

Wood-burning rules tightened again

By Jennifer Wadsworth

Tracy Press, Tuesday, November 4, 2008

Valley residents will have fewer chances to light a log in the fireplace this winter, after regulators recently tightened air pollution standards.

San Joaquin County Air Pollution Control District forecasters predict that on about nine days now through February, particulate pollution will be thick enough to make it illegal to burn fireplace fires this winter in San Joaquin County. In some southern Central Valley counties, the no-burn days might number 48, forecasters say.

And there's a price to pay for disregarding that rule.

The fine for burning on what the district calls a no-burn day is \$50 the first time. The fine escalates for every subsequent offense. The maximum penalty is \$1,000.

Folks can opt out of paying the fine if they attend a class to learn more about the rule and why it's important in an air basin that struggles to meet Environmental Protection Agency clean-air standards.

"It's sort of like going to traffic school," said air district spokesman Anthony Presto. "Except instead you'll come out here and learn about air quality in the valley."

Air quality analysts predicted last winter that valley air pollution would be bad enough to ban wood-burning on as many as four days between November 2007 and February this year. Turned out, valley residents got to burn whenever they pleased because experts deemed none of the days "unhealthy" for the general population.

But now the threshold has been lowered. Air quality needs only be moderately bad for the district to fine anyone who lights a fire. It used to be that there would have to be 66 micrograms of dust, ash and other particles that pollute the air per cubic meter for the district to issue a "red flag" warning and ban wood-burning.

Now, there only needs to be 33 micrograms of particulate matter for every cubic meter for fireplace fires to get banned.

District-employed atmospheric scientists use weather forecasts combined with particulate measures to determine the level of air pollution every day and to forecast what the air quality might look like the next day.

Officials from the eight-county district used to make exceptions for people who lived at or higher than an elevation of 3,000 feet. Not this year, though. Only people who have no hook-up to natural gas are forgiven for lighting up on days when no one else is legally allowed to, Presto said.

The district will rely on called-in complaints to alert them to violations.

To find out what the air quality looks like on any given day, visit the district Website at www.valleyair.org.

First major rain since May wets local area

By Shawbong Fok

Hanford Sentinel, Monday, Nov. 3, 2008

A warm tropical storm dumped almost a tenth of an inch of rain in Hanford Saturday morning, in what was the first major sign of precipitation in Kings County since May 25. And some more wet weather is in store for today.

According to the National Weather Service, a large upper trough approached the West Coast pulling with it southern tropical moisture that poured rain across the San Joaquin Valley. All told, Kings County received .11 from two rain events Saturday and Sunday.

"It's been humid the last few days," David Spector, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Hanford said Saturday. Early Sunday, another .03 inches of rain was recorded after the initial early Saturday downpour which included some thunder and lightning.

After a brief respite from rain this morning, another colder storm from the northwest was set to move into the Valley in the afternoon or evening, kicking in rain until Tuesday morning.

Dewey Cruz, 43, of Riverdale said the storm should help the farmers throughout the region, which heavily depends on rainfall to sustain crops.

"Rain is what farmers need most," said Cruz, while studying in the Kings County Library in Hanford. "This area is based on agriculture."

He added: "The rain should clean up the air pollution."

Hanford Fire Department officials reported no unusual activity associated with the storm. Kings County Fire Department officials said a couple of power poles in Stratford caught on fire.

Fresno may do U-turn on free hybrid parking

By Brad Branan / The Fresno Bee
Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2008

Hybrid vehicles were a bit of a rarity when the city of Fresno started allowing them to park free downtown in 2004.

Now you can buy a Cadillac Escalade Hybrid and many other low-emission vehicles, and the popularity of "green" cars has created problems for downtown parking.

Too many hybrid cars are taking up needed parking downtown, officials say.

The City Council expects to decide today whether to end the parking program, which was intended as an incentive to buy low-emission vehicles.

The council voted 4-3 last week to direct city staffers to write an ordinance that would end the program. Council members Blong Xiong, Cynthia Sterling and Henry T. Perea opposed the move.

About 200 vehicles are registered in the program, said Del Estabrooke, the city's parking manager. Participants pay \$10 to register in the program, which allows them to park free in city lots or at metered spots.

Business owners have complained about participants regularly parking in metered spots all day, when the meters are intended for quick turnover for customer traffic, Estabrooke said.

The city also has struggled trying to figure out which vehicles should qualify for free parking under the program, as more and more vehicles are sold as "hybrids," Estabrooke said.

The city has been following the California Air Resources Board's definitions of low-emission vehicles. Last year, more than 170 vehicles qualified.

Perea, who originally proposed the program, said the city should stick with it. The city should simply tighten the definitions of what vehicles can qualify, he said.

"I think we should encourage people to invest into going green," he said.

But Estabrooke said ending the program is a necessary step to ease downtown parking problems and bring in additional revenue. He estimates that about 50 metered spots will be freed up daily, allowing the city to collect an extra \$63,000 a year.

County wood-burning curbs go into effect today

By Neisha Lofing
Sacramento Bee, Saturday, November 1, 2008

It's cold, it's wet and a warm fire seems like a cozy end to the day.

But beginning today, Sacramento County residents will have to remember to check their e-mail or make a call before using their fireplace, as it is the start of Check Before You Burn season.

The Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District program runs through Feb. 28.

There are some exemptions, including homes and businesses where wood burning is the only source of heat, ceremonial fires used in religious activities or with a hardship waiver due to compelling economic hardship.

The fine for a first-time violation is \$50 and higher for additional violations.

To report a suspected violation, call (800) 880-9025.

The district sends daily e-mails to county residents who sign up for air quality alerts. Residents also may call (877) NO-BURN-5 to check the recorded daily burn status information.

For more information about the Check Before You Burn program, go to www.sparetheair.com/burncheck.cfm.

Bay Area

Denis Cuff

Tri-Valley Herald, Tuesday, November 4, 2008

No-burn night notices offered in Bay Area: Bay Area residents can find out when wood fires are banned in fireplaces and stoves by signing up to get automated e-mails or phone calls from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

To get the e-mail notices, go to the air district's Web site, www.sparetheair.org. To sign up for automated phone alerts, call 800-430-1515.

Bay Area residents also can get daily air pollution forecasts, or file complaints about burning violations by calling 877-4-NO-BURN.

News media are expected to announce the no-burn notices as well.

Saturday was the start of the burn season, when the air district began enforcing the new no-burn rule on chilly Spare the Air nights.

Feds propose much fewer snowmobiles in Yellowstone

By MATTHEW BROWN, Associated Press Writer

In the Washington Post, Contra Costa Times and other papers, Monday, November 3, 2008

Billings, Mont. (AP) -- A cap on snowmobile use in Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks would be lowered by 40 percent under a federal proposal released Monday in response to a judge's rejection of earlier plans.

Parks officials had proposed allowing up to 605 snowmobiles a day in the two parks, but U.S. District Judge Emmet Sullivan rejected that plan in September, agreeing with plaintiff environmental groups that it would increase air pollution, disturb wildlife and cause too much noise.

The new plan calls for a cap of 318 snowmachines a day in Yellowstone and another 50 in Grand Teton to the south. Park administrators said they expect it will be adopted by Dec. 15.

Yellowstone winter use planner John Sacklin said the new cap would meet Sullivan's concerns while park administrators again try to form a long-term plan for the machines. The cap would expire after three years.

Last year, an average of 294 snowmobiles a day entered Yellowstone. But the peak daily use was much higher — there were 557 on one day in December.

Jack Welch with the Blue Ribbon Coalition, a snowmobile advocacy group, said the proposed restrictions are too severe.

"People will be turned away and consequently it's not fair," he said. "318, no matter how it's divided up, is not going to be adequate to allow for people to visit their national parks."

Sacklin defended the new plan as "falling right within the range of use that we have seen."

"We believe the impacts will be no more than moderate based on our analysis and based on looking at monitoring results for the last four to five winters."

The plan released Monday also requires that all Yellowstone snowmobile trips be commercially guided and would allow 78 multi-passenger snowcoaches in that park daily, five fewer than what would have been permitted under the rejected plan.

It's been 28 years since the National Park Service began trying to address how many snowmobiles are appropriate for Yellowstone and Grand Teton. A succession of proposals — including an outright ban on snowmobiles sought by the Clinton administration — have been scrapped or thrown out by judges.

Environmental groups have called for the machines to be eliminated entirely and replaced with a smaller number of multi-passenger snowcoaches. But Tim Stevens with the National Parks Conservation Association said his group recognizes a temporary measure was needed while the issue is resolved.

"This steps in a better direction," Stevens said. He said the Park Service had "acknowledged that its prior plan did not provide adequate protection."

The state of Wyoming and snowmobile advocates have filed a lawsuit seeking to increase the number of the machines allowed in the two parks. That litigation is pending.

Bush Ocean Plan Is Criticized

Cheney Among Those Objecting Because of Economics

By Juliet Eilperin

Washington Post, Tuesday, November 4, 2008; A13

President Bush's vision for protecting two vast areas of the Pacific Ocean from fishing and mineral exploitation, a move that would constitute a major expansion of his environmental legacy, is running into dogged resistance both inside and outside the White House and has placed his wife and his vice president on opposite sides of the issue.

With less than three months before Bush's term ends, his top deputies are scrambling to try to execute a plan that would shield some of the world's most diverse underwater ecosystems. The original plan, which included four potential "marine monuments" and was well received by environmentalists, has already been scaled back.

Vice President Cheney and some officials in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands have argued that the plan could hurt the region's economy by barring fishing and energy exploration. First lady Laura Bush, along with a number of scientists and environmental advocates, has countered that preserving the region's natural attributes would attract tourism and burnish the president's record for history.

Laura Bush has asked for two briefings on the issue from White House staff members, and her aides have conferred with scientists who support the two designations.

"It's hard, but it should be," said James L. Connaughton, who chairs the White House Council on Environmental Quality and just returned from an overseas listening tour on the proposal. "These are big, consequential, national decisions that have international ramifications."

While environmental groups have pilloried Bush over his approaches to climate change, forest management and air pollution, many marine experts give him credit for his ocean policies.

In 2006 he designated the nearly 140,000-square-mile Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the northwestern Hawaiian Islands, creating what at the time was the world's largest protected marine area. Scientists have advocated designating more such areas to protect them

from the effects of overfishing, pollution and global warming, which are degrading oceans worldwide.

"There's pretty strong evidence that everyone will benefit from the establishment of no-take reserves," said Jane Lubchenco, a professor of marine biology at Oregon State University, adding that fish populations rebound both within the protected reserves and in nearby fishing grounds. "The administration made a major step forward in designating the Papahānaumokuākea National Monument, but that one alone is not enough to protect the full range of places and habitats and species that need to be protected. It will be part of [Bush's] legacy, but his ocean and environmental legacy could be much, much more."

Researchers and activists welcomed Bush's August memorandum asking Connaughton and the secretaries of defense, commerce and the interior to assess the two "marine conservation management areas" he might establish before leaving office.

One, in the central Pacific, would encompass an area known as the Line Islands and stretch about 2,000 miles from the Johnston Atoll to the Rose Atoll. The memo described the area as "isolated from population centers, mostly uninhabited" and supporting "endemic, depleted, migratory, endangered and threatened species of fish, giant clams, crabs, marine mammals, sea turtles, seabirds, migratory shorebirds and corals that are rapidly vanishing elsewhere in the world."

The other area, in the western Pacific, would include the waters around two northern Mariana Islands and the 6.8-mile-deep Mariana Trench, the deepest ocean canyon in the world.

Both regions are treasure troves of biodiversity: Kingman Reef and other islands in the central Pacific area teem with sharks and other top predators; the Mariana Trench and its nearby islands are home to several species of rare beaked whales and the Micronesian megapode -- an endangered bird that uses the heat from volcanic vents to incubate its eggs -- as well as to mud volcanoes, pools of boiling sulfur and the greatest microbial diversity on Earth.

No one questions the ecological, biological and geological value of these sites, but supporters of protecting them -- including Connaughton and advocacy organizations such as the Pew Environment Group -- have faced serious opposition in convincing several key White House officials of the value of broad "no-take" reserves. Bush initially explored the idea of establishing other protected areas closer to U.S. shores, including one off the southeastern coast near a group of deep-sea corals and another in the Gulf of Mexico. After commercial and recreational fishing interests and oil companies objected, the administration decided to pursue existing resource-management plans in those areas instead.

Despite the islands' distance from the continental United States, the proposal to designate an area around the Northern Marianas -- a U.S. commonwealth between Japan and Guam -- has sparked considerable debate. Cheney and National Economic Council Director Keith Hennessey have questioned the impact on the region's economy, a concern some local officials also raised.

In a June 9 letter to Bush, Juan Borja Tudela, mayor of the Marianas' most populous island, Saipan, argued that "the loss of extractive privileges of natural resources in over 115,00 square miles of water . . . far outweigh any benefits" that a marine reserve would yield. Another group of local officials wrote to Bush on Sept. 15, saying that the designation "would deny and take away from us the management responsibility of hundreds of years of successful stewardship."

The influential Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, a fierce opponent of marine reserves that tried to block the Hawaii marine monument, has also worked to keep the Northern Marianas open to fishing. On Oct. 20, the council, which regulates fishing in U.S. waters in the far Pacific, passed a resolution saying it "is concerned about the magnitude of areas being discussed" and insisted that local residents be allowed to review any proposal before it becomes final.

There has been significantly less controversy over designating the Line Islands in the central Pacific; much of the region is federal territory and sparsely populated.

Connaughton -- who held meetings last month in American Samoa, Hawaii, Guam and Saipan about the two proposals -- said the administration is sensitive to the issues that Marianas officials have raised.

"The vice president is flagging something I had already laid out in our policy briefings," Connaughton said. Officials in Saipan "want to make sure that local tourism concerns are going to be taken care of, which includes fishing off of Saipan. They're very interested in the potential of geothermal energy."

But other island residents welcome the idea of a marine reserve, which would draw researchers and tourists to nearby diving spots. The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands has endorsed it, and the Pew Environment Group has collected 6,500 signatures from residents who back the monument.

Joshua Reichert, the Pew group's managing director, said that if Bush designates the Mariana Trench and the surrounding area, he will have protected more square miles than any previous president.

"Protecting places like this is one of the few things a sitting president can do that will live on in posterity and be remembered long after the other decrees and orders have been forgotten," Reichert said. "It would signal to the nation and the world that the sea needs to be treated as a threatened resource, and it will open up an era of global ocean conservation."

Claudia McMurray, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for oceans, environment and science, said the administration will be "working up until the last week" of Bush's term on the initiatives.

"While it would take a significant amount of work, we haven't ruled it out," she said. "We feel fairly confident, scientifically, there are so many unique species in that area, from that standpoint, we think it's important to wall off as much as we can."

[The Bakersfield Californian, Commentary, Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2008:](#)

Taft plans for smart growth

Taft's City Council has set in motion the process to create Taft's blueprint for growth for the next 20 years and far beyond.

Preparation of Taft's general plan and environmental documents are under way, and staff is working with its consulting team and ad hoc vision steering committee to ensure that the city plans for growth in a way that protects its small town charm, yet allows for sustainable smart growth.

We are pleased that 55 community stakeholders have volunteered to participate in the planning process organized around the required general plan elements and the addition of Energy, Economic Development and Green Elements.

We believe that we are on a path for Taft to become a national model for Sustainable Smart Growth including plans to:

- Protect and preserve 120 square miles of agriculture land.
- Preserve oil industry and Bureau of Land Management-owned land.
- Protect endangered species through "pocket" development, habitat conservation plans and other innovative policies.
- Focus on infill development opportunities within the current sphere of influence first and then link pocket/compact development projects.
- Implement "green building" policies that comply with the letter and intent of AB 32, including city-led efforts such as energy audits and energy efficiency programs. This will include participating in PG&E's Climate Smart Program and San Joaquin Valley Air Control District efforts to improve air quality.

- Participate in the Valley Floor SOI/MSR Master Plan and other regional approaches for land-use planning and environmental protection policies.
- Coordinate with Central California Economic Development Corp.'s gathering of information regarding the infrastructure needs for the San Joaquin Valley in an effort to look at the potential impact and financing requirements.
- Utilize the Urban Land Institute's smart growth planning tools and benchmarks for best practices in land-use planning and real estate development.
- Participate in the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan.
- Create and implement water conservation policies and recycling programs and opportunities.

We believe Taft is a safe community and a wonderful place to work, raise a family and/or retire. Our plans include about 6,000 dwelling units and multiple lifestyle choices.

New residents are attracted to our city for good reasons: a strong and expanding job market, with plans to diversify the local economy by creating 6,000 new jobs; a very safe community with zero tolerance for graffiti, drugs or gang activity; a charming downtown business district complete with historic structures that are being renovated for new business opportunities; excellent schools and a community college, and other amenities, such as The Fort, Oil Museum, Veterans Memorial Park and Honolulu Hills.

We also have created a Historic Preservation Plan that is vital to maintaining the community's character and identity. Preservation of historic resources fosters civic and neighborhood pride, forms the basis for a unique community identity and enhances the visual character of the city.

Historic preservation has been shown to improve property values within historic areas. Maintaining and reusing historic structures conserves building materials and energy resources. Preservation also serves as a tool in comprehensive planning efforts.

Robert Gorson is the city manager of Taft.

[N.Y. Times editorial, Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2008:](#)

So Little Time, So Much Damage

While Americans eagerly vote for the next president, here's a sobering reminder: As of Tuesday, George W. Bush still has 77 days left in the White House — and he's not wasting a minute.

President Bush's aides have been scrambling to change rules and regulations on the environment, civil liberties and abortion rights, among others — few for the good. Most presidents put on a last-minute policy stamp, but in Mr. Bush's case it is more like a wrecking ball. We fear it could take months, or years, for the next president to identify and then undo all of the damage.

Here is a look — by no means comprehensive — at some of Mr. Bush's recent parting gifts and those we fear are yet to come.

CIVIL LIBERTIES We don't know all of the ways that the administration has violated Americans' rights in the name of fighting terrorism. Last month, Attorney General Michael Mukasey rushed out new guidelines for the F.B.I. that permit agents to use chillingly intrusive techniques to collect information on Americans even where there is no evidence of wrongdoing.

Agents will be allowed to use informants to infiltrate lawful groups, engage in prolonged physical surveillance and lie about their identity while questioning a subject's neighbors, relatives, co-workers and friends. The changes also give the F.B.I. — which has a long history of spying on civil rights groups and others — expanded latitude to use these techniques on people identified by racial, ethnic and religious background.

The administration showed further disdain for Americans' privacy rights and for Congress's power by making clear that it will ignore a provision in the legislation that established the Department of Homeland Security.

The law requires the department's privacy officer to account annually for any activity that could affect Americans' privacy — and clearly stipulates that the report cannot be edited by any other officials at the department or the White House.

The Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel has now released a memo asserting that the law "does not prohibit" officials from homeland security or the White House from reviewing the report. The memo then argues that since the law allows the officials to review the report, it would be unconstitutional to stop them from changing it. George Orwell couldn't have done better.

THE ENVIRONMENT The administration has been especially busy weakening regulations that promote clean air and clean water and protect endangered species.

Mr. Bush, or more to the point, Vice President Dick Cheney, came to office determined to dismantle Bill Clinton's environmental legacy, undo decades of environmental law and keep their friends in industry happy.

They have had less success than we feared, but only because of the determined opposition of environmental groups, courageous members of Congress and protests from citizens. But the White House keeps trying.

Mr. Bush's secretary of the interior, Dirk Kempthorne, has recently carved out significant exceptions to regulations requiring expert scientific review of any federal project that might harm endangered or threatened species (one consequence will be to relieve the agency of the need to assess the impact of global warming on at-risk species). The department also is rushing to remove the gray wolf from the endangered species list — again. The wolves were re-listed after a federal judge ruled the government had not lived up to its own recovery plan.

In coming weeks, we expect the Environmental Protection Agency to issue a final rule that would weaken a program created by the Clean Air Act, which requires utilities to install modern pollution controls when they upgrade their plants to produce more power. The agency is also expected to issue a final rule that would make it easier for coal-fired power plants to locate near national parks in defiance of longstanding

Congressional mandates to protect air quality in areas of special natural or recreational value.

Interior also is awaiting E.P.A.'s concurrence on a proposal that would make it easier for mining companies to dump toxic mine wastes in valleys and streams.

And while no rules changes are at issue, the interior department also has been rushing to open up millions of acres of pristine federal land to oil and gas exploration. We fear that, in coming weeks, Mr. Kempthorne will open up even more acreage to the commercial development of oil shale, a hugely expensive and environmentally risky process that even the oil companies seem in no hurry to begin. He should not.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses "Green" motorcycles. For more information on this and other Spanish clips, contact Claudia Encinas at \(559\) 230-5851.](#)

Diálogo Ecológico: Motocicletas 'verdes'

EarthTalk

La Opinión, Sunday, November 02, 2008

¿Hay bicicletas eléctricas o motonetas que beneficien al ambiente? -- Sean Foley, Nashua, NH

Ir al trabajo en bicicleta ha sido por mucho tiempo un símbolo de una vida más "verde", y es gran ejercicio, también. Pero la mayoría de la gente no está probablemente lista a ir mucho más allá de cinco o 10 millas en una dirección debido al tiempo requerido y la posibilidad de llegar exhausto (o lleno de transpiración) y no muy dispuesto a trabajar.

Ahora están entrando al mercado una serie de bicicletas a batería que no te forzarán a hacer ejercicio pero que te llevarán del punto A al punto B y de vuelta, con consecuencias mínimas para el medio ambiente. Los consumidores pueden comenzar ya a "verdear" sus viajes al trabajo con tales vehículos que requieren solamente una inversión de alrededor de \$1.500 y cerca de 25 centavos más por día en costo de electricidad—no muy malo cuando consideras que un nuevo coche, de partida, cuesta millares de dólares más y mastica cantidades horrosas de gasolina cara y contaminante.

Muchos de nosotros que recordamos las imágenes de bicicletas eléctricas y motonetas probablemente visualicemos los velomotores temperamentales de los años 70 y 80, pero las ofertas de hoy son muy superiores y bastante diversas.

Los que quieren ir rápido pero seguir siendo ambientalistas deben chequear algunas de las vespas eléctricas hechas por EVTAMERICA basada en Miami. Cada uno de los tres modelos de la compañía alcanzan a una velocidad máxima de 72 km por hora, respetable incluso en la carretera. La "gente quiere ir por lo menos a 64 kh," dice el copropietario de la compañía, Fernando Pruna. "Todo lo construido antes podía alcanzar solamente 40 o 48 kph."

Mientras tanto, la firma eGO de Somerville, Massachusetts hace bicicletas eléctricas que pueden andar a 40 kilómetros por hora en modo de velocidad, pero también poseen un modo de "largo alcance" que sustituye distancia por velocidad (unos 40 km en una sola carga). Aunque las bicis de eGO pueden parecer diminutas, se conocen como muy resistentes. "Nuestras bicis son lo suficientemente fuertes como para remolcar un coche," dice Kevin Kazlauskas, jefe de operaciones de la compañía. "Éstos no son juguetes, y los clientes no los están tratando como juguetes."

Otra opción podría ser una vespa eléctrica hecha por Veloteq, basada en Houston. Estas motonetas alcanzan solamente 32 kilómetros por hora en términos de máxima velocidad, pero pueden cubrir hasta 80 km en una sola carga, que es más que suficiente para transportar a la mayoría de los que van al trabajo diariamente, tanto de ida como de vuelta, mientras que eviten las carreteras de alta velocidad a lo largo de la ruta. Un beneficio adicional de la limitación de la velocidad en los vehículos de Veloteq es que están típicamente exentas de licencia, registro y reglamentos de seguros en la mayoría de las jurisdicciones—todavía otra manera de ahorrar dinero en comparación con los conductores de coche todavía atascados en sus viajes al trabajo al estilo Siglo 20.

Optar por una de estas nuevas motonetas o bicis en vez de un un coche convencional reducirá en forma dramática tu huella de carbón, pero las versiones futuras prometen ser aun meas "verdes". Las baterías de plomo-ácido que usan la mayoría de los modelos actuales pronto serán substituidas por variedades más verdes y más eficientes, las de ion de litio y cinc de níquel siendo dos de los formatos más prometedores. Estas baterías innovadoras harán que los vehículos cuesten más, por lo menos inicialmente, pero también reducirán el peso de la bici perceptiblemente y proporcionarán mucho más distancia por carga. Y eGO está trabajando en un modelo con un pequeño panel solar detrás del asiento para prolongar el alcance de la velo una vez que su carga eléctrica comience a descargarse.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses Tri-Rail goes green on biodiesel.](#)

Tri-Rail se suma a los verdes

By Pedro Cortés

Diario Las Americas, Thursday, October 30, 2008

Tri-Rail está usando biodiesel en sus locomotoras como parte del movimiento nacional para fuentes alternas de energía y reducir la contaminación.

Así Tri-Rail pasa a ser un ferrocarril suburbano pionero en el uso del biodiesel, en este caso aceite de palma o de soya, según las disponibilidades,

El director de operaciones de la empresa, Brad Barkman, dijo que el biodiesel cuesta de entre 10 y 30 centavos por galón menos que el diesel, pero su eficiencia es 7 por ciento menor.

Si bien el biodiesel puede ser usado en locomotoras aproximadamente el 20 por ciento de los trenes del sistema, aquellos en los cuales los motores son parte de los vagones de pasajeros, continuarán usando diesel a fin de no anular las garantías.

Al partir el primer tren con segundo tanque, que lleva biodiesel, el jefe de la Administración Federal del Tránsito, dijo que el cambio de combustibles es importante para proteger el medio ambiente y para curar a la nación de su adicción al petróleo extranjero.

Agregó que “estamos por transferir al exterior un trillón de dólares, Se irán en humo del diesel y se van a otros países”.

Tri-Rail ha estado usando una mezcla de 80 por ciento biodiesel y 20 por ciento diesel.

Según el Departamento Federal de Energía, el biodiesel produce un 43 por ciento menos de monóxido de carbono, 56 por ciento menos hidrocarburos, 55 por ciento menos hollín y 90 por ciento menos toxinas aéreas que el diesel.

Tri-Rail ha estado creciendo como medio de transporte, cada vez con más pasajeros pero, a la vez, ha estado aumentando la incertidumbre económica.

La Legislatura en Tallahassee nuevamente este año no ha establecido una fuente regular de ingresos para suplementar lo que se recada con los boletos. De esta manera la carga financiera cae sobre los tres condados que financian el servicio, Miami-Dade, Broward y Palm Beach, todos ellos apremiados por problemas económicos.

La ley establece que cada uno tiene que aportar anualmente \$15 millones.

Todos ellos han cortado este año sus contribuciones en un 10 por ciento y Palm Beach ha advertido que el año próximo no continuará financiado al ferrocarril al nivel actual.