

State air board chief is let go

Decision comes shortly after governor criticizes support of cleanup delay for Valley.

By E.J. Schultz / Bee Capitol Bureau
Fresno Bee, Friday, June 29, 2007

SACRAMENTO -- Gov. Schwarzenegger on Thursday fired the chairman of the California Air Resources Board, days after the governor criticized the board for agreeing to delay a clean-air deadline for the San Joaquin Valley.

Robert Sawyer, a Democrat and former university professor, was forced out after an 18-month reign in a signal that the governor isn't happy with the board's direction.

The governor "gave Dr. Sawyer the option to resign; he declined, so we rescinded his appointment," said Aaron McLearn, a Schwarzenegger spokesman.

"The delay on the San Joaquin Valley plan was wholly inconsistent" with the administration's views, McLearn said.

Sawyer was not available for comment, according to the Air Resources Board. Environmentalists came to his defense, saying he was a scapegoat.

"We think that the board as a whole and its staff need to be more aggressive," said Bill Magavern, senior representative for Sierra Club California. "Sawyer wasn't the problem."

Just a week ago, the governor said he was "deeply disappointed" in the board's actions on the Valley air plan. He also vowed to "push for more aggressive action on these fronts" -- including asking that regulators revisit the proposal within the next month.

The board has also faced pressure to enact stronger rules to implement the state's new law to curb global warming.

The state air board recently approved a 2024 completion target for smog cleanup in the Valley, one of the nation's worst air basins. The target date -- approved earlier by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District -- is more than a decade beyond the initial deadline set by the federal government.

"When one out of six residents in the San Joaquin Valley has been diagnosed with asthma and one in five children carry an inhaler to school, it is a call to action," the governor said in a statement last week.

Sawyer supported the Valley air plan delay. But, overall, he had a good reputation among environmentalists -- especially on global-warming issues, Magavern said.

Sawyer, a former professor of energy at the University of California at Berkeley, earned \$117,818 as the board's full-time chairman, according to a statement released in December 2005 when he was appointed.

"I've enjoyed working for Gov. Schwarzenegger as he pursues his very ambitious environmental agenda," Sawyer said in a statement issued by the governor's office Thursday.

The governor "will begin the process of finding a replacement immediately," according to his office.

The state air board approved the 11-year extension for the Valley smog plan by a 7-1 vote, including yes votes by Sawyer and Fresno County Supervisor Judy Case, a recent Schwarzenegger appointee.

Case, who also voted for the smog plan as a member of the Valley air district, still requires confirmation by the state Senate. Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter, said he will lobby against her.

"Ms. Case has demonstrated she is not on the same page as the governor and myself when it comes to fighting for air quality," he said in a statement.

Case did not return a call for comment Thursday. She said in a recent interview that she voted for the plan to meet certain deadlines but hopes it will be "tightened" in coming weeks.

San Joaquin Valley air district officials say the region's air will become cleaner in coming years but that the technology does not exist to eliminate vehicle pollution, a major contributor to the smog problem.

In a recent letter to the editor published in The Bee, Sawyer defended that view: "The delay takes advantage of approved technology that will not be available until 2014," he wrote.

Environmentalists want regulators to adopt stricter standards sooner. Quicker deadlines will force companies to develop clean-air technology, they say.

"Regulations really do incentivize the technology to be developed," said Liza Bolaños, Fresno-based coordinator for the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition, a nonprofit group representing public health and environmental organizations.

When the state air board approved the delay, it also called for more research into ways to speed up the cleanup, including possibly banning older vehicles during bad-air days. A report is expected within six months.

In his statement last week, Schwarzenegger called for the state and Valley air boards to "strengthen the clean air plan within the next month."

The state air board has a mission to maintain clean air and research pollution causes.

The board, whose 11 members serve at the pleasure of the governor, recently took on the added responsibility of implementing the state's new law aimed at curbing global warming.

Schwarzenegger signed the warming legislation last year with great fanfare and has used the law to bolster his environmental credentials throughout the nation and world.

But environmentalists and some Democrats have criticized the air board for not pursuing tougher rules to reduce greenhouse gases, the leading cause of manmade warming.

"The governor must step up and demand more from his agencies," Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata, D-Oakland, said in a recent statement.

This kind of pressure puts the governor in a tough spot, said Tony Quinn, a political analyst and former Republican legislative aide. There are no easy answers to reducing emissions, he said, and many of the potential rules could hurt businesses.

"It is going to take a lot of focus from the governor's office to actually get workable regulations," he said.

Governor ousts head of antismog board after air quality dispute

In the S.F. Chronicle, Thursday, June 28, 2007

SACRAMENTO, (AP) -- Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has removed the chairman of the California Air Resources Board, days after saying he was upset with a board decision related to Central Valley air quality.

The move, announced Thursday, comes after the panel voted to ask the federal government for an 11-year extension to bring the San Joaquin Valley in line with clean air requirements.

Robert Sawyer told colleagues in an e-mail that the Republican governor rescinded his appointment last Friday. The governor appoints all 11 members of the board.

Schwarzenegger sent Sawyer a letter saying the challenges of dealing with global warming and air pollution required "a different set of skills in order to successfully guide such complex and challenging issues through the regulatory process," according to The Sacramento Bee.

Sawyer was part of a board majority that voted June 14 to ask the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to extend the deadline to meet federal ozone standards in the valley from 2012 to 2023.

Environmental groups said the board failed to follow through on Schwarzenegger's pledge to cut pollution in half by 2010. A week after the vote, the governor issued a statement saying he was "deeply disappointed" that the board asked for the delay.

"There are few environmental issues facing Californians that are more important to our children's health, our quality of life and our economic security than air quality," the governor said in a statement. "When one

out of six residents in the San Joaquin Valley has been diagnosed with asthma and one in five children carry an inhaler to school, it is a call to action."

On Thursday, the governor issued a statement announcing that Sawyer was stepping down and praising him for his "great leadership."

"It will be difficult to replace him, and I wish him well as he takes on new endeavors," Schwarzenegger said.

Sawyer, a professor emeritus in air quality science at the University of California, Berkeley, said in a statement that he was proud of the board's accomplishments during his 18 months as chairman. He also said he had enjoyed working with Schwarzenegger as the governor "pursues his very ambitious environmental agenda."

State Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter, said Sawyer's departure was a "good first step" but also urged Schwarzenegger to remove former Fresno County Supervisor Judy Case from the board. He said she had voted twice to seek an extension, once as chairwoman of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

"The air board exists to clean the air and protect public health," Florez said. "It does not exist to see how much pollution we can get away with, how much damage we can do to our children's lungs, before we face federal sanctions."

Sawyer and Case did not immediately respond to requests for comment made through the Air Resources Board.

Air Resources Board chair resigns

Greg Lucas, Chronicle Sacramento Bureau
SF Chronicle, Friday, June 29, 2007

Sacramento -- The chairman of the California Air Resources Board resigned Thursday after opposing Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger over how fast the state reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Robert Sawyer, appointed by the governor in 2005, was one of three air board members who voted "no" last week when the board adopted three new policy changes to curb carbon dioxide and other emissions statewide. Sawyer, like several environmental groups, thought the board should have made more changes than those the governor sought.

"I'm proud of what the Air Resources Board has accomplished over the last 18 months under my direction," Sawyer said in a statement Thursday. "I've enjoyed working for Gov. Schwarzenegger as he pursues his very ambitious environmental agenda."

The air board is at the center of the politically charged implementation of California's landmark global warming law, which pits industry groups against environmentalists. While the governor has made reducing emissions a centerpiece of his political agenda, his administration has taken a centrist and incremental approach to adopting stricter standards.

Last week, the air board approved statewide rules requiring cleaner gasoline, reduced methane emissions from landfills and a ban on the sale of refrigerants for air conditioners in cars. A group of environmental advocates advising the air board had drawn up a list of more than 30 policy changes the board could have adopted.

Bill Magavern, a Sacramento Sierra Club lobbyist, called Sawyer a "dedicated champion of clean air. Any problems the air board has experienced are not due to any lack of dedication on his part of cleaning up California's air."

Sawyer, 71, came out of retirement at Schwarzenegger's request to head the board, which has a \$300 million annual budget.

The air board chair "took on one of the most critical jobs in all of government -- keeping California's air clean and safe," the governor said in a statement. "He fought tirelessly for California's bold vehicle

emission standards and did an outstanding job launching the world's first low-carbon fuel standard for transportation vehicles."

Last week, Schwarzenegger criticized the 11-member board -- all of whose members he appoints -- for what he described as an "11-year delay in enforcement of federal air quality standards in the San Joaquin Valley" from 2013 to 2024.

According to the air board's agenda for last week's meeting, the action its board took was recommended by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. While the final date for compliance is 2024, the board noted that most parts of the valley will be in compliance before that date.

Chairman of state air resources board fired

Robert Sawyer says he was asked to retire; he refused and was told his job had been rescinded.

By Janet Wilson, Times Staff Writer

L.A. Times, Friday, June 29, 2007

The chairman of the California Air Resources Board, Robert F. Sawyer, was fired by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger this week amid mounting criticism of the agency's leadership on global warming and air pollution policies.

Sawyer and the governor's office gave sharply differing accounts of why he was let go after 18 months at the helm of what has long been described as the world's most influential air pollution regulatory agency.

"I was fired, I did not resign.... The entire issue is the independence of the board, and that's why I got fired," Sawyer said in a telephone interview with The Times. He said that though the 11-member board is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the governor, "there's also an incredible tradition of independence. I have board members going all the way back to [Gov. Pete] Wilson's time, and they tell me they have never seen such a level of interference as is occurring at this time, and that's what this is all about."

Sawyer said he had declined to fire the agency's embattled executive director, Catherine Witherspoon, and objected when his longtime communications director Jerry Martin was also fired, then reassigned to another agency by the governor's office without notifying him. Finally, last week, he said he was called by a Cabinet secretary who ordered him to limit to three the number of so-called early action measures the board was considering to slow global warming.

Environmentalists complained bitterly that the three measures, approved by the board, were not enough, and Sawyer, ignoring the order he had received, unsuccessfully sought to persuade fellow board members to add more measures to the list.

He said he was baffled two days after the vote when the governor issued a news release criticizing the board for not taking more action.

In the statement, Schwarzenegger also criticized the board for approving a request by San Joaquin Valley air quality authorities to seek an 11-year extension of a federal deadline for complying with the Clean Air Act.

"I was deeply disappointed," Schwarzenegger said. "The air board let the federal government off the hook by seeking delay."

Sawyer said he requested a meeting with the governor's chief advisor, Susan Kennedy, to clear up the "mixed signals." Instead he was asked by Kennedy to retire, and when he refused, was handed a letter signed by the governor saying his appointment had been rescinded.

"I cleared out my office today," Sawyer said Thursday.

Sawyer said that despite his disagreements with the governor's office, he never questioned Schwarzenegger's commitment to air-pollution and climate-change policies, and that he enjoyed "nearly every minute" of his time as chairman.

Schwarzenegger's deputy chief of communications, Adam Mendelsohn, said the governor's office did not think the air board or its staff were moving aggressively enough on air pollution and global warming.

"The issue really came to a head after the decision to ask for an extension in the San Joaquin Valley, and the lack of early action items that we wanted done ... last week," Mendelsohn said. He said the items Sawyer proposed were minor, while the governor's office was seeking far tougher measures to control emissions from concrete factories and other sources.

The shake-up comes as Witherspoon and her staff struggle to implement many of the state's ambitious climate-change initiatives, along with now overdue federal clean-air plans for the Central Valley and Southern California.

Mendelsohn said the administration first became upset with the agency when Witherspoon, without consulting the governor's office, sent a letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency last spring seeking a long postponement of a federal deadline to clean up diesel soot.

"With the health threats of California air quality, this is a very high priority," Mendelsohn said.

Reaction to Sawyer's dismissal by industry representatives, environmentalists and other elected officials was mixed.

State Sen. Dean Florez (D-Shafter), who represents the Central Valley, said Sawyer's departure was "a good first step toward restoring confidence in a board many feel has lost sight of its ultimate goal."

Some environmentalists said they were not happy with all recent air board decisions, but they defended Sawyer.

"This is a sad and tragic day, and Bob Sawyer deserved far better," said V. John White, head of the Center for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Technologies, an environmental and renewable energy nonprofit.

Bill Magavern of the Sierra Club's California office said Sawyer had made a strong mark in his 18 months, shepherding through tough new regulations on formaldehyde, dry-cleaning chemicals and other pollutants.

Construction industry representatives also expressed concern about Sawyer's departure.

"He was somebody who was very much involved in the issues we're concerned about ... and I hate to lose his knowledge at this particular moment," said Mike Lewis, head of the Construction Industry Air Quality Coalition, a statewide organization of contractors, homebuilders and other construction companies.

He said that with the new greenhouse gas policies, the federal deadlines on air pollution plans and a pending vote on a proposed construction rule, "right now the air board is getting buffeted by all sides."

Schwarzenegger spokesman Mendelsohn said the administration would move quickly to name a replacement for Sawyer.

"This is priority one," he said.

Air plan led to chairman's undoing

BY STACEY SHEPARD, Californian staff writer
Bakersfield Californian, Friday, June 29, 2007

The chairman of the California Air Resource Board was fired in part because of the board's approval of a controversial plan to postpone the timeframe for cleaning the San Joaquin Valley's air, the governor's spokesman said Thursday.

"The board was not acting as aggressively as the governor wanted to on air pollution," said Aaron McLear, the governor's press secretary.

Robert Sawyer had held the post for the past 18 months.

He was offered the opportunity to resign last week, but declined, McLear said, so the governor rescinded his appointment.

The decision to remove Sawyer from the position was related in part to a plan approved by the Air Resources Board two weeks ago that delays the San Joaquin Valley's attainment date for federal smog standards by more than a decade, McLear said. The plan, drafted by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, created an outcry among valley environmentalists and health advocates because it postpones attainment of federal smog standards from 2013 to 2024.

"(The) delay ... was problematic for this administration and the environmental community," McLear said. "That vote was inconsistent with what we're trying to do on the environment."

In a statement, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said Sawyer "fought tirelessly for California's bold vehicle emission standards and did an outstanding job launching the world's first low-carbon fuel standard for transportation vehicles."

Sawyer also released a statement that said he was proud of the accomplishments the board made during his tenure.

The Air Resources Board is charged with protecting public health by reducing air pollution in the state. It is also drafting regulations to comply with the governor's goal of reducing carbon emissions in the state.

The governor last week said he was "deeply disappointed" with the state board's decision to approve the plan.

Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter, who has long been critical of the Air Resources Board, called Sawyer's departure a good first step toward restoring the board's image.

"The air board exists to clean the air and protect the public health," Florez said. "It does not exist to see how much pollution we can get away with, how much damage we can do to our children's lungs, before we face federal sanctions."

However, Liza Bolanos, coordinator for the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition, said Sawyer's dismissal has no immediate benefit for the San Joaquin Valley. Nine of the board's 10 remaining members voted to approve the valley's smog plan, she said.

"Overall, does it benefit us?" she asked. "Not unless someone takes up (Sawyer's) seat that will fight for the San Joaquin Valley."

Air board's leader fired

By Andy Furillo - Bee Capitol Bureau
Sacramento Bee, Friday, June 29, 2007

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has fired California's top air quality official for voting to extend the deadline for the San Joaquin Valley to meet federal clean air standards.

Schwarzenegger spokesman Adam Mendelsohn said Thursday the administration gave California Air Resources Board Chairman Robert F. Sawyer "the option to step down," but when the option wasn't taken, "we rescinded his appointment."

"The decision by the Air Resources Board to ask for a waiver in the San Joaquin Valley was very problematic for this administration as well as most of the environmental community," Mendelsohn said.

Sawyer, in an interview, said "I would guess" that the June 14 vote by the state air board figured in his termination. By a 7-1 margin, the state panel voted to give valley polluters until 2024 to come into compliance with the federal Clean Air Act. But Sawyer said he believes there was more to his dismissal.

"I think I was protecting the independence of the board by not doing things I was instructed to, and they decided that was not acceptable," Sawyer said.

Besides the vote, Sawyer also cited his opposition to the administration's effort to dismiss the air board's chief executive officer, Catherine Witherspoon, as a major reason for his own rescinded appointment.

"The governor and his staff would have you think they have absolute power over the board," Sawyer said. "But the tradition has never been that. Some members of the board, going back to the (former Gov. Pete)

Wilson days, said they'd never seen such an effort to control the board as they were experiencing at the present time. So I felt it was important to protect that level of independence."

Mendelsohn declined to comment on the Witherspoon matter, saying it was a personnel decision.

Sawyer, 72, was appointed to chair the air board in December 2005 after state Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata, D-Oakland, held up the governor's previous nominee, Cynthia Tuck, as being too close to business interests.

A professor emeritus of energy from the University of California, Berkeley, Sawyer was living in England, teaching and consulting, when Schwarzenegger tapped him to head the ARB.

Representatives of both environmental and business interests expressed disappointment Thursday over his firing.

"That's a very tragic and unjustified decision," said V. John White, a Sacramento lobbyist who represents major groups such as Environmental Defense and the Natural Resources Defense Council. "This is a very distinguished scientist and leader, one of the top 10 of all time. He's been mistreated and doesn't deserve this end to an illustrious career."

Michael Marsh, chief executive officer of Western United Dairymen, also termed Sawyer's dismissal "disappointing."

"From our industry's perspective, we've long advocated a science-based approach to air regulation," Marsh said. "It's just disappointing that a scientist with that kind of prestige, who reviewed issues and used a science-based approach, won't be on the board any more. If you're going to have a meaningful reduction in smog and ozone, you have to follow the science. You can't just make stuff up."

The heat started coming down on Sawyer after the ARB vote in Fresno to uphold a decision by the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District to delay an ozone emission attainment date by 11 years, from 2013 to 2024.

Schwarzenegger himself stepped into the issue last Friday by issuing a statement saying he was "deeply disappointed" that the board voted for the delay. He said the board let the federal government, with whom he has squabbled over global warming and other environmental issues, "off the hook" by pushing back the attainment date.

"There are few environmental issues facing Californians that are more important to our children's health, our quality of life, and our economic security than air quality," Schwarzenegger said in the statement. "When one of six residents in the San Joaquin Valley has been diagnosed with asthma and one in five children carry an inhaler to school, it is a call to action."

In an e-mail to his fellow board members, Sawyer said he learned Wednesday from Schwarzenegger Chief of Staff Susan Kennedy "that Gov. Schwarzenegger rescinded my appointment." He quoted Schwarzenegger as saying in a letter that "the magnitude of this task" of cleaning the air and impacting climate change "requires a different set of skills in order to successfully guide such complex and challenging issues through the regulatory process."

Sawyer said in the interview he favored the delay because low-emission nitrous oxide technology, needed to help diesel fuel consumers reduce smog-causing ozone, won't be available for on-road trucks until 2010 and that it has a "turnover time" of 10 years.

Pollution-control technology for construction equipment won't be available at all until 2014, he said, after the deadline date.

Valley environmentalists vigorously opposed the 11-year extension. Liza Bolaños, coordinator for the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition, suggested Thursday that Sawyer's departure won't make much difference when it comes to the region's air quality, which is among the worst in the nation.

"Somebody's resignation won't take care of it," Bolaños said. "The governor stating he's not OK (with the ARB decision) does not equate to a solution. We need action."

Air board chief ousted in shakeup after controversial vote

by Alex Breitler
Stockton Record, Friday, June 29, 2007

The chairman of the California Air Resources Board is leaving his post, officials announced Thursday, less than one week after Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said he was "deeply disappointed" that the board voted to delay ozone cleanup in the San Joaquin Valley.

Schwarzenegger's office said Robert F. Sawyer was stepping down.

"I was fired; I didn't resign," Sawyer said Thursday.

Sawyer's board approved a plan that gives the San Joaquin Valley until 2023 -- a decade-long extension - to meet federal ozone standards. The plan allows the Valley to avoid losing billions of dollars in federal transportation funding but has been blasted by environmentalists and community groups that say the air can and should be made clean sooner.

It's unclear if Sawyer's departure could have any impact on the ozone plan, since the board has already voted. Paul Cort, an attorney with the conservation law firm Earthjustice, said board staffers may still be considering strategies to reduce ozone in the Valley.

"The hope is that the (Air Resources Board) has made a commitment to re-evaluate some more stringent controls, and that will continue no matter who is in charge," Cort said.

State Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter, called Sawyer's leaving "a good first step" toward restoring confidence in the state air board.

"The air board exists to clean the air and protect the public health," he said in a prepared statement. "It does not exist to see how much pollution we can get away with, how much damage we can do to our children's lungs, before we face federal sanctions."

Sawyer, a professor emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley, said he wasn't sure if the ozone vote was related to his dismissal.

The governor indicated he "wanted a different type of leadership" to deal with Assembly Bill 32, which requires the air board to find ways to reduce California's greenhouse gas emissions 25 percent by 2020, Sawyer said.

"I took the job because the governor has taken a very strong position on environmental issues and climate change," he said. "I was delighted to be a part of that, and I commend him for it."

In a statement, Schwarzenegger said Sawyer "fought tirelessly" for new vehicle emission standards and that it would be difficult to replace him.

Schwarzenegger last week said the vote to delay the ozone plan let the federal government off the hook.

"When one out of six residents in the San Joaquin Valley has been diagnosed with asthma and one in five children carry an inhaler to school, it is a call to action," he said.

Governor fires his top smog-fighter

By Michael Gardner, Copley News Service
San Diego Union-Tribune, Friday, June 29, 2007

SACRAMENTO - Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has fired California's top smog-fighter, days after the California Air Resources Board sought a delay for tougher air quality standards in the San Joaquin Valley.

Robert Sawyer, who had been one of the governor's closest allies in the campaign to curb global warming, departs immediately as board chairman after 18 months on the job.

Sawyer lost his \$128,000-a-year job after a falling out over tougher air quality standards in the San Joaquin Valley. Schwarzenegger rebuked the Sawyer-led air board last Friday for asking the federal government for an 11-year delay.

Schwarzenegger at the time fired off a statement, saying he was "deeply disappointed" and charging that the air board "let the federal government off the hook by seeking the delay."

"There are few environmental issues facing Californians that are more important to our children's health, our quality of life, and our economic security than air quality. When one out of six residents in the San Joaquin Valley has been diagnosed with asthma and one in five children carry an inhaler to school, it is a call to action."

The governor appointed Sawyer, a professor emeritus in air quality science at UC Berkeley, in 2005. The governor appoints all 11 members of the board.

Sawyer's departure comes at a critical juncture. In late July, the board will rule on regulations to scrub diesel pollution from heavy equipment used by construction crews, in the ski industry and at airports. Crucial decisions on global warming loom, such as balancing market-based incentives with regulation and reducing the state's reliance on fossil fuels for energy.

CALENDAR – Events

Visalia Times-Delta, Thursday, June 28, 2007

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District workshop — San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District will explain new engine emission rules taking effect Jan. 1, from 1:30-3:30 p.m. today at Tulare County Agricultural Building, 4437 S. Laspina St., Tulare. Sign-up information: Tulare County Farm Bureau, 732-8301 or California Grape and Tree Fruit League, 226-6330.

[Hanford Sentinel, Commentary, Thursday, June 28, 2007:](#)

My Corner: Elected officials need new tasks

By Richard de Give

As we approach Independence Day, marking the 231st anniversary in our nation's humble experiment in democracy, I wonder if we should make some changes in the way we celebrate it.

Take away fireworks, hot dogs and parades? No way.

Eliminating face time for some politicians at these events? You bet.

As disappointing as our elected representatives have been of late, I wonder if we just ought to forego the speeches they like to deliver on such occasions, which are generally filled with as much hot air as ... well ... Kings County in the summertime.

A better use of time for some of our representatives may be to reflect on what's been going on of late in our nation and world, and what they can do to help.

To President Bush: From your days as owner of the Texas Rangers, you know you can't hit a homer every time. Yet going for the long ball seems to be your strategy of late in Iraq. We know you're trying to avoid it looking like a hit-and-run, but perhaps it's time for something to get the base runners moving and in position for the heavy hitters?

To the U.S. Senate: It's time to stop the posturing when dealing with immigration reform. Border fences and "soak the poor" legislation smacks of elitism and a disconnect with reality. Signs with a big hand, like at the amusement parks, reading "You must be this tall to enter this country," would be just as effective as any fence ... but some fence-mending is what's really needed.

To Gov. Schwarzenegger: It's nice to see you in Canada, signing agreements on greenhouse gases and global warming. Ditto for visiting Tony Blair in his last days as Great Britain's prime minister and discussing the environment. So when can we expect you to do something about our air quality, beyond throwing money at it? Last time I checked, we are still in Kalefornia

To the state legislature: That budget passed yet? Didn't think so. But why should this year be any different?

There are some folks I'd like to see at this party, though, starting with ...

Hanford city government: A little time in the light of day would do everyone wonders. Enough said.

Political spin masters and commentators of all parties: Just to show you there's life outside the studio.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District: I'd like to see the board spend a few hours outside, breathing the same dirty, dingy air the rest of us do while not taking in the panoramic views of the mountains, which are obscured by smog ... then tell me why there seems to be more delaying tactics than steps forward in cleaning things up.

Richard de Give is The Sentinel's copy editor.

[Letter to the Editor, Friday, June 29, 2007:](#)

Clean-Air Rules Work

David Sokol had it backward in his June 22 op-ed, "An Apollo Program for Climate Change," when he cited the Apollo space project as a reason for not requiring polluters to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

In 1970, Sen. Edmund Muskie and other congressional visionaries cited the successful moon landing as an example of American can-do innovation, and they wrote binding cleanup requirements that challenged industry to apply the same ingenuity to pollution control. In response to these and subsequent requirements, American pollution-control technology has progressed by leaps and bounds.

As we combat climate change, let's not make the mistake of adopting the weak approaches that were wisely rejected in 1970. They were wrong then, and they're wrong now.

*Howard I. Fox
Counsel, Earthjustice, Washington, D.C.*