

## **LA wildfires prompt unhealthy air warning**

In the S.F. Chronicle, Tri-Valley Herald and other papers, Tuesday, Oct. 14, 2008

Los Angeles, CA (AP) -- Hospitals near two wildfires raging in the San Fernando Valley reported a spike in patients complaining about breathing problems from the ash and soot Monday.

Fifteen patients came into the emergency room of Providence Holy Cross Medical Center with coughing, chest pain, shortness of breath and other respiratory problems. Of those, two were admitted for further evaluation, said hospital spokeswoman Patricia Aidem.

"We immediately stepped into disaster mode," Aidem said.

About eight miles away, Northridge Hospital Medical Center saw 11 patients who were exposed to unhealthy air. Most had breathing difficulties and some were treated for eye injuries from flying debris, said Charmine Navarro, a clinical nurse manager.

The hospital braced for more patients.

As long as the fires are burning, "they'll be trickling in," Navarro said.

On Monday, the South Coast Air Quality Management District predicted unhealthy air for parts of Los Angeles County due to the wind-fanned wildfires. The air pollution control agency said air quality in the San Fernando Valley and parts of the San Gabriel Mountains may reach unhealthy levels.

The agency urged people who can see smoke or dust to avoid unnecessary outdoor activities. It also advised the elderly, children and people with breathing problems to stay indoors.

## **Governor gets mixed report card on environment**

**Activist groups criticize Gov. Schwarzenegger for vetoing bills on air pollution and fire safety, but he is praised for approving a measure to require future regulation of toxics.**

Compiled by Margot Roosevelt, staff writer  
L.A. Times, Tuesday, October 14, 2008

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger wants to be known as the greenest governor in America. But his eco-record this year was at best "mixed," according to from the Natural Resources Defense Council and other major environmental groups.

Not only did he terminate the most significant air pollution bill to reach his desk -- a measure to assess ship container fees that would be used to alleviate port traffic emissions -- but he vetoed other green bills strongly promoted by environmental groups:

\* **Fire safety** -- The governor vetoed AB 2447, sponsored by Assemblyman Dave Jones (D-Sacramento), which would have required cities and counties to certify that new subdivisions have adequate fire protection.

In its report card, the Planning and Conservation League called the bill "the most meaningful measure on the governor's desk related to wildfire danger." But Schwarzenegger contended that it would be too "costly and time consuming" for the state to verify whether fire standards were being met.

\* **Green building** -- The governor vetoed AB 2939, sponsored by Assemblywoman Loni Hancock (D-Berkeley), which would have authorized cities and counties to adopt green building standards that exceed those adopted by the state. Schwarzenegger said localities already could adopt stricter standards and the bill was "unnecessary and overly far-reaching."

Environmentalists also criticized the governor for signing a bill that gives exclusive authority over green building rules to the Building Standards Commission instead of sharing authority, as is the current practice, with bodies such as the California Energy Commission and Air Resources Board that have an environmental portfolio.

\* **Toxic chemicals** -- The governor vetoed SB 775, sponsored by Sen. Mark Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles) to increase screening and tracking of childhood lead poisoning. The bill would also have required that information about lead, which can cause retardation, be given to pregnant women.

Schwarzenegger also vetoed SB 1313, sponsored by Sen. Ellen Corbett (D-San Leandro), which would have banned two chemicals, perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), from being used in food packaging.

Despite his vetoes, the governor won praise for signing the nation's most comprehensive bill to require future regulation of toxics, an effort to get away from a chemical-by-chemical approach.

[Manteca Bulletin commentary, Friday, Oct. 10, 2008:](#)

### **Prop. 1A: Fast track to financial hell**

By Dennis Wyatt, Managing Editor

It is time to derail the ultimate California fast train to financial ruin - the boondoggle known as the "Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act" or Proposition 1A on the Nov. 4 ballot.

There are countless reasons a sane person would reject this invitation to bankrupt future generations for a public transportation system that - if ever completed- would be used by very few people out of the state's current 36 million residents and would cost in excess of \$1 billion a year to operate.

**•The \$9.95 billion bond represents less than a sixth of the 2006 estimate of the \$45 billion needed to build the system.**

If you think this is a reasonable expectation, just think of the infamous "Big Dig" project in Boston. Some \$14.6 billion has been spent so far since 1991 or six times the original estimate. And that was for a relatively short highway tunnel as opposed to hundreds of miles of track for a train that will travel in excess of 200 mph.

Can you imagine the environmental lawsuits that would be filed? It is doubtful a cent of the \$9.5 billion would be spent on anything but legal fights should voters approve Prop. 1A and give the rail authority the ability to move forward in much the same fatalistic manner as "The Light Brigade."

Regardless of whether costs balloon even more, someone has got to come up with the rest of the \$456 billion estimate. Big hint: It isn't going to be Wall Street.

**•Trusting the California Legislature with bond money at this juncture in our state's history is akin to trusting a meth addict with a truckload of copper wiring.**

Remember Proposition 13 from the 2000 election? It was supposed to deliver \$1 billion for the express purchase of flood control and water storage development. What happened to the \$1 billion, you ask? It was "borrowed" by the California Legislature to help wipe out the multi-year \$37 billion deficit that got Gray Davis kicked out of the governor's office. The promise was to start repaying the \$1 billion back this year. Given the fact we just patched together a budget after 82 days that pushes a \$17 billion deficit into next year and revenue projections are already lagging on top of that, only a masochist that is a sap would send more money to Sacramento.

• **If all the bond measures on the Nov. 4 ballot pass, it will send bond debt commitments hurdling toward 11 percent of the state's general fund expenditures.**

The state already has over \$100 billion in voter-approved debt on the books and that's minus the interest. What happens if our leaders in Sacramento get their act together so we can build something that is critical to the welfare of this state and its people such as a new reservoir, a water conveyance system or desalinization plants. We may not be able to afford it so some modern-day Yuppies can zip between San Francisco and Los Angeles at high speeds.

• **The congestion relief argument is a pile of - let's put this politely - horse manure.**

The main corridor between northern and southern California is Interstate 5. Do you see bumper-to-bumper traffic except in Los Angeles or Sacramento and that's during rush hours. Yes, the leg into the Bay Area has heavy traffic but here's a thought: How are people going to get around once they reach their destinations? Gee, you think everyone is going to walk?

Also, how much more congestion would conventional rail projects between urban areas such as the Altamont Commuter Express or light rail projects in urban areas reduce for \$45 billion than the high speed rail project? No matter how you dice it - whether it is passenger miles or number of riders - the high-speed rail is a loser.

• **The high-speed rail is not the most effective way to reduce air pollution.**

Hello, even a sixth grader knows that idling vehicles pollute much more than vehicles traveling at 55 mph. Reducing urban transit congestion has a much bigger impact in terms of moving people and improving **air quality**.

• **This could become California's railroad to nowhere.**

In order to be built, a lot more bucks in future years need to be found. Even during well-managed fiscal times there were huge segments of Interstate 5 that were completed years and years before the rest of the freeway was done - including the gap between Stockton and Sacramento.

But unlike a freeway, a missing link renders the complete high-speed rail system inadequate. If the money stops flowing, you run the risk of creating a massive monument to government waste.

But if you like gambling and thought buying more home than one could afford at zero percent down, zero interest loans for the first three years was the cat's meow, then Proposition 1A is right up your alley.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses Schwarzenegger declares state of emergency due to the fires that have caused two deaths. For more information on this or other Spanish clips, contact Claudia Encinas at \(559\) 230-5851.](#)

### **Schwarzenegger declara estado emergencia por fuego que ha causado dos muertos**

Frontera, Tuesday, October 14, 2008

LOS ÁNGELES, California(EFE) El gobernador de California, Arnold Schwarzenegger, ha declarado el estado de emergencia en los condados de Los Angeles y Ventura debido a dos incendios que han causado ya dos muertos y han arrasado casi 4 mil hectáreas en el Valle de San Fernando en las últimas horas.

La decisión de Schwarzenegger responde a las condiciones de "extremo peligro para la seguridad de las personas y las propiedades" en ambos condados, donde el fuego resulta muy difícil de controlar debido a los fuertes vientos que azotan la zona.

Según un comunicado emitido por la Oficina del gobernador, "miles de residentes han sido evacuados y buscan refugio" , mientras que "varias carreteras y autopistas han sido cerradas" , así como algunas escuelas donde no se ha dado clase.

La autopista 118 fue cerrada a la altura de Chatsworth, donde el humo podría haber influido en un accidente en el que se vieron implicados cuatro vehículos y en el que falleció un motorista, según las autoridades locales.

La otra víctima, al parecer un vagabundo, se encontraba en el área de Lake View Terrace, donde mil 200 personas han sido evacuadas.

En esta zona, en el noreste del Valle de San Fernando, el incendio ya ha arrasado casi 2 mil hectáreas, mientras que otras tantas hectáreas ha ardido en Porter Ranch.

Unos 800 bomberos trabajan intensamente para apagar ambos incendios, una tarea muy complicada debido a los fuertes vientos de Santa Ana cercanos a los 100 kilómetros por hora.

El jefe de bomberos del condado de Los Angeles County, Michael Freeman, explicó que se espera que el viento propague con rapidez el fuego a través de los cañones de la zona durante la mañana.

"Este fuego puede moverse desde donde está ahora hasta quizá la autopista de la costa del Pacífico" , lo que podría ser "desastroso" , indicó Freeman en declaraciones al diario "The Angeles Times" .

Los incendios se originaron el domingo cerca de Los Ángeles (California) y han destruido 37 casas móviles debido a la virulencia de los vientos.

La orden de evacuación que afecta al este del Valle de San Fernando sigue vigente ya que las llamas avanzan hacia el suroeste.

"Si estás en la dirección del fuego, coge tus pertenencias de más valor y sal de ahí" , avisó el inspector del cuerpo de bomberos del condado Frank Garrido.

Se desconoce por el momento la causa que originó los incendios y las autoridades locales han abierto una investigación.

Otros incendios declarados en Santa Clarita, al norte del condado de Los Ángeles, y cerca de Santa Paula, en el condado de Ventura, ya han sido controlados.

Mientras, se registraron otros dos fuegos de menor intensidad y más alejados de la zona del valle de San Fernando: en el sureste de la base de los marines de Camp Pendleton, en el condado de San Diego, y en la isla del Angel de la Bahía de San Francisco.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses air quality alert due to new fires.](#)

### **Alertan por contaminación que generó nuevo incendio**

Manuel Ocaño

Noticier Latino

Radio Bilingüe, Monday, October 13, 2008

Un incendio que se desató el fin de semana y continúa en el Valle de San Fernando, al norte de Los Ángeles empeoró las condiciones de contaminación del aire.

Autoridades ambientales de California advirtieron que ese deterioro pudiera ser peligroso especialmente para la población considerada más vulnerable a la contaminación del aire: los niños y los ancianos.

Los principales consejos son permanecer en interiores y sólo salir si es muy necesario. Para quienes sufren enfermedades respiratorias es recomendable también estar en contacto con sus médicos.

El fuego había consumido por lo menos unos dos mil acres hasta esta mañana.