

Ethanol plant approved for Hanford

By Eiji Yamashita

Hanford Sentinel, Wednesday, Dec. 12, 2007

Over objections from residents who fear pollution and truck traffic, Hanford's city planners on Tuesday approved a plan to build an ethanol plant in south Hanford capable of producing 63 million gallons a year.

The 6-1 vote at a meeting that ended after more than three hours of public hearing marked the complexity -- and the controversy -- of the project.

Opponents cited myriad concerns -- greenhouse gas emissions, odor, traffic, health and environmental risks to the residents and, most notably, a 1 million-gallon-a-day water consumption amid severe drought.

Supporters of the plant said they want the 46 full-time jobs resulting from the construction, \$22 million in new taxes and a supposed green industry in town.

Skeptical members of the Hanford Planning Commission had an endless list of questions about the pros and cons of the project. But in the end the commission gave the project a thumbs-up.

The decision comes after seven months of environmental impact review and a couple of public scoping meetings.

"I'm delighted," said Edward Settle, president/CEO of Great Valley Ethanol. "I think it was the right decision. No other ethanol project in the U.S. has been studied like this one."

The Bakersfield-based company will build a new ethanol plant on a 112-acre parcel at the southwest corner of Iona and 10th avenues in the Kings Industrial Park.

Tuesday's approval allows the plant to break ground in April. Construction will take about 15-18 months, Settle said.

The project puts Hanford on the ethanol map that is sprawling -- with bipartisan support -- in California, where the industry claims a 1 billion-gallon demand is barely filled by a current 70 million-gallon supply. Corn ethanol is used as a gasoline additive replacing MTBE, which has caused groundwater pollution in the past.

There are currently four ethanol plants operating in California, including one in Madera, and three under construction. The Hanford plant was one of three in the permitting process. A virtually identical plant by Great Valley Ethanol is also in the works in Wasco.

Not all is well in the ethanol industry, however.

Sacramento-based Pacific Ethanol has recently halted construction on a new plant in Imperial County because of falling prices for the corn-based fuel. The company once tried to locate a plant in Kings County but pulled the plug on the project earlier this year.

Settle says Great Valley remains unaffected by the issue.

"The issue is not necessarily a glut of ethanol, not so much as it is difficult to get oil companies to blend it," he said.

Great Valley Ethanol will get various tax incentives by siting itself within Kings County's enterprise zone.

Debate Tuesday centered on the environmental impacts and economic gains involved with the ethanol plant.

"The emissions that will be coming from the plant will be coming directly to my property and therefore into my lungs," said Andre Booker, who lives just west of the project.

Booker also raised issue with greenhouse gas emissions.

"The Valley already has a classification of extreme air quality. The Valley already has a classification of extreme water drought. The Valley already has extreme day and night temperature (fluctuations)," Booker said.

Sandy Newburn, a north Hanford resident, questioned the air pollution number.

"We'll have 313,000 tons of carbon dioxide (a year)? Have you thought about how much that is?" she challenged the commission. "If it's coming out of the air in the Midwest where corn's grown, that's great, but it's coming out of here in the Valley where the air mass is trapped."

The environmental impact report indicates the plant would cause unavoidable significant amounts of nitrogen oxide, a smog precursor, and greenhouse gas. The plant also uses 1 million gallons of water a day, which is one-11th of the average amount of water pumped by the city each day. That's enough water to serve 4,651 residents in Hanford.

John Westermier, a consultant who worked on the environmental impact report for the project, said this water use exceeds the city-wide water use projected by the 2005 Urban Water Management Plan by 3.3 percent.

Company officials said they are mitigating these issues.

For example, the company will pay the Kings County Water District for any water usage exceeding the historical use of water by agriculture in the area, that is 3 acre-feet per acre. The money will pay for water banking to replenish groundwater. The company will also implement a truck traffic plan to minimize inner-city traffic impact, said Brian Pellens, the company's chief operating officer. Odor will also be controlled by combustion, he said.

Commissioner Russell Nabors was satisfied with the company's plans.

"This was the most scientifically difficult, hard-to-digest project," Nabors said.

"I think not only some of the issues are mitigated, but they are over-mitigated to an extent," he said. "I think every precaution has been taken into effect. Yes, it doesn't create a whole a lot of jobs, but the overall picture is that it's going to create a better environment for the state."

He was hardly a minority.

Several commissioners said they had their skepticism about the project but changed their minds after the public hearing saying it is the right business for the right location.

"This is an industrial area, and this type of business does deserve to go into this area," said Commissioner Neil Jennings.

Jennings also said, "I showed up tonight really skeptical, probably somewhat biased against the ethanol plant."

But listening to what Great Valley Ethanol had to say won him over, he said.

Commissioner Sue Sorensen said the city must give ethanol a chance to participate in the global movement toward better environment.

"We need to move into the 21st century. Change is inevitable," she said. "We've got to be willing to take that leap to move forward."

The sole dissension came from Commissioner Steven Wee.

"My concern was the air quality," Wee said after the meeting. "I think 330,000 tons of CO₂ going into the air is (concerning), when we know how the air is like here. I just can't see it's going to get any better."

Judge rejects automakers' lawsuit

By SAMANTHA YOUNG, Associated Press Writer

Sacramento Bee, Modesto Bee, SF Chronicle, Thursday, December 13, 2007

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - California scored a major victory Wednesday in its bid to be a player in the fight against global warming, as a federal judge ruled that the state has the authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from cars.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Anthony Ishii in Fresno was another in a series of losses this year for automakers, who have sought to block California's clean car mandates from taking effect here and in 16 other states that together make up nearly half the U.S. population.

The win for environmentalists is tempered by the federal Environmental Protection Agency, however, which has yet to grant California's two-year-old request for a waiver, the last roadblock to the new rules.

Ishii's ruling puts more pressure on the federal government to approve California's law and sends a signal to Congress not to interfere in that process.

"Today's decision marks another important victory in the fight against global warming," Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said in a statement. "California and other states will prevail in our goal to take aggressive action on climate change."

Automakers sued California over the tailpipe standards it approved in 2004, which would force automakers to cut greenhouse gases by about one-third in new cars and light trucks by 2016.

The Association of International Automobile Manufacturers argued that a 1975 federal energy law gave the U.S. Department of Transportation sole jurisdiction to establish one uniform fuel economy standard.

They said piecemeal attempts by states to regulate greenhouse gases would force manufacturers to make vehicles using too many different standards, raising the cost of cars and eliminating some model choices. They also claimed it would undermine America's foreign policy efforts on climate change.

But Ishii rejected those claims, saying Congress gave California and the EPA the authority to regulate vehicle emissions, even if they impose rules that are more strict than those from federal highway officials.

"It would be the very definition of folly" to prevent environmental agencies from regulating greenhouse gas emissions, Ishii wrote in his 57-page opinion.

As well as improving fuel efficiency, Ishii suggested car companies could comply with the new regulations by increasing the efficiency of air conditioners in vehicles or building more hybrid and alternative-fuel cars.

AIAM said it would consult with its 14 member companies, which include auto giants such as Toyota Motor Corp., Honda Motor Co., Nissan Motor Co. and Hyundai Motor Co., about whether to appeal.

"While we have not yet had an opportunity to analyze the California federal court's decision, we are obviously very disappointed by this result," said Michael Stanton, the association's president and chief executive.

Under the Clean Air Act, California is the only state that can set its own vehicle pollution standards because it started regulating air pollution before the EPA was created. Other states are free to choose either the California rules or the federal government's.

Twelve other states - Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington - have adopted California's emissions standards, and the governors of Arizona, Colorado, Florida and Utah have said they also plan to adopt them.

First, they need the EPA to grant California's waiver request. Frustrated by the lack of federal action, 14 states joined California in a lawsuit against the agency in November.

"Unfortunately, the EPA is under the thumb of the White House," California Attorney General Jerry Brown said Wednesday. "I hope this will get the attention of President Bush and have him support significant caps on greenhouse gas emissions."

Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal added that the EPA should "stop its shameful stonewalling and address this growing and grave threat to the environment and human health."

Last summer, EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson said he would decide on California's waiver request by the end of this year.

The state's plan to reduce tailpipe emissions is key to California's goal of lowering greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. About a third of the state's emissions come from cars, pickups and sport utility vehicles, a figure that will only grow if they are not regulated in the nation's most populous state.

In April, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the EPA could regulate greenhouse gases as a pollutant. In a case similar to the one in California, in September a federal judge in Vermont rejected similar claims by the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, which includes domestic automakers Ford Motor Co., General Motors Corp. and Chrysler LLC.

"This is not only another nail in the industry's auto fight, this should be the end of it," said David Bookbinder, an attorney with Sierra Club, one of six environmental groups that intervened in the California lawsuit. "They've lost every attempt they've made to stop the standards."

State scores big victory in fight to curb emissions **Court rules California can regulate auto mileage standards**

By Matt Nauman and Frank Davies, MEDIANEWS STAFF
Tri-Valley Herald, Thursday, December 13, 2007

In a major environmental victory for California and 16 other states, a federal court in Fresno on Wednesday upheld a bid to slash auto emissions to combat global warming, a move fiercely opposed by automakers and the Bush administration.

The fight now shifts to Washington.

A Senate vote might come as soon as today on an energy bill that says cars and trucks must meet a fleet fuel-economy average of 35 mpg by 2020. That's compared with 27.5 mpg for cars and 22.2 mpg for trucks today. The House approved the fuel-mileage hike last week.

Wednesday's ruling that California

has the authority to impose greenhouse-gas-emission-related mileage standards on cars and trucks - a plan that would cut emissions from vehicles 30 percent by 2016 - increases pressure on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to give the state a waiver to do that.

The state requested a waiver in late 2005, and California Attorney General Jerry Brown sued the EPA in November over its two-year refusal to say yes or no. The agency has said it will issue a decision on California's waiver, which has never been turned down before, by year's end.

Wednesday's 57-page opinion by U.S. District Court Judge Anthony Ishii follows three other court losses this year by the auto industry and the administration.

Ishii's ruling and a similar decision by a federal judge in Vermont three months ago stem from a major Supreme Court ruling in April that the EPA has authority to regulate greenhouse-gas emissions under the Clean Air Act - and can grant waivers to California to enforce its own regulations.

"As the Supreme Court's decision ... makes clear, the EPA's congressionally established purpose is to protect the public's health and welfare, a task EPA can and must undertake independent of (the Department of Transportation's) duty to set mileage standards," Ishii wrote.

But White House officials, under pressure from the auto companies, have insisted that the DOT should have the sole responsibility to deal with fuel economy. That would block EPA authority - and by extension, California's - to enforce tougher tailpipe emissions limits.

Rep. Ed Markey, D-Mass., who chairs a special climate change committee, said the administration is "seeking a last-minute change in the energy bill to effectively overrule the Supreme Court, the Vermont court and the California court."

Fred Krupp, president of Environmental Defense, called on EPA Administrator Steve Johnson to issue the waiver immediately.

"The next step here is for the EPA to get out of the way," said Roland Hwang, the Natural Resources Defense Council's San Francisco-based vehicle policy director. "We will repeat our message: It's time for the auto companies to send their lawyers home and put their engineers to work."

The Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers issued a statement repeating its position.

"Under federal law, only the federal government can set fuel economy standards for all 50 states," Alliance President Dave McCurdy said.

"We need a consistent national policy for fuel economy, and this nationwide policy cannot be written by a single state or group of states."

McCurdy's statement made no specific reference to the Fresno court ruling. Alliance spokesman Charles Territo would only add, "We're still reviewing the decision. We have not yet decided to appeal."

The decision comes at a crucial time in the nation's capital.

"There are a lot of politics swirling around right now in Washington," said Hwang. "Everything is coming to a head, but it's very uncertain what's going to happen."

In Fresno, the judge said California can regulate greenhouse-gas emissions coming from cars and trucks. The case originated from a bill signed by Gov. Gray Davis in 2002, the first state law in the nation to force automakers to reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse emissions from new cars starting in 2009. Automakers and some Central Valley dealers sued.

Automakers have said the law will mean higher vehicle prices for California car buyers - perhaps three times more than the state's projections of about \$367 in 2009 and \$1,064 in 2016. They also said they might have to stop selling their biggest trucks and SUVs here.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, a Republican often in conflict with President George Bush on environmental issues, called Wednesday's ruling "another important victory in the fight against global warming." He again called for the EPA to give California a waiver and noted that vehicles represent 28 percent of the state's greenhouse gas emissions.

California Attorney General Jerry Brown also applauded the Fresno decision: "This court ruling leaves the Bush Administration as the last remaining roadblock to California's regulation of tailpipe greenhouse gas emissions."

Ishii made reference to three other related rulings this year.

In April, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that greenhouse gases are pollution, and thus subject to Clean Air Act regulations.

In September, a federal judge upheld a Vermont law that closely resembles California's law. Automakers are appealing that ruling.

In November, a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco said Bush Administration fuel-economy standards for light trucks, set to go into affect for 2011 models, didn't account for greenhouse-gas emissions and needed to be rewritten. Environmental groups called that ruling "a stinging rebuke" to the government.

State wins emissions lawsuit

Judge in Fresno tosses automakers' challenge.

By Marc Benjamin

The Fresno Bee, Thursday, Dec. 13, 2007

California scored a victory Wednesday in its effort to reduce global warming when a federal judge in Fresno tossed out an auto industry challenge to the state's limits on greenhouse-gas emissions from vehicles.

State officials on Wednesday praised the ruling and urged federal regulators to grant California the waiver it needs to implement the emission rules. Auto industry officials said they are weighing whether to pursue an appeal.

A group of automobile manufacturers and Valley car dealers argued that federal fuel-economy regulations superseded state efforts to regulate greenhouse-gas emissions from vehicles.

But U.S. District Judge Anthony Ishii said the state and federal government have equal power through the federal Clean Air Act to regulate emissions from motor vehicles, and that the state's clean-air regulations don't conflict with federal regulatory control over fuel efficiency.

Ishii's ruling is virtually identical to a September decision by a federal judge in Vermont, which allowed that state to adopt California's rules. In that case, a U.S. District Court judge also said that states can regulate greenhouse emissions from vehicles.

California's plan would require new vehicles sold in the state to reduce global-warming emissions by 30% by 2016, beginning with the 2009 model year.

Under federal law, California is the only state allowed to set its own vehicle emission standards, provided it gets a waiver from federal rules. Other states can choose between the federal rules or California's stricter measures. Sixteen other states want to adopt California's rules.

The Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, one of the plaintiffs in the Fresno case, said it still believes that states do not have jurisdiction over greenhouse-gas emissions. Reducing emissions requires changing fuel-economy standards, which only the federal government can regulate.

A major concern that auto manufacturers have with the ruling, said Charles Territo, an alliance spokesman, is that carbon dioxide emissions are used to determine fuel economy and different standards will alter the way fuel efficiency is measured.

"Only the federal government can set fuel-economy standards for all 50 states," Dave McCurdy, president and CEO of the alliance, said in a statement Wednesday. "We need a consistent national policy for fuel economy, and this nationwide policy cannot be written by a single state or group of states."

In a statement, Gov. Schwarzenegger applauded Ishii's ruling. The state filed a lawsuit last month demanding that the federal Environmental Protection Agency grant California's request to implement the new emission standards.

"Once again, the courts have determined that states, and the federal EPA, can and should regulate greenhouse-gas emissions" from vehicles, he said. "With motor vehicles contributing to roughly 28% of the state's greenhouse-gas emissions, it is imperative that we be granted the fuel waiver from the federal government."

California Attorney General Jerry Brown said that the ruling was a "stinging rejection" of the auto industry's challenge.

"This court ruling leaves the Bush administration as the last remaining roadblock to California's regulation of tailpipe greenhouse-gas emissions," Brown said in a statement.

Last month, EPA officials said administrator Stephen Johnson would decide on California's waiver request by the end of the year.

One environmental group that intervened in the Fresno suit said Wednesday's ruling may help the state's effort to get a waiver.

"We understand there is a debate raging in EPA between the career folks who say the law supports California's request and the political folks who want to deny it to help their political friends," said Jim Marston, who represented Environmental Defense in the lawsuit. "This decision helps the career folks because it takes away arguments that there is not authority for California to act."

California's emission-control law upheld on 1st test in U.S. court

Bob Egelko, Chronicle Staff Writer

S.F. Chronicle, Thursday, December 13, 2007

FRESNO -- California's first-in-the-nation effort to limit cars' emissions of gases that contribute to global warming took a big step forward Wednesday when a federal judge upheld the state's right to control air pollution and dismissed a challenge by the auto industry.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Anthony Ishii of Fresno also was a victory for 16 other states whose laws or regulations on tailpipe emissions were modeled after California's 2002 statute. The 17 states represent nearly half the U.S. population, and their laws would effectively require automakers to cut greenhouse gas emissions nationwide, despite President Bush's rejection of mandatory national standards.

The California law, however, cannot be enforced without the approval of the Bush administration's Environmental Protection Agency. The state asked the EPA two years ago for a waiver that would allow it to exceed federal clean-air requirements and regulate cars' greenhouse gas emissions starting with 2009 models.

The EPA has never denied California such a waiver, but the agency has been lobbied by auto companies and by Bush's transportation secretary to deny the request. The state has sued the agency to force a decision, and EPA Administrator Steven Johnson has promised to decide by the end of the year.

Ishii's ruling "leaves the Bush administration as the last remaining roadblock to California's regulation of tailpipe greenhouse gas emissions," said state Attorney General Jerry Brown, whose office defended the law.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed another groundbreaking law last year seeking a 25 percent reduction in all greenhouse gases emitted in California by 2020. He said Wednesday that with motor vehicles contributing nearly 30 percent of those emissions, "it is imperative that we be granted the fuel waiver from the federal government."

Environmental groups that joined the defense of the state law praised the ruling. The law's author, former Assemblywoman Fran Pavley, a Los Angeles-area Democrat now with the Natural Resources Defense Council, said the decision "affirms California's legal right to clean its air and protect the health of its citizens."

The ruling was the result of a 2004 lawsuit filed by auto industry trade organizations that wanted to overturn the California law. On Wednesday, the auto industry groups were noncommittal on whether they would appeal, apparently awaiting the EPA decision on the state's waiver request.

Dave McCurdy, chief executive of the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, repeated his group's position that the issue should be off-limits for individual states.

"We need a consistent national policy for fuel economy, and this nationwide policy cannot be written by a single state or group of states - only the federal government," he said.

Ishii, however, disagreed with the auto industry's claim that the state's curb on greenhouse gas emissions amounted to a forbidden intrusion on federal regulation of gas mileage. There is no conflict between the federal government's efforts to improve fuel economy and a state's attempts to protect its residents' health and resources by reducing air pollution, the judge said.

The ruling is the latest in a series of court decisions in favor of states and environmental groups that have argued that laws originally enacted to fight smog can be used against greenhouse gases - carbon dioxide and other fumes from tailpipes and smokestacks that scientists believe cause global warming.

Bush opposes mandatory limits on greenhouse gas emissions and says the nation should address the problem through voluntary industry action and modest increases in fuel economy standards. But in April, over Bush administration objections, the Supreme Court ruled that the emissions are pollutants covered by the Clean Air Act, and that the EPA must regulate them unless it can back a refusal to do so with scientific evidence.

In September, a federal judge in Vermont upheld a state law identical to California's auto emissions statute, a ruling that automakers have appealed. Last month, the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco ruled that the federal government's new miles-per-gallon standards for SUVs and light trucks were too lax because they failed to account for the effect of fuel consumption on global warming.

The California law requires car manufacturers to lower emissions gradually, to 23 percent below current new-car levels by 2012 and 30 percent by 2016. It does not specify how the reductions are to be accomplished, but the state Air Resources Board says automakers can reach the goals by a combination of improving gas mileage, implementing new technology, using alternative fuels and reducing leaks of greenhouse gases from air conditioners.

The lawsuit by auto trade groups, manufacturers and dealers argued that the California statute conflicts with federal law. The suit contended that the only practical way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is to increase gas mileage, a subject regulated exclusively by the federal government.

In Wednesday's 57-page ruling, Ishii said California is not directly regulating fuel economy even if its law has the effect of forcing increases in gas mileage.

"The required increase in fuel economy is incidental to the state law's purpose of assuring protection of public health and welfare under the Clean Air Act," Ishii said.

Compliance with the law, he said, "can be at least partially achieved through changes that are not directly reflected in fuel economy improvements," such as using other fuels and improving air conditioners.

Ishii said the Supreme Court addressed a similar issue in its April ruling when it rejected the EPA's argument that regulating greenhouse gases would require the agency to increase fuel economy, a task that the agency said was the job of federal transportation officials.

In light of scientists' increasingly dire warnings about global warming, Ishii said, preventing an environmental agency from setting air pollution limits that might require improving cars' gas mileage would be "the very height of folly."

Global warming rulings

Wednesday's ruling: U.S. District Judge Anthony Ishii said that California has the authority to limit cars' emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases and that the state would not be intruding into the federal government's exclusive authority to regulate fuel economy.

Previous rulings: The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in April that greenhouse gases are air pollutants subject to regulation under the Clean Air Act. A federal judge in Vermont upheld a state law in September that is identical to California's law. In November, the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco found new federal mileage standards for light trucks and SUVs too lax, because they ignored the effect of fuel economy on greenhouse gas emissions.

What's next: The Environmental Protection Agency must decide whether to issue a waiver that would allow California to enforce a standard more stringent than the federal clean-air law, a decision that will affect similar laws or regulations in 16 other states. Wednesday's ruling could also be appealed.

Judge says California can regulate greenhouse gases from cars

The decision is a setback for automakers, which argued that only the federal government could set standards that would affect fuel economy. The state now needs an EPA waiver to proceed.

By Ken Bensinger, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer
L.A. Times, Thursday, December 13, 2007

In a major defeat for automakers, a federal judge in Fresno ruled Wednesday that California could set its own standards on greenhouse-gas emissions from vehicles. But the state still needs permission from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to implement the rules.

"Both EPA and California . . . are equally empowered through the Clean Air Act to promulgate regulations that limit the emissions of greenhouse gases, principally carbon dioxide, from motor vehicles," U.S. District Court Judge Anthony W. Ishii said, citing recent decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court and a federal court in Vermont. Automakers had argued that only the federal government had such power.

The decision is the second time this year that courts have rebuffed the auto industry's attempts to forestall regulation of tailpipe emissions by states, which have grown impatient with the Bush administration on the issue of global warming.

The Supreme Court has ruled that greenhouse-gas regulation falls to the EPA under clear-air legislation, but the agency has issued no regulations on carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping emissions. Nor has it granted California the right to enact its own rules. California already has the power to regulate pollutants such as particulates from vehicles.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger called Wednesday's ruling "another important victory in the fight against global warming," adding, "California and other states will prevail in our goal to take aggressive action on climate change."

California has plans to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions by 30% from 2009 to 2016, under a plan passed by the California Air Resources Board in 2004.

State Atty. Gen. Jerry Brown, though enthusiastic about Wednesday's ruling, expressed concern that the EPA could drag its feet indefinitely in making a decision on the state's waiver request, which has been pending for nearly two years. In November, California sued to force an EPA ruling. "Dragging it out would be a disaster and a gross dereliction in duty," Brown said.

A spokeswoman for the EPA said the Fresno ruling shouldn't affect EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson's pledge to issue a ruling on California's waiver request by the end of the year. EPA lawyers, however, are reviewing the ruling to determine whether "there are any relevant ramifications" for how the agency decides on the matter, the spokeswoman said.

Environmental groups were jubilant in the wake of the decision.

"This is a huge win for clean air and a cooler planet," said Vickie Patton, senior attorney with Environmental Defense, which intervened in the case on behalf of the defendant, the California Air Resources Board.

Roland Hwang, director of clean vehicle programs for the Natural Resources Defense Council, which also intervened for the state, said the ruling in effect finished legal debate over the right of states to regulate tailpipe emissions.

"The handwriting is on the wall," he said. "The automakers can send their lawyers home and put their engineers to work on building clean cars."

Automakers have argued that regulating emissions is tantamount to regulating fuel economy, an authority that only the federal government has. According to some estimates, California's more stringent standards would raise the fuel economy of gasoline-fueled cars to an average of 43.5 miles per gallon by 2016, up from 27.5 mpg today. California says that its regulations concern only air quality and that fuel economy is not a factor in its calculations.

The case Ishii ruled on was filed in 2004 by a group of San Joaquin Valley auto dealers and the Washington-based Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, a trade group representing 10 large car and light-truck manufacturers, including General Motors Corp., Ford Motor Co. and Toyota Motor Corp.

"We can all agree that higher fuel economy is important, but the issue here was about federal fuel economy law," Dave McCurdy, chief executive of the alliance, said Wednesday. "Under federal law, only the federal government can set fuel economy standards for all 50 states. We need a consistent national policy for fuel economy."

Michael J. Stanton, CEO of the Assn. of International Automobile Manufacturers, which represents other automakers including Honda Motor Co. but was not directly involved in the suit, said the group was "very disappointed." He added that a "state-by-state approach . . . will ultimately limit consumer choice."

Danielle Fugere, attorney for Friends of the Earth, which also intervened in the case, said the ruling was somewhat ironic because automakers filed the suit in the Fresno jurisdiction because of its reputation as a conservative bench. The case was originally assigned to Judge Robert E. Coyle, who in 2002 blocked California from moving ahead with a Zero Emissions Vehicle program. Coyle has since retired, and the case was reassigned to Ishii.

Ishii was unequivocal in ruling against the automakers, saying, "It would be the very definition of folly if EPA were precluded from action simply because the level of decrease in greenhouse-gas output is incompatible with existing mileage standards."

The decision comes as the Senate debates an energy bill passed last week by the House that would raise federal fuel-efficiency standards for cars and light trucks to 35 mpg by 2020, a 40% increase over the current 25-mpg combined standard.

Senate leaders have said they were confident of getting the required votes before Christmas, but on Friday, the White House threatened a veto, contending that the bill, among other things, must "clarify one agency as the sole entity . . . responsible for a single national regulatory standard for both fuel economy and tailpipe greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles."

Separately, Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.) has said he wants to clarify the language of the bill to "make sure there is no conflict between the role of the EPA" and the role of the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, which sets fuel economy standards for the Transportation Department.

Frank O'Donnell of Clean Air Watch, a Washington-based environmental group, said the maneuvers were "a bid to kneecap EPA and states led by California that seek to enforce tougher greenhouse gas standards for motor vehicles. EPA would become subordinate to the Transportation Department. And states like California would be left out in the cold."

California is the only state that can set its own vehicle pollution standards because it began regulating air pollution before the EPA's creation. Under the Clean Air Act, however, other states can select either California's rules or federal ones.

Fifteen other states have adopted California's limits, most recently New Mexico late last month. In sum, those 16 states account for about 40% of the U.S. population.

Federal Judge Upholds Law on Emissions in California

By John M. Broder

N.Y. Times, Thursday, December 13, 2007

WASHINGTON - A federal judge in Sacramento on Wednesday upheld a California law regulating greenhouse gas emissions from cars and trucks, another in a string of legal defeats for the auto industry this year.

The ruling, by Judge Anthony W. Ishii of United States District Court, affirms a 2002 California law that would effectively force automakers to raise the average fuel economy of fleets by about 30 percent by 2016. A bill pending in Congress demands a 40 percent mileage increase by 2020.

The auto companies challenged the California law, which 15 other states say they intend to adopt, saying that it is technically and financially impossible to meet. They also argued that regulation of vehicle mileage is the responsibility of the federal government, not the states.

"We can all agree that higher fuel economy is important, but the issue here was about federal fuel economy law," said Dave McCurdy, president of the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers. "Under federal law, only the federal government can set fuel economy standards for all 50 states."

Mr. McCurdy noted that the industry had agreed to a pending Congressional mandate to achieve a 35-mile-per-gallon fleetwide average by 2020.

Judge Ishii, though, said that California was entitled to set its own stricter standards under the Clean Air Act, if the Environmental Protection Agency grants a waiver from federal law, which it has done dozens of times in the last 35 years. California applied to the Bush administration for a waiver in December 2005. The White House has said that it will issue a decision by the end of this month.

While Republican and Democratic administrations have routinely granted California waivers on pollution programs, this one is more controversial because the auto companies and other industries are lobbying heavily against it, saying it will cost them too much to comply. The White House has not tipped its hand on California's application.

The judge also rejected the automakers' claim that the state law usurps the federal government's right to conduct foreign policy because climate is a global problem. He said there was no legal precedent for the claim.

Attorney General Edmund G. Brown Jr. of California called the ruling "a major victory."

"This is the fourth defeat for the Bush administration and the auto companies," Mr. Brown said, "and I hope it sends a powerful message to the White House and to Congress that California's role as an innovator should be appreciated and not negated."

He was referring to an April decision by the United States Supreme Court affirming the E.P.A.'s authority to regulate vehicles' greenhouse gas emissions; a federal court ruling from Vermont in May upholding California's law; and a federal appeals court ruling in November chastising the Department of Transportation for failing to enforce its vehicle mileage rules and for not taking the impact of exhaust gases into account.

In 2002, California adopted the first state law requiring auto makers to begin reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases. In 2004, it issued rules for achieving the reductions. Vermont adopted the same standards, as did other states, including Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.

Fran Pavley, a former member of the California State Assembly who wrote the emissions bill, said on Wednesday that Judge Ishii's ruling represented a legal tipping point, leaving the automakers and the Bush administration isolated on the regulation of gases that scientists say contribute to global warming.

"What we're finding is that this is a bipartisan issue," Ms. Pavley said. "The states have moved on and they are working together to be responsible in doing their fair share to reduce greenhouse gas emissions."

State wins challenge to law on emissions Showdown looms over U.S. curbs on carmakers

By Michael Gardner, Copley News Service

In the San Diego Tribune, Thursday, December 13, 2007

SACRAMENTO - California scored a significant legal victory yesterday as it approaches an end-of-the-year showdown with the Bush administration over regulating vehicle emissions to curb global warming.

U.S. District Court Judge Anthony Ishii's rejection of an automaker challenge to the state's greenhouse gas law was the third opinion issued this year to back California, including a landmark ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Senate is expected to take up an energy bill that includes a gradual increase in gas mileage standards, which could influence California's campaign to slow global warming even as the political and legal tussles continue.

The fight in Washington has produced signals from the president's team that it is leaning toward rejecting California's application for permission to impose greenhouse gas standards on vehicles.

Automakers and their Detroit-friendly allies in Congress have stepped up pressure to insert language in the bill that would pre-empt California's ability to impose its own standards. California's Democratic senators, Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, have vowed to resist such an amendment.

The challenged California legislation, which has been copied in more than a dozen states, requires automakers to gradually roll back greenhouse gas emissions beginning with the 2009 model year until carbon-dioxide emissions fall 30 percent by 2016.

California can exceed federal clean-air standards, but the state must secure approval from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency before regulations can go into effect.

Dec. 21 will mark two years since California submitted its application for permission to regulate carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases linked to global warming.

Under legal pressure from Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and state Attorney General Jerry Brown, EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson has promised to decide before the end of this year.

It doesn't look promising, say some clean-air advocates.

The president's Office of Administrative Policy has issued objections to the Senate energy bill, including a veiled demand for amendments that would pre-empt California's effort.

The Bush administration's statement called for a "single national regulatory standard for both fuel economy and tailpipe greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles."

Jim Marston of the advocacy group Environmental Defense said there is a clash within the administration between the career employees sympathetic to California and political appointees friendly to the auto industry.

"The political people are still trying to deny the waiver. The career folks, who are trying to judge the claim for a waiver on the merits, have been arguing it should be granted," Marston said. "This decision strengthens the hands of the career folks."

Denial of the waiver would be a first. California has secured dozens of approvals for its trend-setting clean-air laws from Republican and Democratic administrations.

Since California's emissions law was enacted in 2003, the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers has filed several lawsuits nationwide challenging regulations as de facto gas mileage standards that fall under federal purview.

The industry also contends that greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide should not be regulated as a pollutant and that the states are pre-empted by federal foreign policy considerations.

Judge Ishii, based in Fresno, dismissed each of those contentions in his ruling. Ishii relied heavily on the Supreme Court's decision in April that rejected automaker claims that the EPA has no independent authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.

"It would be the very definition of folly" to preclude the EPA from acting, given its responsibilities to protect public health, Ishii said.

Ishii also dismissed automaker arguments that the law imposed gas mileage standards, which fall under the federal Department of Transportation and should be uniform nationally. California's law "overlaps, but doesn't conflict" with gas mileage standards, he said.

Ishii's ruling follows a similar decision issued in September by a federal judge in Vermont.

Automakers responded with a statement expressing disappointment and noting their support for most of the proposed energy bill, which would raise gas mileage standards to a fleetwide average of 35 miles per gallon - up from 25 mpg - by 2020.

"We can all agree that higher fuel economy is important, but the issue here was about federal fuel economy law," said Dave McCurdy, president of the automakers' alliance. "Under federal law, only the federal government can set fuel economy standards for all 50 states.

"We need a consistent national policy for fuel economy, and this nationwide policy cannot be written by a single state or group of states - only by the federal government," McCurdy said.

The association, which includes some of the world's largest automobile manufacturers, is considering whether to appeal Ishii's ruling.

Jennifer Wood, a spokeswoman for the EPA, said the court decision was under review. She also confirmed the agency's intention to act on California's application by the new year.

Most parties involved agree that increased gas mileage would, by itself, help California achieve its goal by cutting the amount of tailpipe emissions.

Schwarzenegger welcomed Ishii's ruling as marking "another important victory in the fight against global warming."

Former Assemblywoman Fran Pavley, an Agoura Hills Democrat who wrote the legislation, said the ruling "affirms California's legal right to clean its air and protect the health of its citizens."

Tote up your carbon footprint

By DALE McFEATTERS , Scripps Howard News Service
in the Modesto Bee, Fresno Bee, Thursday, December 13, 2007

WASHINGTON - Carbon is the new guilt.

And if you don't feel guilty about the carbon you exude, thus threatening the penguins, the polar bears, lower-lying nations, not to mention prime beachfront real estate, do-good groups will soon be around to see that you do.

In conjunction with a U.N. conference on climate change, demonstrators around the world hit the streets with placards urging, "Say no to carbon dioxide." But try to say no without breathing because carbon dioxide is the stuff you exhale.

Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas and thus a culprit in global warming, a principle side effect of which is Al Gore.

As it happens, this conference is in Bali, not the most convenient place on the planet, and the pocket-protector types who have adopted carbon as their cause quickly calculated that hauling and housing 10,000 delegates on that island city would unleash over 100,000 tons of carbon, 48,000 of it in air travel alone.

That resulted in an escalation in the race for politicians to be more carbon sensitive than thou. Rep. Edward Markey, D-Mass., chairman of a House committee on global warming, sprang out to an early lead.

He was invited to speak but elected not to come but address the delegates through a virtual animation of himself called an avatar. Said Markey, "Instead of offsetting the carbon footprint of my flight to Bali, I'm going to upload my avatar and I'm going to Bali with no footprint at all."

Carbon has our politicians talking like that.

Your carbon footprint is the total amount of carbon you emit and cause to be emitted as you go about your daily business. The Web is full of programs that enable you to calculate your personal carbon footprint -- in other words, how much better the planet would be if you weren't on it.

The carbon footprint shows up in ways you might not expect. Began a recent story by the British Press Association, "The turkey and trimmings enjoyed at millions of Christmas dinner tables will have a carbon footprint equivalent to 6,000 car journeys around the world, a study has shown."

The irrepressible funsters at the University of Manchester calculated that a Christmas dinner for eight of turkey, stuffing, roast potatoes, vegetables, bread sauce, cranberry sauce and other accompaniments would produce 44 pounds of carbon dioxide.

The life cycle of the turkey accounts for 60 percent of the total carbon and getting the cranberry sauce from North America to the British dinner table accounts for half of the transportation-related footprint. Enjoy your Christmas dinner, planet killers.

Carbon has become such a worthy cause that other worthy causes are latching onto it.

Public health activists are urging you to save your life and the planet by walking or biking a half-hour a day instead of driving. Someone calculated the reduction in driving would cut carbon-dioxide emissions by 64 million tons.

And, of course, you'd be in better shape and wouldn't breathe so hard, cutting your personal carbon emissions as well. And while you're at it, don't eat meat because the whole business of producing meat accounts for 18 percent of all greenhouse-gas emissions.

One of the solutions proposed for emissions is a carbon tax. And that brings us to this bellwether news: California has become the first state to require refineries, power plants and other major sources of carbon dioxide to start reporting their annual emissions.

So you think this is only going to affect big industry? You naive little carbon emitter, you. If it's possible to calculate your personal carbon footprint, it's possible some do-good politician will try to tax it -- in the name of saving the planet, of course.

Breathe shallowly.

EPA Pushed to Lower Reporting Standards

By H. JOSEF HEBERT, Associated Press Writer

In the S.F. Chronicle and other papers, Wednesday, December 12, 2007

WASHINGTON, (AP) -- The White House pressured the Environmental Protection Agency to weaken requirements that companies annually disclose releases of toxic chemicals, congressional auditors said Wednesday.

The Government Accountability Office said the changes mean that industry will have to file 22,000 fewer reports each year, reducing an important public monitoring tool on industrial emissions.

The EPA rushed to complete the changes because of "pressure" from the White House Office of Management and Budget to reduce the regulatory burdens on industry, says the study obtained by The Associated Press and later released by the GAO. The White House overstated the cost-savings to industry of making the changes, it added.

"The EPA administrator expedited the process in order to meet a commitment to OMB," which had pushed to reduce the paperwork burden on industry by the end of 2006, said the GAO.

For more than two decades, industries and businesses have had to disclose to the EPA the amount of toxic chemicals they produce, store and discharge into the air, water and ground. Communities, watchdog groups, local neighborhoods and even the Internal Revenue Service have used the information

Last December, the EPA reduced the amount of information that needed to be disclosed in the Toxics Release Inventory Report, or TRI, process. Companies were allowed to use shorter, less detailed forms if they used less than 5,000 pounds of toxic chemicals or released less than 2,000 pounds. Previously more detailed information had to be provided in longer forms if there was as little as 500 pounds, a threshold that the new rule maintains only for some of the most dangerous chemicals.

Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, said the GAO report "confirms the serious flaws" in the reporting requirement." The public has a right to know about toxic pollution in local communities," she said in a statement.

Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., said the report, which he, Boxer and Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, had requested, "makes clear the Bush administration is ... letting facilities hide critical data about toxic chemicals."

Snowe called the reporting changes by the EPA "a reckless drive that circumvented the ... normal rulemaking process."

EPA officials did not return calls Wednesday seeking comment on the report.

In a response included within the report, the agency said it disagreed with the GAO's conclusions and that the rule changes included new incentives for industry to reduce the amount of toxic chemicals it uses.

"EPA believes fully that all appropriate and necessary analyses were conducted," wrote Molly O'Neill, the agency's assistant administrator and chief information officer. As for criticism that the process was rushed, she wrote that EPA "management has discretion to accelerate regulatory development."

The GAO auditors determined that the change would allow more than 3,500 facilities to no longer disclose detailed information about released toxic chemicals. It said 22,000 fewer TRI reports would be available to the public, a 25 percent decline.

The EPA estimated that the reporting changes would save industry and businesses \$6 million annually.

But the GAO said that analysis "masked the disproportionately large impacts" the reporting changes would have on individual communities and that the EPA's estimated cost savings were based on outdated information from the Office of Management and Budget and overstated the savings by as much as 25 percent.

A dozen states last month filed a lawsuit asking the court to order the EPA to return to the old reporting requirements and legislation, sponsored by Lautenberg, would require the same.

The TRI program was enacted in 1986, two years after the release of deadly chemical gas at a chemical plant in Bhopal, India killed thousands of people. The regulations emerged in the 1990s as a widely used "community right to know" tool.

[Fresno Bee editorial, Thursday, Dec. 13, 2007:](#)

A big win for California

Ruling moves state closer to new greenhouse gas emissions standards.

California won a major victory in a Fresno court Wednesday, when a federal judge tossed a lawsuit brought by automakers that sought to derail the state's tough, new effort to reduce emissions of the greenhouse gases blamed for global climate change.

The automakers wanted to overturn AB 1493, which requires a 30% reduction in statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 2016. They argued that the law would put the state in the business of regulating fuel economy standards, a job they said belongs to the federal government.

But U.S. District Judge Anthony Ishii rejected that argument, saying that "both EPA and California ... are equally empowered to promulgate regulations that limit the emissions of greenhouse gasses, principally carbon dioxide, from motor vehicles."

Ishii left no doubt where he stood in the matter. He called the auto industry's challenge "the very definition of folly."

The ruling mirrors an earlier one in a Vermont case and is good news to California and the 16 other states that have adopted or are working to adopt California's new, more stringent rules. Together, those states account for 45% of the nation's new vehicle sales, which means the California standard could become the de facto national standard.

It's important for those other states because, under the federal Clean Air Act, California is permitted to create more stringent standards than the federal government. Other states then may choose between adopting California's rules or sticking with the more lenient federal regulations.

Now the ball is in the EPA's court. Under the terms of the Clean Air Act, the agency must still approve a waiver California needs to begin enforcing its law. Such waivers have routinely been granted in the past, but EPA -- reflecting pressure on the Bush administration from the auto industry -- has stalled its approval for two years now.

That delay prompted Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to sue the EPA to force a decision and threaten to sue again if EPA rejects the waiver. Fourteen other states have joined in that lawsuit.

Environmentalists were delighted by Ishii's ruling. "We keep winning," said David Bookbinder, a lawyer with the Sierra Club, which participated in the case. "The courts are simply not buying [the auto industry's] arguments."

Bookbinder said it would be no surprise if the automakers appeal the ruling, but, "Sooner or later, they're going to have to stop throwing lawyers at the problem and start hiring engineers."

Sounds like good advice. Why not start now?

[Fresno Bee commentary, Thursday, Dec. 13, 2007:](#)

AMY GOODMAN: No recovery in sight for global fever

The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded this week, in Oslo, Norway. Al Gore shared the prize with the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which represents more than 2,500 scientists from 130 countries.

The solemn ceremony took place as the United States is blocking meaningful progress at the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Bali, Indonesia, and the Republicans in the U.S. Senate have derailed the energy bill passed by the House of Representatives, which would have accelerated the adoption of renewable energy sources at the expense of big-oil and coal corporations.

Gore set the stage: "So, today, we dumped another 70 million tons of global-warming pollution into the thin shell of atmosphere surrounding our planet, as if it were an open sewer. And tomorrow, we will dump a slightly larger amount, with the cumulative concentrations now trapping more and more heat from the sun.

"As a result, the Earth has a fever. And the fever is rising. The experts have told us it is not a passing affliction that will heal by itself. We asked for a second opinion. And a third. And a fourth. And the consistent conclusion, restated with increasing alarm, is that something basic is wrong. We are what is wrong, and we must make it right."

He went on: "Last Sept. 21, as the Northern Hemisphere tilted away from the sun, scientists reported with unprecedented distress that the north polar ice cap is 'falling off a cliff.' One study estimated that it could be completely gone during summer in less than 22 years.

"Another new study, to be presented by U.S. Navy researchers later this week, warns it could happen in as little as seven years. Seven years from now."

How will climate-change skeptics explain that one? (Already, big business is celebrating the break-up of the polar ice cap, as a northern sea route from the Atlantic to the Pacific is opening, creating a cheaper route for more needless shipping.)

It is hard to imagine the north pole, the storied, frozen expanse of ice and snow, completely gone in just a few years. Lost as well will be the vast store of archeological data trapped in the ice: Thousands of years of the Earth's climate history are told in the layers of ice that descend for miles there.

Scientists are just now learning how to read and interpret the history. The great meltdown will surely have catastrophic effects on the ecosystem in the north, with species like the polar bear already edging toward extinction.

Rajendra Pachauri, an Indian scientist, accepted for the IPCC. He is a careful scientist with the political finesse to chair the work of the IPCC despite the enduring antagonism of the United States. He pointed to the disproportionate effect of climate change on the world's poor:

"The impacts of climate change on some of the poorest and the most vulnerable communities in the world could prove extremely unsettling ... in terms of: access to clean water, access to sufficient food, stable health conditions, ecosystem resources, security of settlements."

Pachauri predicts water wars and mass migrations. "Migration, usually temporary and often from rural to urban areas, is a common response to calamities such as floods and famines."

Gore invoked the memory of Mohandas Gandhi, saying he "awakened the largest democracy on earth and forged a shared resolve with what he called 'Satyagraha' -- or 'truth force.' In every land, the truth -- once known -- has the power to set us free." Satyagraha, as Gandhi practiced it, is the disciplined application of nonviolent resistance, which is exactly what Ted Glick is doing back in Washington, D.C.

Glick heads up the Climate Emergency Council. On his 99th day of a liquids-only fast, the day after the Nobel ceremony, he joined with 20 people in the office of Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell for a sit-in. The Senate Republicans are now blocking a federal energy bill that would create funding for the development of renewable energy sources in the U.S., while stripping away billions of dollars worth of tax breaks for big oil and coal.

Glick told me: "We have to be willing to go to jail. Al Gore, himself, a couple of months ago talked about how young people need to be sitting in in front of the coal plants to prevent coal plants from being built.

That's true. Young people need to be doing that.

"Middle-age people need to be doing that. Older people need to be doing that. And Al Gore needs to be doing that. Let's get serious about this crisis."

While Glick was sitting in, news reports began to circulate about Republican presidential candidate Rudolph Giuliani's law firm's lobbying activities against the energy bill. According to Bloomberg News, Bracewell & Giuliani LLP was hired by energy giant Southern Co. to defeat the bill. At a \$1,000-a-plate fundraiser last August, addressing members of the coal industry, Giuliani said, "We have to increase our reliance on coal."

As Giuliani's coffers get fat with money from big oil, gas and coal, Glick has lost more than 40 pounds, and the Earth's temperature continues to rise.

Amy Goodman is the host of "Democracy Now!," a daily international TV/radio news hour airing on 650 stations in North America, including at 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. weekdays on local station 88.1 KFCF FM.

[Letter to the Fresno Bee, Thursday, Dec. 13, 2007:](#)

Stop leaf blowers

I just noticed a letter Dec. 4 from Janet Cotton on the subject of leaf blowers. I also read the previous one by Dave Buchan on Nov. 25. It served to stir up old irritations for me. I was beginning to think I was the only one who objected to these annoying contraptions.

Over the past few years, I have attempted to get some action on the problem, but to no avail. Several letters to the mayor -- no response. Nothing from the air pollution control people. Nothing from Sen. Dean Florez. One reply from Jerry Duncan, our council member, and he said he could not support any ordinance banning the use of the blowers. (He gave no reason, only that he would not support a ban.) I did hear from Bill McEwen of The Bee.

He was sympathetic and agreed it was a nuisance. To Ms. Cotton and Mr. Buchan, I suggest a more organized approach, one that will get someone's attention, whether it be a petition, an appearance at council meetings or more letters to different people. Should they be interested, perhaps we could join forces to produce some results.

Robert Greteman. Fresno

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses the proven fact that children who live near highways or high traffic areas affects the development of their lungs which then has a bigger impact on their capacity of breathing when they become adults. For more information, contact Claudia Encinas at \(559\) 230-5851.](#)

Confirman que cercanía a carreteras afecta el tamaño de los pulmones infantiles

Noticiero Latino

Radio Bilingüe, Wednesday, December 12, 2007

Nuevos estudios en California confirman que vivir cerca de las carreteras afecta el tamaño de los pulmones infantiles y la capacidad de respirar cuando llegan a la edad adulta.

Un médico en Berkeley dijo que los menores que viven en zonas con alta contaminación del aire y cerca de las carreteras son quienes sufren las peores consecuencias.

De acuerdo con universidades de California y del Sur de California, los niños que viven hasta los 18 años de edad a menos de 500 metros de las carreteras podrían tener al crecer hasta un nueve por ciento menos capacidad de respirar que quienes crecen en mejores condiciones ambientales.