

## **State crafting plan to reduce gasses**

### **Ambitious effort to comply with 12-year goal on emissions is picking up steam.**

By Jim Downing

Sacramento Bee, Friday, November 30, 2007

The state Air Resources Board will launch into a yearlong planning effort today that it hopes will yield a workable plan for slashing California's annual greenhouse gas emissions by 100 million metric tons in just 12 years.

That goal – the equivalent of cutting the state's gasoline use almost 70 percent – represents most of the reductions mandated under Assembly Bill 32, passed last year. The specific regulations enacted to meet it likely will affect virtually every sector of the California economy, from how electricity is generated to how new communities are planned.

Many of the emissions reductions will be straightforward expansions of energy-efficiency programs that the state already has pursued for years. But others – like rules that could affect land use – will put the agency in unfamiliar regulatory territory.

At today's public meeting in Diamond Bar, the agency will consider how to divide the state's greenhouse-gas sources into six economic sectors: electricity; local initiatives and land use; transportation; business and industry; agriculture; and forestry.

"There are a lot of animals on this ark, and we have to examine each separately," said agency spokesman Stanley Young.

In two weeks, a workshop in Sacramento will begin to look at policy proposals within each sector. By June, the agency's climate-change team – which has grown from 75 to 200 staff members in the last year – is scheduled to produce a detailed draft of where and how to cut emissions.

The result is likely to be a suite of traditional regulatory mandates combined with an emissions-trading plan, whereby a pool of emissions allowances would be given out or auctioned off to certain industrial sectors and then traded between individual businesses.

The plan is expected to go before the agency's executive board in November 2008, with rules taking effect by 2012.

The state's current emissions now stand at the equivalent of 500 million metric tons of carbon dioxide. Absent new regulations, population growth and economic expansion are expected to boost that total to 600 million tons by 2020. AB 32 requires the state to cut back to the 1990 emissions level of 427 million tons.

The air board already has identified ways to cut emissions by about 70 million tons a year by 2020. However, close to half of that total depends on the state winning the right to enforce a 2002 state law that calls for emissions reductions in new cars and trucks starting next year.

In some areas – like the electricity sector – the air board can draw on proven regulatory templates for squeezing emissions. That's not the case in other areas, notably land use and development.

The promotion of transit-oriented, high-density communities offers "a huge untapped opportunity" to reduce future driving miles and emissions, said Devra Wang, who directs the California energy program at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments has estimated that such strategies would ultimately yield a 26 percent reduction in the region's per-capita driving.

But the promotion of so-called "smart growth" policies can be a contentious area, often running counter to the interests of developers, landowners, existing residents and local government.

Still, without a dramatic shift in growth patterns, the California Energy Commission estimates that the average number of vehicle miles driven each year by the typical Californian is likely to continue to increase.

Ideas to reverse that trend range from a statewide review of zoning rules to encourage high-density development to "location-efficient mortgages," designed to help sell homes in neighborhoods where residents might drive less.

Representatives of other sectors likely to bear much of the 100 million-ton cut said they are reserving judgment until more details of the air board's plan take shape.

Amisha Patel, policy advocate for the California Chamber of Commerce, said the agency so far has been eager to collaborate with business groups.

"They've been listening to us," she said.

### **Controlled burns today in Lode**

Stockton Record, Thursday, November 29, 2007

ARNOLD - Folks living in Arnold and surrounding communities should expect to see smoke today through the weekend. Stanislaus National Forest crews will be burning brush and other ground-level fuels to improve forest health on about 100 acres two miles north of Arnold.

The project is intended to thin the forest and reduce fuels that could lead to a catastrophic fire and threaten the nearby towns of Arnold and White Pines. Thirty ground-based firefighters and several pilots will be involved in monitoring and managing the burn.

Another control burn of about 400 acres will be happening at the same time near Long Barn, in Tuolumne County. Drifting smoke may be visible at times along Highway 108.

### **Alameda OKs bike lockers**

#### **BikeAlameda group finally realizes success in making area bicycle-friendly**

By Alan Lopez, Staff Writer

Contra Costa Times, Friday, November 30, 2007

The 16 electronic bike lockers that will be installed as part of the new parking garage under construction at Oak Street and Central Avenue are among the recent accomplishments of bicycle advocacy group BikeAlameda.

The group, led by resident Lucy Gigli, is making progress in seeing a potential new crossing for the estuary that will be an alternative to the bike-unfriendly Webster and Posey tubes.

It's also helping to devise a new bike path near the Harbor Bay bike bridge; restripe sections of Central Avenue and Oak Street; and procure better bike rack placement at Alameda Towne Centre.

"We've had our part in every single one of them," Gigli said. "It's just taken a very long time -- excruciatingly long, but it's nice to see things finally come together."

Gigli said the group has been "instrumental" in convincing the city to install 16 electronic bike lockers, as opposed to 16 regular lockers in the Oak Street parking garage. The garage, that also will include 24 standard bike racks, is scheduled to open in January with the e-lockers in operation two-to-four weeks after that.

The e-lockers work with cards that can be purchased online for a minimum of \$20 at <http://www.bikelink.org>. The actual cost to store the bike is three-to-five cents an hour.

Unlike regular bike lockers, that are for months or even a year at a time, the electronic lockers are available to anyone as long as they're not in use.

Purchased with a \$32,000 grant from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the lockers are expected one day to be at every Bay Area Rapid Transit station and the Berkeley Amtrak station.

"We're hoping it creates an incentive to bike instead of drive," redevelopment manager Jennifer Ott said. "And now we have a secure on-demand spot waiting for them."

Cyclists can expect two other changes near the parking garage and the adjacent eight-screen cineplex now under construction.

They are:

- Bike lanes repainted on Central Avenue for one block between Oak and Walnut streets. The bike lanes were removed about 10 years ago, when the library moved into historic Alameda High School, and a new diagonal parking scheme was developed to accommodate library patrons.

Along with the bike lanes, the parking also will revert to a parallel arrangement.

- New markings -- stencils of a bicycle with two chevron markings above it -- will be painted on Oak Street from Lincoln to Encinal avenues. Considered a compromise in areas where bike lanes aren't feasible, the plan also will include new signs in the area.

"It's an interim solution to keep the bike way," Gigli said, "since there will be more traffic from the parking garage and theater."

She added that both projects would be done soon after the theater opens, which is expected to occur in March.

Gigli, whose mountain bike has a "One less car" bumper sticker attached to its frame, started BikeAlameda in 1999 with husband Dan Wood, as an offshoot of a committee that helped devise a comprehensive bike master plan for the city. The group now has about 200 members, she said.

And some members have been lobbying recently for better-placed bike racks around the Alameda Towne Centre shopping complex. While the racks between Trader Joe's and Safeway are convenient, the others are located in out of the way spots.

Gigli said she plans to meet with the owners of Towne Centre this week.

"We're meeting with them ... to work on some sidewalk issues and bike racks and try to get them to understand good bike rack placement," Gigli said. "It's not just quantity, it's placement too."

In the meantime, the city and BikeAlameda are working on longer-term projects both in the west and east ends of the city intended to increase bicycle safety and access.

In an effort to bypass the Webster and Posey tubes -- considered dangerous and inconvenient to bicyclists -- a water taxi to cross the estuary is expected as part of the 77-acre Alameda Landing development.

The city is scheduled to hire a consultant in January to determine whether the taxi or some other method would work best for bicyclists. A study could be completed as early as October, Gigli said.

"The ideal long-term solution is a pedestrian/bike bridge," she said. "It's possible that that's not at all feasible, not with all the money in the whole wide world. We think a secondary option is a shuttle going back and fourth consistently."

On the other side of the Island, on Fernside Boulevard near Lincoln Middle School, the approach to the Harbor Bay Bike Bridge is also considered dangerous with bicyclists often crossing Fernside and riding on the sidewalk or on the street against busy traffic to get there.

To fix the problem, the city is looking at building a new 10-foot-wide bike path to accommodate the bicyclists riding both ways on the east side of Fernside Boulevard between the entrance to the bike bridge and San Jose Avenue.

There are also plans for new signs to direct people to the bridge since it remains mostly hidden from view.

The city received a \$568,980 grant to address the issue and Gigli expected construction to begin before October.

"We've had lots of volunteers working for years to get these improvements," she said. "We stay on city staff with lots of phone calls to make sure things progress."

## **U.S. Steel considering \$1 billion investment to improve emissions**

The Associated Press

Contra Costa Times, Friday, November 30, 2007

CLAIRTON, Pa.—United States Steel Corp. said Friday it was considering spending \$1 billion to improve the environmental performance of the country's largest coke-making facility.

The investment at the Clairton plant near Pittsburgh would ensure the long-term viability of U.S. Steel's Mon Valley Works operations and create more than 600 construction jobs, the company said in a statement.

The improvements would be made over a period of years and would include the building of two new coke batteries, used to make iron, and the rehabilitation of existing batteries to improve emissions control.

Coke is a fuel used in steel production. It is made by baking coal in large brick ovens to remove impurities, a process known to cause air pollution.

In June, the Allegheny County Health Department said U.S. Steel had agreed to pay nearly \$400,000 in fines and make \$76 million in repairs to address air pollution at the Clairton facility.

The company's investment hinges on receiving environmental permits and the approval of U.S. Steel's board of directors.

Shares of U.S. Steel rose \$1.42, or 1.5 percent, to \$99.09 in morning trading Friday.

## **Business leaders seek action on warming**

By SETH BORENSTEIN, AP Science Writer

in the Modesto Bee and Tri-Valley Herald, Friday, November 30, 2007

WASHINGTON — Some of the world's top business leaders are demanding that international diplomats meeting next week come up with drastic and urgent measures to cut greenhouse gas pollution at least in half by 2050.

Officials from more than 150 global companies - worth nearly \$4 trillion in market capitalization - have signed a petition urging "strong, early action on climate change" when political leaders meet in Indonesia.

The hastily prepared petition drive, coordinated through the environmental office of Britain's Prince Charles, is signed by leaders from mainstream powerhouse companies such as Shell UK, GE International, Coca-Cola Co., Dupont Co., United Technologies Corp., Rolls Royce, Nestle SA, Unilever, British Airways and Volkswagen AG.

The petition is aimed at the United Nations conference in Bali, convened to draft a new environmental treaty to replace the Kyoto accord, which expires in 2012.

"We urge world leaders to seize this opportunity," the petition says.

Contrary to the argument that mandatory pollution cuts would harm the economy, the business leaders' petition says ambitious emissions reductions would "create significant business opportunities."

"You've got businesses around the world saying, 'Give us certainty so we can do what's right for our investors, society at large and the broader environment,'" said Richard Barrington, head of sustainability for Sun Microsystems in the United Kingdom and Ireland, whose boss signed the petition. "If you look at the risks associated with climate change, they're just as much business risks as they are human risks."

In the three weeks that the business leaders circulated the petition, primarily in the United Kingdom, Europe, the United States and Australia, more than 80 percent of the giant firms contacted agreed to join in, said petition coordinator Craig Bennett, of the University of Cambridge's Programme for Industry.

Just how drastic the cuts in man-made greenhouse gas emissions - carbon dioxide is the main one, generated mostly from the use of coal and oil products - should be left up to science, the business leaders said. But their communique refers to a recent international report on climate change, which said a 50 percent cut in emissions by 2050 is needed to prevent catastrophic global warming. Barrington said "that's the minimum order of what we're looking for."

"It's a massive problem for humanity; it's a huge problem for our businesses," Bennett said. "The politicians have got to sit up and do something."

In January, the CEO's of 10 major U.S. companies urged President Bush to support mandatory industrial greenhouse gas emission cuts. The White House is against that policy. Since their January plea, the industry group, the United States Climate Action Partnership, has grown to include 27 of the world's largest firms.

Other companies signing the British-based petition include Nike Inc., Johnson & Johnson, Virgin Group, Barclays PLC, Gap, Nokia, Pacific Gas and Electric, and the Rupert Murdoch-owned News Corp., which runs the conservative Fox News Channel.

"There are voices that you may not normally expect to be heard on this particular issue," Barrington said. "It just shows how concerned we are about the issue."

[Letter to the Modesto Bee, Friday, November 30, 2007:](#)

### **A global warming riddle for you**

How many irresponsible people does it take to cause a global warming? Let me count:

1. As many people that turn on all those unnecessary lights and TVs in stores instead of having sample ones on so customers can try them. The heat and energy is causing our planet to warm up.
2. Trucks that dump tons of cans in the dump yard never used from factories. One truckload is equivalent to what I recycled in 20 years.
3. All these companies building big buildings, cutting all these trees, just to knock the building down in a few years to build another one the same size.
4. All these planes burning all that jet fuel.

We're killing ourselves and the world with our ignorance and greed. We don't have to worry about another world power; we are committing suicide.

Never mind worrying about a nuclear bomb. We set our own bomb off. The cancer, lung disease, heart problems, birth defects, etc., thank the big companies for that. I say stop gouging the little guy on their smog certificates and charging for gas caps that aren't on tight enough and start fining and putting restrictions on the big companies.

*Barbara Fobare, Modesto*

Letter to the Contra Costa Times, Friday, November 30, 2007:

### **Less trips to pumps**

With the high price of gas, it's worth focusing on improving gas mileage. Plus did you know that for each gallon of gas your car burns, 19.4 pounds of carbon dioxide are spewed into the air? (US EPA Web site <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/climate/420f05001.htm>.) That's why biking is my preferred mode of transportation. But even for a bicycling enthusiast like me, sometimes biking isn't practical.

So when driving is unavoidable, let's at least drive efficiently. Here's a few tips: Drive smoothly, no jack rabbit starts/stops, don't exceed the speed limit and keep your car well maintained. Don't idle your car while waiting for the bridge to go down, the train to pass or in the car wash line. Clean out your trunk. It takes extra gas to haul excess weight.

If you've ever biked with under inflated tires, you know how hard it is. The same applies to vehicles. Under inflated tires reduce fuel efficiency by up to 3 percent. I'll admit I regularly procrastinated checking tire pressure as I hated fussing with the air pressure gauge, always either overshooting or undershooting the right amount.

What a pain, until I discovered the pump at Alameda Nob Hill gas station in the Bridgeside Shopping Center by the Fruitvale Bridge. Set desired pressure, attach the nozzle and when the tire pressure is reached, the machine beeps. Piece of cake! Try to check tire pressure at least once a month.

With these simple changes we can all visit the gas station less often and produce less pollution.

*Joyce Mercado*