.

That's more carbon dioxide than every car in the state combined produces now.

Other deadlines follow that, including creation of a fully spelled-out plan for meeting the target by January 2011 and enforcement beginning in 2012. The board also can consider implementing a so-called cap and trade system, which would allow companies to buy and sell credits for emission reductions, allowing one company that lowers emissions more than required to sell credits to another firm, for example.

Each step will involve public hearings and is likely to feature battles -- and litigation -- among regulators, businesses and environmental groups.

"In many ways, what was done this year was the easy part," said Bill Magavern, a lobbyist with the Sierra Club. "The implementation will be the hard part."

The state had already begun to tackle global warming, and the track record so far illustrates how difficult hitting the reduction target could be.

A law passed before Schwarzenegger took office that requires automakers to reduce tailpipe emissions from cars beginning in 2009, which would account for a major portion of the new law's target, has been held up in court after carmakers sued the state. Trial begins in January.

Provisions of the new environmental law

Key points of AB32, signed into law by Gov. Schwarzenegger:

- Reduction: California is required to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by about 25 percent by 2020.
- Restrictions: The California Air Resources Board will develop a plan by 2009 outlining reductions that must be made by industrial sources such as utilities, power plants, manufacturers and cement makers.
- Trade system: Regulators can develop a market-based program to help industries that might not be able to meet the new targets. The system could allow a California company to buy credits for emission reductions made elsewhere in the world.
- Regulations: By 2011, the state air board is required to adopt regulations to meet the 2020 reductions; by 2012, it is to begin enforcing limits and reduction measures.
- Delays: The governor can delay the cap deadline by one year in the event of extraordinary circumstances, catastrophic events or threat of significant economic harm.

In addition ... The governor has indicated he will sign SB1368 by Senate leader Don Perata, D-Oakland, which would prohibit utilities in the state from buying electricity from high-polluting power plants.

State's Greenhouse Gas Bill Signed

By Michael Finnegan and Marc Lifsher, staff writers
L.A. Times, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2006

California moved to the front of local government efforts to fight global warming today when Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed legislation calling for a reduction of greenhouse gases.

The bill commits the state to reduce the emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases by 25% by 2020. Greenhouse gases trap heat in the atmosphere and cause global warming.

At an elaborate signing ceremony at Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay, Schwarzenegger put pen to paper, a scene he repeated at a second ceremony at Pepperdine University in Malibu.

"We simply must do everything we can in our power to slow down global warming before it is too late," Schwarzenegger said at Treasure Island.

Both ceremonies were grandiose, bipartisan affairs, heavily laced with the exchange of compliments. The only difference was the weather, with bright sun in Southern California.

At Treasure Island, Schwarzenegger signed the bill into law at an outdoor ceremony under overcast skies with a chilly breeze and the San Francisco skyline as a backdrop. On one side of the stage were 114 flags from nations around the world; on the other, a giant video screen.

Among those onstage with Schwarzenegger were San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, New York Gov. George Pataki, and the bill's cosponsors, California Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez (D-Los Angeles) and Assemblywoman Fran Pavley (D-Agoura Hills).

The signing ceremony gave Schwarzenegger a platform to display his environmental credentials weeks before voters decide whether to give him another term.

The Schwarzenegger camp touted the signing as a major policy step, and included a live satellite video message of congratulations from British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

"You are showing brilliant leadership that will inspire and excite a lot of people worldwide," Blair said. He expressed hope that leadership on the issue would come from "states within the United States of America" and "hopefully, in time, from the whole of America."

A Japanese diplomat read a letter to Schwarzenegger from Japan's outgoing Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who commended the governor for "taking a leadership role in protecting the Earth's environment."

"As the world's two biggest economies, Japan and the United States share common responsibility to lead the world in its effort to fight global warming," the letter said.

The bill, AB 32, authorizes the California Air Resources Board and other agencies to begin measuring greenhouse emissions from electric power plants, oil refineries and other sources.

Beginning in 2012, emitters will be assigned firm limits on the amounts of carbon dioxide they can release into the atmosphere. Those caps will be gradually lowered to meet the 2020 target.

The new law relies on a variety of tools to reduce greenhouse gas emissions:

- Direct government regulation.
- Development of new technology, energy efficiency and alternative fuels.
- Creation of a market for companies that have met their emissions targets to sell credits on an open market to other firms. Buyers of pollution credits could continue to release carbon dioxide in excess of their limits.

Supporters of the global warming law concede that California, which is responsible for only about 2.5% of the world's greenhouse gas production, won't make a major difference in combating global warming alone.

Nevertheless, they contend that passage of the bill sets an example for the federal government, other states and countries that shows that action can be taken now to deal with climate change.

Critics, mainly mainline business groups, argue that California, acting on its own, will drive manufacturers and jobs to other states and countries that require less stringent regulation of greenhouse gases.

State to curb greenhouse gases

Governor breaks from Bush to sign global warming law

By Josh Richman

Tri-Valley Herald, Thursday, September 28, 2006

SAN FRANCISCO — Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Wednesday signed into law the nation's strictest greenhouse-gas emission cuts, aiming to reduce the global-warming pollution by a quarter by 2020.

AB 32's signing marks the start of "a bold new era of environmental protection here in California that will change the course of history," the governor told politicians, business leaders and environmental advocates at the signing ceremony under leaden skies on Treasure Island's breezy shoreline. "This is something we owe our children and that we owe our grandchildren."

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, linked live via satellite, said Schwarzenegger and lawmakers have shown "brilliant leadership that will excite and inspire a lot of people worldwide."

"You guys have set yourself a really bold target but I think that's right, that's important," Blair said, adding that Great Britain set and met its emissions-reduction standards while growing its economy. He said he hopes California's action will prod the United States, China, India and other nations to join the international community for a more binding global pact after the Kyoto Protocols expire in 2012.

AB 32 requires the California Air Resources Board to develop and implement regulations and market mechanisms to cut the state's greenhouse gas emissions to 1990's levels by 2020 — a 25 percent cut — and then 80 percent more by 2050. Mandatory caps will begin in 2012 for significant sources and then ratchet down to meet the 2020 goal.

New York Gov. George Pataki was at the signing ceremony, and said that although New York and California are a continent apart, "on issues such as this we share a common vision." New York was the launching pad for a seven-state Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative compact signed earlier this year which created a cap-and-trade system limiting power plants' carbon dioxide emissions.

"We cannot wait and follow others — we have to lead ourselves," Pataki said, adding more must be done to reduce America's dependence on foreign oil exported by "unfriendly regimes like Hugo Chavez" of Venezuela.

Pataki's words seemed to underscore the event's political context: self-styled moderate Republican governors breaking from the Bush administration's inaction to embrace an environmental issue near and dear to many Democrats' and independents' hearts.

Democratic gubernatorial contender Phil Angelides and some environmental activists have noted that Schwarzenegger tried to gut this bill by putting a board of his own political appointees in charge of its enforcement and granting that panel power to ease the deadlines if compliance would be "detrimental to the California economy."

Schwarzenegger was "dragged kicking and screaming" to this agreement, Angelides said last week in San Francisco, and is signing it only as an effort to "greenwash" his record as he seeks re-election. On Wednesday, protesters sat atop a row of Hummer vehicles near the signing site, bearing signs that read, "Gas Guzzlers for Arnold."

But Assembly Speaker Fabian Nez, D-Los Angeles, beamed as he shook the governor's hand Wednesday and thanked him "for demonstrating leadership, for demonstrating courage." Nez co-authored AB32 with Assemblywoman Fran Pavley, D-Agoura Hills.

"We believe this is the destiny of a state like California," Nez said. "Today we tell the rest of the world ... that California has the courage, the know-how to turn this tide."

State Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata, D-Oakland, had been scheduled to attend but didn't.

"He decided not to go," spokeswoman Alicia Trost said Wednesday; she later noted Schwarzenegger didn't sign Perata's companion bill, SB 1368, which would require the State Energy Conservation and Development Commission to set emissions standards for electric utilities.

San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom was present; he praised Schwarzenegger's "vision and leadership" and received one of several signed copies of the bill, less than a day after having emceed an Angelides rally at San Francisco State University.

"I do admire what the governor did today, but I don't know which governor we're going to elect," Newsom told reporters after the event — 2006's seemingly moderate, green governor or the conservative ideologue he appeared to be in 2005. "People have to ask themselves, 'Is that a risk worth taking?'"

Environmental Defense regional director Tom Graff said the new law helps ensure a cleaner, safer world for his grandson's generation, and must be replicated across the nation and globe in order to face up to "potentially the most devastating problem on earth."

Pacific Gas & Electric Co. President and CEO Tom King said it's "the right thing to do for California and the right thing to do for our nation. ... Climate change is the defining environmental challenge of our generation."

And Japanese Consul General Makoto Yamanaka read a congratulatory letter from Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi praising Schwarzenegger and Californians for "taking a leadership role in protecting the earth's environment."

Representatives for and against Proposition 87, the oil-drilling-tax ballot measure on November's ballot, were at Wednesday's signing, too. Advocate Beth Willon said the measure — taxing oil companies about \$4 billion, to be spent on developing alternative, renewable energy and reducing gas and diesel consumption by 25 percent over 10 years — is a perfect companion to the law Schwarzenegger just signed. Schwarzenegger opposes Proposition 87, saying he opposes all new taxes; Perata, Nez and Angelides have endorsed it.

The governor on Tuesday signed three other bills aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. SB 107 by state Sen. Joseph Simitian, D-Palo Alto, requires investor-owned utilities to have 20 percent of their electricity come from renewable sources by 2010; AB 1925 by Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee, R-San Luis Obispo, requires the California Energy Commission to study and make recommendations for capturing and storing industrial carbon dioxide; and SB 1686 by state Sen. Sheila Kuehl, D-Santa Monica, lets the Wildlife Conservation Board consider forests' ability to reduce greenhouse gases when prioritizing funds for proposed land buys.

Warming Trend Is Hatching a Business

By Steven Mufson, Staff Writer

Washington Post, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2006; D01

U.S. governors, impatient with federal inaction on global warming, are taking matters into their own hands. The result could add impetus to an emerging industry.

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) yesterday signed legislation to cap greenhouse gas emissions. And seven Northeastern states, which together emit as much greenhouse gas as Germany, have banded together to set rules that would cut their emissions by 10 percent by 2019. Other states may join them.

"There isn't an actor at the table who wouldn't prefer a national program, but we can't afford to wait," says Franz Litz, climate change coordinator at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

So the state leaders are modeling their efforts on the European Union, which has turned limits on greenhouse gas emissions into a multibillion-dollar worldwide industry.

Companies are already scrambling to take advantage of the E.U. system, which is an outgrowth of the global environmental accord known as the Kyoto Protocol. Arlington-based AES Corp. has dispatched

teams to negotiate with Asian palm oil plantations over installing equipment to suck methane -- one of the most potent of a half-dozen greenhouse gases -- out of waste lagoons. The electric power company wants to convert it into energy and less harmful gases. In return, the firm would get credits it could use or sell in Europe.

The European system sets a cap for the continent's emissions of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide. Every company producing significant amounts of greenhouse gases is issued a designated number of "allowances." If power plants and factories spew out more than their quotas, they have to buy allowances from firms that spew less than their allotments. Polluting companies can also buy credits from firms that are cutting emissions in the developing world.

The result: Gases that were once worthless now have a commercial value every bit as solid as coal, pork bellies or Treasury bills -- only with this commodity, companies are paid for what they do not deliver. According to Point Carbon, a research firm, \$12.6 billion of greenhouse gas emission rights, called European Union Allowances, were traded in the first half of this year. The value of all existing allowances exceeds \$70 billion.

The Northeastern U.S. governors' Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative plans to begin a similar type of carbon trading by 2009. Schwarzenegger, who appeared last month beside British Prime Minister Tony Blair, said that linking a West Coast plan to Europe's was one option.

The idea of creating a market for trading air pollution rights began in the United States. Legislation passed in 1990 and implemented in 1995 established an acid rain program, which capped sulfur dioxide emissions and let companies trade their assigned shares. Sulfur dioxide emissions fell 30 percent. Economists say such plans meet environmental goals efficiently, without choosing between technologies.

The United States insisted that other countries adopt a cap-and-trade approach for greenhouse gases in the Kyoto accord but then never signed on while Europe moved ahead. Back then, the United States agreed to reach a target 7 percent below 1990 emissions by 2012. Now, the country is churning out 16 percent more than it did in 1990 and 25 percent more than either China or the E.U.

"It is ironic that 10 years after Kyoto was signed, there is a vibrant market in Europe, an emerging market in the developing world, and the U.S. is sitting on the sidelines," says Véronique Bugnion, Point Carbon's research director.

No one is on the sidelines in Europe. Power generators now count greenhouse gases -- measured in metric tons of carbon dioxide -- as one of their costs. "It's going to change the way you make decisions about deploying capital," says Garth Edward, trading manager for environmental products at Royal Dutch Shell PLC, which has 25 installations in the E.U. system. Energy efficiency projects, he said, "are going to move up the ladder faster."

Stockholm-based Vattenfall, Europe's fourth-largest utility, is building a pilot zero-emissions coal-fired plant in Germany using sequestration, which injects carbon dioxide into the earth instead of releasing it into the air. Vattenfall chief executive Lars G. Josefsson says removing the carbon dioxide will cost more than \$25 a metric ton, but he says, "If we're going to have a problem with carbon dioxide, this is a good investment."

While the E.U. carbon trading scheme has given birth to an industry, it has also created controversy over how quotas are assigned and who gets stuck paying the bills. In Germany, utilities raised electricity rates, treating carbon emissions as a cost to pass along. Four utilities made \$3 billion to \$5 billion in windfall profits, Bugnion says.

There are disputes between countries as well as within them. Britain and Germany are cutting their greenhouse emissions sharply, while Spain's are still growing. Sweden relies mostly on hydro- and nuclear power for electricity; Germany relies overwhelmingly on coal. Countries are currently drawing up new caps for 2008-2012.

Setting baselines for emissions has been tough. Quotas are based on a company's emissions over the five years before the program began. Firms have sought higher baselines to get more allowances. In most nations, utilities were squeezed while industrial firms were given more than enough.

The numbers didn't add up the way people expected. In May, the E.U. revealed that actual emissions were well below the quotas, suggesting that baseline levels were set too high. That shocked the carbon trading market. The price of a ton of carbon dioxide crashed, dropping by two thirds and erasing \$36 billion of value. Prices crept back up but tumbled in recent days.

The credits bought in developing countries pose other challenges. So far, companies find it cheapest to cut the most potent greenhouse gases, mostly in the developing world. A ton of methane, common in landfills and farms, equals 21 tons of carbon dioxide; a ton of hydro-fluorocarbons, a refrigerant byproduct, is worth as much as 11,700 tons of carbon dioxide.

Independent firms and investors are getting into the act. EcoSecurities, whose chief executive Bruce Usher is a former Wall Street derivatives trader, has become a broker and developer of projects in 26 countries, ranging from one to capture methane at a Chinese landfill to small hydropower dams in Honduras.

A London firm called Climate Change Capital has raised \$830 million to reduce greenhouse gases for credits to be sold in Europe. AES is putting \$325 million into a joint venture to produce 50 million tons of credits by 2012.

These credits need the blessing of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), a United Nations agency in Bonn. That process could get messy, and political. One criterion: "additionality," the buzzword for a project that wouldn't have happened without the credit system. That can be hard to figure out when high oil prices make conservation and alternative energy attractive. In July, the CDM rejected four projects, including two proposed by EcoSecurities, without saying why.

Not surprisingly, most credits are generated in countries with the worst environmental track records. China accounted for 62 percent of the CDM credits sold during the first half of this year. That raises a sensitive question: Should Europe be effectively subsidizing investments in pollution control that its economic competitor China hasn't bothered to make? Moreover, China is collecting a 65 percent tax on the sale of credits.

"Scientifically, it makes sense to take [greenhouse gases] out wherever you can do it most cheaply, but politically, it might be better to do it in your country," said AES chief executive Paul Hanrahan.

There is one functioning U.S. carbon market. On Earth Day 2005, Richard Sandor founded the Chicago Climate Exchange, but participation is voluntary. Member companies must trim 6 percent of their emissions by 2010. "The only ones who opt in know they'll meet the targets," says Point Carbon's Bugnion. Members include Ford Motor Co., DuPont Co., Motorola Inc., International Business Machines Corp., American Electric Power Inc. and half a dozen municipal governments.

Mandatory carbon trading may still be adopted in the United States. Cap-and-trade measures have been drafted by a handful of lawmakers. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) co-sponsored an earlier bill.

"This is a big global problem, and we have a deficit in global governance," says Vattenfall's Josefsson. "If we could solve this, it could be a model for global governance."

[Bakersfield Californian, Commentary, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2006:](#)

State has conflict of interest about greenhouse gases

Global warming cannot be proven in a court of law. There is broad disagreement in the scientific community on its validity or potential impacts. And even if it can be proven, the impacts California is suing for are predictions and not historical.

But for the sake of argument, let's say that a legal standard of proof can show that global warming is real and that without reasonable doubt will cause the future financial losses contended in the state's suit against automakers.

Who is most liable for causing it?

The state, counties and cities of California, for five reasons.

A vehicle that is not operating emits no threatening levels of greenhouse gases.

But the state, counties and cities enable, financially benefit from and encourage the use of motor vehicles.

Every year, every car with a California license plate pays a fee to the state, permitting it to operate.

California demands and accepts fees granting the right to operate a vehicle for another year and levies fines and other penalties against owners who do not comply.

Every two years every vehicle licensed by the state must pay a fee to undergo and pass an emissions test, the standards of which are defined and legislated by the state.

Every vehicle operator must pay a fee and pass a test to be issued a driver's license by the state.

The roads in California are built, expanded and maintained by the state, counties and cities, which are designed with the specific intent to operate motor vehicles. Many of these roads -- such as the interstate - are restricted to just this use.

The state, counties and cities of California license fueling stations and charge a fuel tax to vehicle operators.

If the state is really concerned with cleaning the air, it can stop issuing licenses for vehicles, tighten emissions standards, stop issuing driver's licenses, stop building and maintaining roads and prohibit the sale of gasoline.

Rather, the government provides infrastructure for vehicles to operate, encourages their operation and financially benefits from their operation.

The state, counties and cities then are culpable for causing the emission of greenhouse gases as these vehicles are operating in ways deemed lawful by the government and that are financially beneficial to state and local governments.

Who are we suing and why?

Attorney General Bill Lockyer is clearly election-season grandstanding as a ploy for headlines and a violating the trust of the office of the Attorney General.

Bill Bartling of Bakersfield is chairman of SciFrame Inc., which offers computing services for science.

[Sacramento Bee, Commentary, Thursday, September 28, 2006:](#)

David S. Broder: Schwarzenegger's lessons

By David S. Broder - The Washington Post

SACRAMENTO -- The Terminator has rescued himself from political ruin by reinventing his approach to government, thus demonstrating in the most dramatic way possible the value of political independence.

Barely more than 10 months after California voters rejected all four of the ballot initiatives he put before them and sent his personal approval ratings crashing to dangerous depths, Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is riding high, poised to win a full term come November.

Instead of the partisan assault on public employee unions and Democratic legislators (a.k.a. "girly men") that marked his rhetoric in 2005, Schwarzenegger has negotiated agreements this year on a minimum wage increase, higher school spending, curbing air pollution and a mega-bond sale designed to meet overdue highway, flood-control and school-construction needs.

Democratic leaders of the Legislature, who a year ago were ready to cut Schwarzenegger's throat politically, now sing his praises and join him on the public platform at bill-signing ceremonies, while the unions debate whether it is worthwhile to put money into the rival campaign of struggling Democratic nominee, state Treasurer Phil Angelides.

This turnaround, likely to yield a notable Republican victory in a year of widespread GOP losses, began within a week of Schwarzenegger's humiliation in the November 2005 special election he had called in hopes of trumping the Legislature and passing four initiatives that would have curbed the unions and expanded his power to run the state his way.

He immediately and publicly said that he had misjudged the electorate, but had heard the voters' message: Cut the partisan rhetoric and get back to work on the real problems facing the state.

He signaled the change by hiring as his new chief of staff Susan Kennedy, a lifelong Democrat who had served as executive director of the state party and a key aide to former Gov. Gray Davis, the man Schwarzenegger beat in the recall election of 2003.

The other day, puffing a cigar in the smoking tent Schwarzenegger built in the courtyard of the smoke-free Capitol, Kennedy talked about the new regime.

The governor still has very large goals, she said, citing the billions of construction bonds he has placed on the ballot in November. Those goals, she said, proved irresistible to the Democrats, "who salivate at the thought of spending \$50 billion." But they also represent a political risk -- it will be a struggle to pass even one or two, polls show -- by a man "who is not afraid to fail because he picks himself right up and goes back for more."

Were Schwarzenegger not that resilient and resourceful, he never would have made it out of Austria, to the top of the body-building world, to a business career, Hollywood stardom and now striking success in politics, all of which Joe Mathews describes in his excellent new political biography, "The People's Machine: Arnold Schwarzenegger and the Rise of Blockbuster Democracy."

Along the way, as one of the governor's aides told me, Schwarzenegger became an expert at marketing himself, "and to market yourself, you have to reinvent yourself."

The biggest reinvention came inside the governor's own head. A year ago, when I interviewed him on the eve of the special election, Schwarzenegger expressed burning frustration with the political, bureaucratic and interest-group barriers to his accomplishing great goals for his state.

After the failure of his effort to bypass all those barriers through direct appeal to the voters, an old Sacramento hand was summoned for help by the governor and wife Maria Shriver.

Schwarzenegger was told he needed to learn one thing: patience. Amazingly to some, he has learned it, and now works comfortably, convivially, on forging compromises with the very same Democratic legislators and lobbyists he once tried to run out of town. In turn, they have responded by cooperating instead of conniving to defeat or embarrass him.

Schwarzenegger's abandonment of a partisan posture has not cost him significant support in his own party, for a simple reason. As the only major Republican elected in this Democratic Capitol, he stands as the barrier to higher taxes and more stringent regulation of business.

More important, his current political posture mirrors the makeup of this complex state, where the only growing political group consists of those who decline to state a party preference, and where myriad competing racial, ethnic and geographic forces require political leadership with dexterity and flexibility.

Schwarzenegger is providing his party -- and the country -- an object lesson in how to survive and thrive in that kind of independent political environment. Others will have to learn.

[Sacramento Bee, Letter to the Editor, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2006:](#)

Melt down drunken drivers' cars

Re "Six funerals, infinite sorrow," Sept. 19: The elected leaders of this state are disgusting and every one of them should be ashamed. A zero tolerance policy for DUI activity will occur only when one of them has a similar circumstance that directly involves a family member.

A zero tolerance policy should include not only the arrest of the individuals, but also the melting down of their vehicles. This would not only get these clowns off the road immediately, but over time could help improve our air quality and traffic congestion issues.

- John W. Maslen, Carmichael