

## **Lawn mower trade-in offered**

Lodi News Sentinel, Tuesday, April 28, 2009

The Valley Air District is offering a lawn mower trade-in program for San Joaquin Valley residents.

People in the market for a new lawn mower can trade in their gasoline-powered lawn mower for an emissions-free, cordless electric mower at a fraction of the regular price, according to air district officials.

The Neuton CE5 14-inch mower and CE6 19-inch mower are much lighter, quieter, cleaner, easier and less expensive to use than your polluting gas mower, according to Valley Air.

Residents may request a program voucher while supplies last by calling or e-mailing the air district. Include your name, address, phone number and county of residence.

For more information, call 557-6400, send an e-mail to [public.education@valleyair.org](mailto:public.education@valleyair.org) or visit [www.valleyair.org/news/2009%20CGYM%20web%20page%20&%20flyer.pdf](http://www.valleyair.org/news/2009%20CGYM%20web%20page%20&%20flyer.pdf) and [www.neutonpower.com/CHPCContent/aqi/sjv\\_info/index/html](http://www.neutonpower.com/CHPCContent/aqi/sjv_info/index/html).

## **City gets 301 letters on both sides of building Wal-Mart distribution center in Merced**

**Support, opposition, questions come in at comment deadline.**

By Scott Jason

Merced Sun-Star, Tuesday, April 28, 2009

The first round for public comment on the proposed Wal-Mart distribution center concluded Monday, with the city receiving 301 letters.

The 90-day comment period yielded a mix of support, oppositions and questions on how the project will forever change Merced's landscape.

A final tally for support-versus-opposition was unavailable Monday evening. Two weeks ago, distribution center proponents had been outnumbering opponents by nearly a nine-to-one ratio. About 50 letters had been submitted at that time.

However, during a Merced Alliance for Responsible Growth meeting last week opponents urged about 75 people to write letters to the city before time ran out.

Supporters trumpet the 1,200 full-time jobs that Wal-Mart pledges to create. Opponents say they come at a cost of congested roads and polluted air.

The deadline marks the first hurdle as the project inches closer to a vote by the City Council, which is still months away.

EDAW, the consultant that wrote the technical analysis, must now respond to all the questions and criticisms before releasing the final version of the report.

That version will go before the Planning Commission for a recommendation and to the City Council for approval or denial. Residents will have the chance to give their opinion to both boards.

It's unclear when a vote will take place, Merced planning manager Kim Espinosa explained. The timeline depends on the number of comments and their complexity.

Public agencies, such as Caltrans, Madera County, the Central California Regional Water Quality Control Board and the Native American Heritage Commission offered their thoughts on the matter.

If the project is approved, Wal-Mart looks to break ground in 2010, with construction taking about 18 months. It proposed the project in 2005.

Wal-Mart wants to build the 1.1 million-square-foot center on 230 acres between Childs and Gerard avenues in southeast Merced.

At capacity, more than 450 trucks would come and go each day. The facility would run all day and all night.

## **Opponents of Wal-Mart distribution center aligned with attorneys, environmentalists**

By Scott Jason

Merced Sun-Star, Tuesday, April 28, 3009

Opponents of the proposed Wal-Mart distribution center are working with a team of environmental experts to persuade city leaders that the project's detriments outweigh the benefits.

"I've been fighting all the battleships," Sacramento lawyer Keith Wagner said last week to a room full of residents critical of the proposal. "I'm happy to go in and take on the Death Star."

Wagner, who has worked to block supercenters in Paradise, Stockton and Concord, is working with Merced Alliance for Responsible Growth, or MARG, to critique the draft environmental impact report.

A lawyer who earned his degree from UC Davis School of Law in 2000, this is Wagner's first fight against a distribution center. Past successful Wal-Mart fights have led to judges awarding attorney fees, allowing him to keep working on such cases, he told the crowd.

"Fortunately, litigation pays," he said, adding that it's his personal goal to help people.

Wagner, hydrologist Dennis Jackson and San Francisco State University economics professor Philip King spoke to about 75 residents during a meeting Thursday at Golden Valley High School organized by MARG.

An official with MARG said the experts are not being paid for their help.

The trio, along with the residents supporting them, shows that the distribution center will remain a contentious -- and costly -- issue that could end up in court.

Merced County Jobs Coalition chairman Doug Fluetsch said he wasn't surprised by outside experts helping local opponents because anti-Wal-Mart groups do all they can to stop projects. That includes lawsuits, he said.

"It doesn't scare me," he said. "(The city) has done a lot to make sure this EIR covers everything."

If the project is approved, he said he expects a lawsuit.

Based on figures from a distribution center in Apple Valley, Fluetsch said the distribution center will add an annual yearly payroll of about \$42 million.

Wal-Mart's building permit alone will cost between \$6 million and \$7 million. It will pay about \$600,000 each year in property taxes.

"I cannot see -- looking at these numbers -- how this could hurt our community," he said.

While there were a few supporters of the project at the meeting, most seemed skeptical or fully opposed to it.

"I think I'm in the wrong place. Is everyone here against it?" Shirley Akins asked.

Tom Grave, co-chairman of Merced Alliance for Responsible Growth, explained that it was a forum to exchange ideas.

The troubled economy and the county's high unemployment rate has made it more difficult to persuade people of the seriousness of the traffic and health impacts.

"People are not seeing that as clearly because they say all we need is jobs," Grave explained Monday.

Akins listened for about an hour before leaving frustrated. She said she didn't want to walk home in the dark, but also didn't get all the answers she wanted.

"I don't even know what CEQA is," she said, referring to the acronym for the California Environmental Quality Act.

The Valley has never had good air, so she doesn't think that should be a big concern.

"I don't understand why the environment would take precedence over jobs and helping people out," she said.

The speakers explained their problems with the project and questioned its benefits.

King, who's studied urban decay, said the distribution center will result in more Wal-Mart supercenters popping up across the Valley, which will hurt other retailers.

The food sold in supercenters usually causes two large grocery stores to close, he asserted.

"Merced can be a great place to live," he said. "Don't mess it up, frankly."

King, who has a Ph.D. from Cornell University, said many of the jobs created wouldn't go to Merced residents. Some workers could come from as far away as Livingston or Fresno, he asserted.

One resident questioned how he came to that conclusion and whether he could back it up. King replied that he'd need to gather evidence.

Mayor Pro Tem John Carlisle listened to the meeting and said afterward that he makes a point to hear from both sides of the issue. He was the only council member there.

"People should look at both sides before they make up their minds," he said. "You shouldn't just jump to conclusions."

## **Kettleman City compensation outlined**

By Eiji Yamashita

Hanford Sentinel, Monday, April 27, 2009

A county committee tasked with negotiating with Chemical Waste Management has completed its job, coming to an agreement on benefits to be given to the Kettleman City community as a compensation for the company's landfill expansion plans.

On Tuesday, the Kings County Board of Supervisors is scheduled to accept the final report and recommendations from the Local Assessment Committee.

Chem Waste proposes to expand the existing hazardous waste landfill by 11 acres and build a new 64-acre landfill. The trash-disposal giant has said the project is necessary because it will extend the Kettleman Hills facility's hazardous waste capacity by 32 years.

First formed in 2005, the committee began meeting each month since last April to seek input from concerned residents, especially those from Kettleman City, which is 3 1/2 miles away from Chem Waste's Kettleman Hills facility.

But the process has been controversial, as opposition groups allege that the formation of the committee is unfair and illegal, calling for a total reorganization of the recommendation-making body.

Among the conditions of the agreement reached through the committee:

- Chem Waste will pay up to \$100,000 for a community health survey of Kettleman City.
- Chem Waste will pay \$552,300 to pass off the debt owed by the Kettleman City Community Services District.
- Chem Waste will pay 10 percent or up to \$150,000 toward construction of the Caltrans safe crossing project for Highway 41 in Kettleman City.
- Chem Waste will provide \$450,000 funding to the Reef Sunset School District for various outdoor facilities.

- Chem Waste will hire independent consultants to prepare [air quality](#) and water quality monitoring reports each year.

The Board of Supervisors meets at 9 a.m. Tuesday in the Board Chambers, 1400 Lacey Blvd., Hanford.

## **Two wheels rule! Cut down on both gas and doctor bills: ride a bike**

By Seth Nidever

Hanford Sentinel, Monday, April 27, 2009

Want to save money in the recession and improve your health at the same time? Ride a bicycle to work. The official California Bike Commute Week is May 11-15, but plenty of locals do it regularly, even in the blazing heat of summer.

Take Greg Tripoli. The self-employed businessman in Hanford is building an old single-speed Schwinn with a metal basket for shopping and groceries.

Tripoli regularly hops on one of his bikes for trips to ... you name it: Neighbors, friends, stores, even business meetings.

Tripoli owns several bikes for different purposes, some designed for high-speed racing and others built for more comfort.

The man is hooked.

He's put his bike on the train to Bakersfield and ridden it to business appointments there.

He estimates that 40 percent of his local transportation needs are now met on a bicycle.

"The obvious benefit is cost savings -- you don't have to pay for fuel," he said.

For Dave Lemons, the ride to his job at the Leprino East facility is a chance for a workout. He only lives three-fourths of a mile from the plant, but he usually extends his morning commute to five miles.

He said it not only costs more money to drive to work than it does to ride there, bicycling on a direct route is actually faster.

The bike commuting has parlayed into a lot more bicycle use. It's expanded into all kinds of trips around town.

Lemons has started to realize the gas savings.

"I really only use my car to go out of town," he said.

For Kings County Human Services Agency employee John Semas, it's 3.5 miles of pedaling to get to the office from his front door. He arranges a change of clothes at work.

It just seemed to make sense in recessionary times.

"The cost of gas and everything else," Semas said. "Just any way I can find to save money, and this is a good way."

But Semas also started realizing the health benefits. He lost 50 pounds in a year and a half of riding. He's noticed it help his high blood pressure, reduce doctor visits and cut down on medical expenses.

For information and tips about California Bike Commute Week, go to [www.californiabikecommute.com](http://www.californiabikecommute.com).

## **Visalia riders form a club to celebrate Vespa scooters**

By Hillary S. Meeks

Visalia Times-Delta and Tulare Advance-Register, Tuesday, April 29, 2009

When describing what it's like to ride a Vespa, Visalia resident Bob Grenier likes to use one of the company's slogans: "1,000 smiles per gallon."

Of course since these stylish motor scooters get an average of 70 miles per gallon, Vespa owners do tend to smile a lot. But it's much more than the economics and environmental value of these classic vehicles that cause riders such as Grenier to be fiercely loyal to the brand.

"Vespas are the gold standard for scooters," Grenier said.

At age 61, Grenier, pastor of Calvary Chapel Visalia, finally fulfilled a lifelong dream of owning a Vespa this year, when his son pushed him to buy it. His son, 26-year-old Robert Grenier, also bought one. And thus started the Central Cal. Vespa Club-Visalia, Ca.

The club has only two more members right now: Erik Nelson, 39, and Shua Allen, 28. When asked about the appeal of Vespas, Allen said, "What's not the appeal? I don't even know where to start."

But once the group got going, it simply came down to this: When riding a Vespa, one just soaks in the world. They are reliable, have an interesting design and can be parked just about anywhere, Allen said.

Nelson acquired his Vespa from his wife's grandfather, who had let a 1979 P200E sit in his garage for 22 years. Nelson finally persuaded the man to give him the scooter, and then he proceeded to pour more than \$3,000 into rebuilding the mechanics. He plans to spend even more on restoring the aesthetics of his Vespa.

While vintage Vespas are often sought by aficionados and can fetch high prices, new Vespas run between \$4,000 and \$7,000.

All four club members said their Vespas have become their main mode of transportation unless the weather is adverse. Allen said he's even been through periods where the Vespa was all he owned for transportation, which didn't bother the scooter enthusiast at all.

"I've seen more cities on the back of my Vespa ..." he said, before trailing off to talk about Vespa rallies.

Rallies consist of a city's Vespa club mapping out the best parts of the area and inviting other groups to visit and enjoy what that region has to offer.

The new club in Visalia hopes to host a rally here, soon.

Clubs in Fresno and Bakersfield are much larger than the fledgling one here, so Allen said the attendance could be very good.

As far as what the club does on a regular basis, it's pretty simple.

Members ride their Vespas on scenic routes, grab coffee and just enjoy everything as they scoot by it.

#### VESPA FACTS

Shua Allen is the Central Cal. Vespa Club- Visalia, Ca. authority on Vespas, as he got obsessed with the scooters culture about eight years ago. Some of his favorite facts to share about the Vespa are:

- Vespas were the first motorbikes ever made that seated two people.
- The scooters, created in 1946 in Italy post-World War II, were a way to provide inexpensive transportation for the masses and to use materials left over from the production of war machines.
- The reason Vespas were made with their signature leg shields is because, as Allen says, "The Italians are always fashionable and didn't want mud getting on their clothes."
- Scooters worked better on narrow Italian roads than cars because they took up less room.

- Vespa in Italian means "wasp," which is what creator Rinaldo Piaggio thought the scooter looked like.

## **San Francisco aims to close Mirant power plant**

By Robert Selna, staff writer

S.F. Chronicle, Tuesday, April 28, 2009

In an apparent effort to shut down the city's remaining large power plant, San Francisco City Attorney Dennis Herrera filed a lawsuit Monday claiming that the plant's owner has failed to comply with laws requiring that brick buildings be retrofitted.

The plant, located south of Mission Bay and owned by Atlanta-based Mirant Corp., is at the center of a long-running dispute involving city officials, environmentalists and state regulators over how and when it should be replaced with a cleaner power source.

In addition to its polluting smokestack, part of the 40-year-old plant runs under an expired permit allowing it to draw in millions of gallons of water per day and return heated discharge to the bay, killing fish larvae.

The facility's property also is contaminated with coal tar from 19th century gas-manufacturing operations.

According to the city attorney's office, the Mirant property includes five unoccupied unreinforced brick structures, in which masonry - instead of wood or steel - serves as the building's frame.

San Francisco approved a law in 1992 requiring owners to shore up such buildings or face fines. The city attorney's office currently has nine similar cases against building owners and 61 matters that lawyers are investigating.

But it was clear that the intent of the lawsuit filed Monday went beyond making the plant's buildings safe.

"To the list of corporate lawlessness that includes polluting our air, ground and water, we can now add Mirant's defiant refusal to address the safety risks to its own employees," Herrera said in a statement.

Mirant spokeswoman Julia Houston said the company would not comment on the litigation.

Despite legal threats from Herrera's office in December, the Regional Water Quality Board has not stopped Mirant from using the cooling system that is dangerous to wildlife. The board has allowed Mirant to operate even though the company's permit expired.

Water board officials have said they were waiting for a decision in a U.S. Supreme Court case challenging water laws and for the completion of state policies on the cooling system.

The lawsuit filed Monday alleges that Mirant is subject to penalties up to \$500 per day for each city building code violation and \$2,500 a day for breaking the state's Business and Professions Code.

Mirant is not required to clean up the coal tar pollution. That job is the responsibility of previous owner Pacific Gas and Electric Co. PG&E currently is investigating the area's offshore sediment. Chemical experts have said contamination from the property is seeping into bay mud in concentrations that are unsafe for humans and marine life.

## **EPA seeks remand of Navajo power plant permit**

By Susan Montoya Bryan, Associated Press Writer

In the Contra Costa Times, Tri-Valley Herald and other papers, Tuesday, April 28, 2009

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.—The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has asked an appeals board to allow the agency to reconsider an air permit issued last year for a planned coal-fired power plant on the Navajo Nation in northwestern New Mexico.

Regional EPA officials want to reconsider the parts of the permit for the \$3 billion Desert Rock Energy Project that were appealed by the state of New Mexico and environmentalists who were concerned about air quality, carbon dioxide emissions and violations of the Endangered Species Act.

EPA spokesman Darrin Swartz-Larson said Monday it was unclear when the Environmental Appeals Board will rule on the EPA's request, but environmentalists were already hailing the agency's motion as a big roadblock for Desert Rock.

"It's still our position that the project should not be built," said Nick Persampieri, an attorney with Earthjustice, which represents a coalition of environmental groups. "There's no demonstrated need for the project and we are hopeful that the final outcome will be that the project will not be built."

The tribe's Dine Power Authority and Houston-based Sithe Global LLC have partnered to build the 1,500-megawatt power plant on the Navajo reservation south of Farmington. They have said Desert Rock would be one of the cleanest coal-burning plants in the nation and it would generate more than \$50 million in annual revenues and create jobs on a reservation where more than half of people are unemployed. Navajo President Joe Shirley Jr. said Monday he was disappointed to learn of the EPA's move only after the motion was filed. He said he had hoped that a new administration in Washington would mean a change in the way the federal government has consulted with his tribe.

Shirley has requested a meeting with President Barack Obama to talk about Desert Rock.

"This isn't just about energy," Shirley said. "This is about sovereignty. This is about saving self. This is about the Navajo Nation regaining its independence by developing the financial wherewithal to take care of its own problems."

Jeff Holmstead, lead attorney in the fight to build Desert Rock and a former assistant administrator for air at EPA, was surprised by the EPA's action and said the agency seems to have little regard for due process or fairness.

"We are well into the appeals process, and now EPA wants the Navajo Nation and its partners to go back and start over again under different rules," he said.

If the motion to remand the permit is granted, it will be sent back to the EPA for further analysis, something that could take many months and another round of public comment.

According to the EPA motion, the agency wants to reassess the limits for particulate matter emissions and whether the plant would use the best available pollution control technology.

The agency also wants to finish consulting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service about endangered species issues and fully analyze methods for controlling hazardous emissions.

Mike Eisenfeld of the San Juan Citizens Alliance said the permit should not have been issued in the first place, but he was hopeful that EPA "will take its responsibilities seriously" under the new administration.

The environmental groups have argued that Desert Rock—which would be the third coal-fired power plant in the Four Corners region—would further degrade air quality, harm the environment and impact human health.

State officials, including Gov. Bill Richardson and Environment Secretary Ron Curry, applauded the EPA's move.

"We still have work to do to make sure that this project only moves forward with the proper environmental safeguards," Richardson said in a statement.

Shirley has said that tribal leaders would not have supported such a project if it endangered their people or residents in neighboring states.

"We're talking clean coal. We're talking carbon capture," Shirley said in a recent interview. "We want the Desert Rock power plant to be not only a model for the United States of America but for the world regarding the use of clean coal technology."

## **Obama seeks reversal of mountaintop mining rule**

By Dina Cappiello, Associated Press Writer

In the Contra Costa Times, Tri-Valley Herald and other papers, Tuesday, April 28, 2009

WASHINGTON—The Obama administration took steps Monday to reverse a last-minute Bush-era rule that allows mountaintop mining waste to be dumped near streams saying it was bad public policy.

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar said the rule didn't "pass the smell test" and he wanted a federal judge to give the Office of Surface Mining another crack at refining the so-called buffer zone rule. If a judge approves, Salazar proposed the temporary reinstatement of a 1983 regulation that would keep coal companies 100 feet away from streams unless they could prove mining wouldn't harm water quality or quantity.

Two lawsuits pending in federal court seek to block or overturn the Bush rule, which was approved the month the administration left office.

In a court filing Monday on one of the cases, Justice Department lawyers said the rule should be vacated because the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had not been consulted about its effect on threatened and endangered species. Sending the rule back to be reworked would achieve the same relief sought by the lawsuits, the filing said.

"The responsible development of our coal supplies is important to America's energy security," Salazar said in a conference call with reporters. "But as we develop these reserves we must also protect our treasured landscapes, our land, our water and our wildlife."

But environmentalists who would like to see mountaintop removal end altogether said the Interior Department would have to do more to protect waterways from mountaintop mining. Earthjustice, which represents the plaintiffs in one of the cases, said that while the lawsuit would be null and void if the judge agrees with the administration, the fight would go on to ensure the rule was enforced.

"With the explosives and bulldozers standing by, it will take tough enforcement and more rule changes and legislation to end mountaintop removal coal mining completely," said Mary Anne Hitt, a deputy director for the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign.

Mining officials responded to Monday's announcement saying it added another layer of uncertainty about the industry's ability to obtain permits and mine coal.

"The Secretary of the Interior's move to undo a seven-year rulemaking process is precipitous and will only add to the uncertainty that is delaying mining operations and jeopardizing jobs," National Mining Association Chief Executive Hal Quinn said in a statement. "We trust the Secretary of the Interior does not plan on engaging in a de facto rulemaking, thereby avoiding the transparency integral to a fair and legal regulation."

The action is the latest by the Obama administration to address mountaintop removal mining, a process in which mining companies remove vast areas to expose coal. While they are required to restore much of the land, the removal creates many tons of rocks, debris and other waste that are trucked away and then dumped into valley areas, where streams flow.

Although the rule applies nationwide, mountaintop removal operations are of special interest in Appalachia, where surface mines cover thousands of acres. An Environmental Protection Agency study estimated 400,000 acres of forest were cut and nearly 724 miles of streams buried between 1985 and 2001 by mountaintop mining.



Last month, the Environmental Protection Agency announced it was cracking down on mountaintop removal by taking a closer look at 150 to 200 permits pending before the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

On Monday, in another sign the Obama administration is targeting Bush administration environmental policies, the agency announced it was initiating a review of three rules that environmentalists and the state of New Jersey had asked the agency to reconsider but in two cases the Bush administration denied. The regulations deal with a program that ensures air quality is not worsened when industrial facilities are expanded or modified.

Kentucky Coal Association President Bill Caylor said a primary reason for the Bush administration's changes was to clarify whether the 1983 rule covered ephemeral streams that occasionally carry water.

"The original rule was clear that it did not apply to these little, small, dry ditches," Caylor said. "It helped by clarifying it because there was starting to be litigation."

Salazar said he talked to West Virginia Gov. Joe Manchin before Monday's announcement. Manchin spokesman Matt Turner said the governor invited Salazar to the state to visit a mountaintop removal mine.

"There has to be a balance and that is what he (Manchin) is looking for," Turner said. "There has to be a realistic understanding of how much energy comes from coal. We just can't instantly wear ourselves from this energy source."

Manchin complained to the administration after the EPA announced it wanted to review permits the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was considering for mountaintop removal mines in West Virginia, Kentucky and Virginia.

Associated Press Writer Brian Farkas and AP Business Writer Tim Huber contributed to this report from Charleston, W.Va.

## **Officials take aim at debris from coal mining**

### **Keeping waste out of streams is goal**

By Dina Cappiello, Associated Press

San Diego Union-Tribune, Tuesday, April 28, 2009

WASHINGTON – The Obama administration took steps yesterday to reverse a last-minute Bush-era rule that allows mountaintop-mining waste to be dumped near streams, saying it was bad public policy.

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar said the rule didn't "pass the smell test" and he wanted a federal judge to give the Office of Surface Mining another crack at refining the so-called buffer zone rule. If a judge approves, Salazar proposed the temporary reinstatement of a 1983 regulation that would keep coal companies 100 feet away from streams unless they could prove mining wouldn't harm water quality or quantity.

Two lawsuits pending in federal court seek to block or overturn the Bush rule, which was approved the month the administration left office.

In a court filing yesterday on one of the cases, Justice Department lawyers said the rule should be vacated because the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had not been consulted about its effect on threatened and endangered species. Sending the rule back to be reworked would achieve the same relief sought by the lawsuits, the filing said.

But environmentalists who would like to see mountaintop removal end altogether said the Interior Department would have to do more to protect waterways from mountaintop mining.

Mining executives didn't welcome the policy reversal, saying they would press to have the court consider their views before dismissing the two lawsuits.

"The secretary of the Interior's move to undo a seven-year rule-making process is precipitous and will only add to the uncertainty that is delaying mining operations and jeopardizing jobs," National Mining Association Chief Executive Hal Quinn said in a statement. "We trust the secretary of the Interior does not plan on engaging in a de facto rule-making, thereby avoiding the transparency integral to a fair and legal regulation."

The action is the latest by the Obama administration to address mountaintop-removal mining, a process in which mining companies remove vast areas to expose coal. While they are required to restore much of the land, the removal creates many tons of rocks, debris and other waste that are trucked away and then dumped into valley areas, where streams flow.

Mountaintop-removal operations are of special interest in Appalachia, where surface mines cover thousands of acres. An Environmental Protection Agency study estimated 400,000 acres of forest were cut and nearly 724 miles of streams buried between 1985 and 2001 by mountaintop mining.

Last month, the Environmental Protection Agency announced it was cracking down on mountaintop removal by taking a closer look at 150 to 200 permits pending before the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The announcement, which came on the same day the Environmental Protection Administration announced it was taking a second look at a handful of Bush-era rules on air pollution, shows that the Obama administration is continuing to chip away at the environmental policies of its predecessor.

The Washington Post contributed to this report.

[Letters to the L.A. Times, Tuesday, April 28, 2009:](#)

### **The road we're on**

Re "Let's get truckin'," editorial, April 24

Your editorial is on the wrong side of the road.

Today, drivers and old trucks remain in the shadows, where sharecropper-style economics cuts corners on maintenance and safety measures. Environmentalists want an overhaul of this dysfunctional system to make sure that owners of trucks are responsible for their upkeep. Without a systemic fix, today's new trucks will be tomorrow's broken-down trucks.

A more sustainable system has been adopted by the Port of Los Angeles, to the dismay of the American Trucking Assn. Industry lawyers want an injunction that would allow the dirtiest of trucks back into service.

The ports already have the dirtiest air. Let's let them have the cleanest trucks and a sustainable system.

*Martin Schlageter, Los Angeles*

*The writer is campaign director for the Coalition for Clean Air*

Given the enormous challenges that our country faces, I wonder if The Times' editorial board thinks George W. Bush is still our president.

Given what President Obama is trying to achieve for our country, the Los Angeles clean-trucks program is right on track. The deregulation mind-set has run its course and ruined our economy. Passing the buck to the little guy is so last administration.

It's time for a change. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's bold effort to fix our polluting port by creating good trucking jobs is not only welcomed but sorely needed.

*Robert Brandin, San Pedro*

Good work pointing out the attempt to hijack the truck pollution program and make it a Teamster recruiting effort. Some other major deficiencies in the plan:

The program emphasizes scrapping good trucks and replacing them with new ones at more than \$100,000 each. But old trucks could be retrofitted to meet new truck pollution standards for much less money.

What's more, about half the trucks going to the port and half the trucks leaving the port are empty. This is because trucking companies are too small to coordinate their deliveries and pickups so that every truck goes to the port with a container and leaves with one as well. Better coordination, which would not be expensive, could result in drastic reductions in traffic and pollution.

The ports have taken a laudable objective -- reducing pollution -- and turned it into a union grab bag, reducing pollution less than they might at a much higher cost than necessary.

*Marshall Kagan*

Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses the 17 representatives of the largest economies in the world and of emerging nations has concluded the climate change summit. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton sent out a message to the international community: US is dedicated in recuperating lost time, move forward in the fight against climate change, and become an active leader. For more information on this or other Spanish clips, contact Claudia Encinas at (559) 230-5851.

### **Las mayores economías concluyen la reunión sobre el cambio climático**

El Periodico de Mexico, Tuesday, April 28, 2009

Washington,(EFE).- Los representantes de las 17 economías más grandes del mundo y de países emergentes concluyen hoy una reunión sobre el cambio climático en la que comenzaron a forjar un consenso político de cara a la conferencia de Copenhague.

Estados Unidos, representado por el enviado especial para el Cambio Climático, Tod Stern, y el asesor adjunto del Consejo de Seguridad Nacional para Asuntos Económicos Internacionales, Michael Forman, presentará hoy sus conclusiones sobre el encuentro.

El llamado Foro de las Mayores Economías sobre la Energía y el Clima, fue lanzado por EU y sirve de marco para el diálogo sobre asuntos clave en materia de cambio climático y energético, crear el liderazgo necesario para lograr un resultado satisfactorio en la conferencia de Copenhague y avanzar en ideas e iniciativas concretas para fomentar las energías renovables y reducir los gases tóxicos.

La conferencia reunió a los países responsables del 75 por ciento de las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero más Dinamarca, en su capacidad de organizadora de la conferencia de Copenhague, que se celebrará en diciembre y donde se espera crear un nuevo protocolo sobre el cambio climático, así como a la ONU y a la UE.

El encuentro fue el primero de varios que tendrán lugar para preparar una reunión de líderes que tendrá lugar en julio en Italia en el marco del G-8.

En la inauguración del evento, la secretaria de Estado del país anfitrión, Hillary Clinton, envió un mensaje alentador a la comunidad internacional: Estados Unidos está decidido a recuperar el tiempo perdido, involucrarse plenamente en la lucha contra el cambio climático y ejercer un liderazgo activo.

La iniciativa impulsada por el presidente Barack Obama es similar a la que lanzó el ex presidente George W. Bush, con los mismos participantes, pero la postura es completamente distinta a la de la anterior Administración, que se negó a ratificar el Protocolo de Kioto e incluso puso en duda la existencia del cambio climático.

Clinton señaló que el calentamiento global "es un peligro claro y actual para nuestro mundo que requiere atención inmediata". "No dudamos de la urgencia o de la magnitud del problema", agregó.

La secretaria de Estado dijo que su país ha decidido actuar rápidamente para frenar el cambio climático e involucrarse plenamente en las políticas y deliberaciones sobre lo que considera una "amenaza" global que tiene un impacto regional, nacional y local.

"EU está plenamente involucrado, preparado para liderar y decidido a recuperar el tiempo perdido, tanto en casa como en el exterior", aseguró.

En el Foro participan Australia, Brasil, Canadá, China, la UE, Francia, Alemania, India, Indonesia, Italia, Japón, Corea del Sur, México, Sudáfrica, Reino Unido, Estados Unidos, Dinamarca y la ONU.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses Tula is strangled by pollution. Cases of cancer and gastrointestinal problems are reported.](#)

### **Estrangula a Tula la contaminación**

#### **Reportan casos de cáncer y problemas gastrointestinales**

Dinorath Mota, Corresponsal

El Universal, Tuesday, April 28, 2009

PACHUCA, Hgo.— Considerada la zona más contaminada del país, el corredor industrial de Tula se prepara para recibir una nueva y moderna refinería petrolera, que los grupos ecologistas prevén que sea acompañada de "tecnología verde" para que contribuya a recuperar la calidad del aire y del medio ambiente.

En Tula, ubicada 80 kilómetros al noroeste de la ciudad de México, se produce 65 veces más contaminantes que los que generan de manera conjunta Naucalpan, Tlalnepantla, Ecatepec, Nezahualcóyotl, Tultitlán, Coacalco y Huehuetoca, según reveló la Procuraduría de Protección al Ambiente del Estado de México.

De acuerdo con estudios de la Secretaría del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (Semarnat), el corredor industrial de Tula genera 99.55% de las emisiones contaminantes del estado de Hidalgo, al producir al año 681 millones 892 mil 194 toneladas métricas de 104 sustancias tóxicas.

El estudio, difundido en 2004 por el Registro de Emisiones y Transferencias de Contaminantes, de la Semarnat, indicó que en todo el estado se generaban 684 millones 964 mil 413 toneladas de sustancias tóxicas que afectaban tierra, aire y agua.

El presidente de la Asociación México sin Contaminación, Enrique Padilla, aseguró que el deterioro ambiental en la región se traduce en muerte por cáncer, problemas gastrointestinales y afecciones en vías respiratorias en muchos de los habitantes.

La razón de ello es la operación de empresas de alto impacto ambiental, y que están consideradas como las más contaminantes a nivel mundial, entre ellas la refinería Miguel Hidalgo, la termoeléctrica Francisco Pérez Ríos y la cementera cooperativa Cruz Azul.

Según Padilla, la termoeléctrica de la Comisión Federal de Electricidad (CFE) expulsa 6 millones 129 mil 92 toneladas de dióxido de carbono al año; la cementera, 990 mil 494 toneladas de contaminantes varios, además de 461 kilogramos de plomo y 141 kilos de mercurio. Por su parte, la refinería arroja 3 mil 312 toneladas dióxido de carbono, y su filial Petroquímica Básica 44 mil 400 toneladas de dióxido de carbono, 455 kilos de cianuro, 455 de níquel y 113 de plomo.

La refinería y la termoeléctrica emiten 33 veces más dióxido de azufre (SO<sub>2</sub>) que todo el Valle de México. Ambas plantas están señaladas como las más contaminantes del país, y la generadora de electricidad ocupa el segundo lugar entre las 500 empresas emisoras de SO<sub>2</sub> que operan en México, Canadá y Estados Unidos.

La refinería de Tula, en cambio, es la principal contaminante de las seis que tiene Pemex en el país, con 30% de las emisiones totales de la petrolera.

Tecnología limpia

El gobernador de Hidalgo, el priísta Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong, adelantó que con la instalación de la nueva refinería con tecnología de punta se contribuirá a limpiar la zona del deterioro ambiental; dijo que su gobierno no permitiría una inversión que dañe la salud de los hidalguenses.

Insistió en que la tecnología de última generación que se utilizará en la operación de la nueva refinería, no sólo evitará la emisión de contaminantes, sino que podrá reutilizar residuos de combustibles como el coque.

En ello coincidió el presidente de la organización México sin Contaminación, quien opinó que con la llegada de la refinería está la posibilidad de que el gobierno ponga en marcha una secretaría del medio ambiente. “Nosotros no nos oponemos a que llegue la refinería, pero que haya instituciones, como una secretaría en la materia, que garanticen la salud de los pobladores”, manifestó Padilla.

El diputado federal con licencia por la región de Tula, Fernando Moctezuma (PRI), señaló que “la tecnología verde que tendrá esta refinería permitirá que las torres de enfriamiento, las calderas y la quema de combustible sean más controladas, y con ello mejorar las expectativas de seguridad para los pobladores”.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses US acts against climate change. On Monday, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said any agreement to fight climate change must include developing nations such as India and China in their reduction of emissions.](#)

### **Actúa EU sobre cambio climático**

Associated Press

El Nuevo Herald, El Diario, Monday, April 27, 2009

*Washington*— La secretaria de Estado Hillary Rodham Clinton dijo hoy lunes que cualquier acuerdo para combatir el calentamiento global debería requerir que las naciones en desarrollo como India y China reduzcan sus emisiones.

El ex presidente George W. Bush no quiso adherirse al Protocolo de Kioto sobre el cambio climático debido a que éste no exigía a los países en desarrollo reducir sus emisiones.

En un foro sobre energía y cambio climático, Clinton dijo a los representantes de 16 de las principales economías del mundo que representan a los mayores emisores de gases de efecto invernadero que Estados Unidos trabajará incansablemente para forjar un nuevo acuerdo internacional, pero que no puede hacerlo solo.

“No tiene sentido negociar un acuerdo si no tendrá impacto práctico en la reducción de emisiones a niveles más seguros”, señaló Clinton a los participantes al inicio de la reunión de dos días. “Así que todos tenemos que hacer nuestra parte, y necesitamos ser creativos y pensar intensamente sobre lo que funcionará para que podamos lograr los resultados que esperamos”.

El presidente Barack Obama anunció en marzo el Foro de las Principales Economías sobre Energía y Clima, el cual incluye a los países responsables del 75% de las emisiones globales de gases de efecto invernadero. Su meta es preparar el terreno para lograr en diciembre un acuerdo internacional que reduzca la contaminación que modifica el clima.

En ese mes se reunirán en Copenhague los delegados de 175 países para redactar un nuevo tratado que reemplace el Protocolo de Kioto de 1997, el cual expira en el 2012. Ese protocolo requiere a 37 naciones que disminuyan sus emisiones en un total de 5% para el 2012.

Durante el gobierno de Bush, Estados Unidos se negó a ser parte del protocolo, al que calificó de injusto porque no exigía nada a las economías en rápido desarrollo como China y India.

Desde entonces, China superó a Estados Unidos como el mayor emisor de gases de efecto invernadero del mundo. Pero entre 15 y 25% de sus emisiones son generadas por la fabricación de artículos de exportación, por lo que los líderes del país asiático han dicho que quieren que los importadores, como Estados Unidos, se responsabilicen de la parte que les corresponde.

India, que junto con la Unión Europea, Rusia, China y Estados Unidos compone el grupo de las cinco naciones más contaminantes en esta materia, ha dicho que su máxima prioridad es el crecimiento económico para acabar con la pobreza al tiempo que va cambiando a energía limpia.

Clinton dijo a los líderes que es posible tener ambas cosas: economía robusta y control de gases que generan el cambio climático.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses save money and the planet. EPA offers a list of ways you can save money and have a positive impact on the environment.](#)

### **Ahorra dinero y cuida el planeta**

La Opinión, Sunday, April 26, 2009

Para aquellos que deseen ahorrar y lograr al mismo tiempo un impacto positivo en el medioambiente, la Agencia de Protección del Medioambiente (EPA) ofrece los siguientes consejos:

Considera la compra de nuevos equipos electrodomésticos. Aunque no hayas incluido en tu presupuesto la sustitución inmediata de los electrodomésticos ya existentes, cuando alguno comienza a deteriorarse, EPA aconseja sustituirlo con aquellos que llevan el sello Energy Star. La adquisición de estos equipos no sacrifica la calidad, y pueden ahorrarles a los dueños de viviendas cerca del 30% de sus costos anuales por consumo de energía.

Desconecta los equipos cuando vayas a salir de casa. Uno de los principales y más silenciosos responsables de los altos costos de consumo de energía son los electrodomésticos que se dejan conectados cuando no se están usando. Por ejemplo, las consolas de videojuegos consumen con frecuencia grandes cantidades de energía, incluso cuando no se utilizan. La desconexión de esos equipos cuando no se usan y cuando no vamos a estar en casa, se materializan potencialmente en ahorros considerables.

Repara cualquier sistema que lo necesite. Los sistemas de acondicionamiento de aire o refrigeración con escapes son altamente ineficientes, y podrían estar costando cantidades sustanciales de dinero. Un viejo calentador de agua equivale también a mayor consumo.

Examina los sistemas de acondicionamiento de aire cada primavera, antes de la llegada de la temporada veraniega. Si detectas que algunos productos que has colocado en el refrigerador o congelador no se enfrían lo suficiente, podría tratarse de un escape u otro problema que te está costando dinero. Pon atención al sistema de calefacción y acondicionamiento de aire, particularmente si tiene algunos años.

Asegúrate de que tu vivienda tenga el aislamiento térmico adecuado. Una vivienda con aislamiento térmico insuficiente le costará mucho más a la hora de poner a funcionar la calefacción o el aire acondicionado. La debida inspección, sustitución o incorporación del aislamiento en su hogar es una forma garantizada de evitar gastos innecesarios. Haga que le inspeccionen el aislamiento térmico lo antes posible, antes de que llegue el próximo invierno.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses scientist propose to store CO2 emissions underground in order to reduce the emissions in the atmosphere.](#)

### **Proponen almacenar gases de efecto invernadero bajo tierra**

By Sebastian Smith, AFP

El Nuevo Herald, Saturday, April 25, 2009

Científicos reunidos en Nueva York elogiaron los méritos de un audaz proyecto experimental consistente en capturar los gases de efecto invernadero y almacenarlos bajo tierra, para impedir que grandes contaminadores, como China y Estados Unidos, sigan dañando el clima del planeta.

El proyecto, denominado "Captura y secuestro de carbono (CCS)", está a la vanguardia de las iniciativas dirigidas a reducir las emisiones de dióxido de carbono (CO<sub>2</sub>) en la atmósfera.

Esta tecnología ya existente, pero muy poco experimentada, consiste en capturar las emisiones contaminantes de las usinas o centrales a carbón que emiten dióxido de carbono y, en lugar de dejarlo dispersarse en la atmósfera, inyectar estos gases en las profundidades de la Tierra.

A pesar de haber un gran interés, los costos elevados y las dudas que subsisten sobre la seguridad del proyecto han hecho que haya apenas unas pocas experiencias en curso. La primera central de carbón que utiliza la tecnología CCS abrió el año pasado en Alemania.

Un grupo de empresas del sector energético, investigadores y representantes del estado de Nueva York, se reunieron el martes en la Universidad de Columbia para tratar ese tema, por lo que se espera que ese estado se convierta en un pionero en la materia.

"Tenemos la oportunidad de mostrar una nueva tecnología que podría ser revolucionaria para todo el mundo", declaró en esta reunión Paul DeCotis, responsable adjunto de política energética de Nueva York.

"Nos gustaría mucho poder exportar esta tecnología al resto del mundo", agregó.

Las autoridades apoyaron una prueba de CCS en una central de carbón en Jamestown, en el norte del estado, pero se necesitarán nuevas reglamentaciones y financiamientos antes de que el proyecto pueda ser lanzado.

Los expertos reunidos en el Instituto de la Tierra de la Universidad de Columbia están convencidos de que este método puede salvar el clima del planeta, cuando las economías se vuelven cada vez más hacia el carbón como alternativa al petróleo, más barata pero considerada más contaminante.

Según Jeffrey Sachs, director del Instituto de la Tierra, el CCS será crucial para países como China y la India.

China, que construye una central de carbono por semana, superó a Estados Unidos en emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero, el 80 por ciento de los cuales está vinculado al carbón, indicó Sachs. En el caso de India, la cifra llega al 70 por ciento.

Algunos grupos de ecologistas, como Greenpeace, se interrogan sobre la utilidad del CCS, afirmando que el dinero invertido debería servir para abandonar totalmente las energías fósiles en favor de las de fuentes renovables, como la solar y la eólica.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses indigenous communities want to fight against climate change. They are asking that the emissions be reduced by 45% by 2020.](#)

### **Pueblos indígenas quieren luchar contra el cambio climático**

Julio César Rivas, EFE

La Opinión, Saturday, April 25, 2009

TORONTO, Canadá (EFE).- Los pueblos indígenas de todo el mundo reclamaron hoy a los países desarrollados que consideren sus opiniones en la lucha contra el cambio climático a la vez que les exigieron reducciones de sus emisiones del 45 por ciento para el 2020.

Tras cinco días de sesiones en la localidad estadounidense de Anchorage, en el estado de Alaska, y bajo el auspicio de la Universidad de las Naciones Unidas (ONU), unos 500 delegados de 80 países acordaron una declaración final y un plan de acción en el último día de la Cumbre de Pueblos Indígenas sobre Cambio Climático.

"La Madre Tierra ya no está en un periodo de cambio climático sino de crisis climática. Por lo tanto insistimos en el fin inmediato de la destrucción y profanación de los elementos de vida", dijeron los participantes de la Cumbre.

La declaración también pide a los países desarrollados que para el 2050 reduzcan sus emisiones de gases con efecto invernadero un 95 por ciento con respecto a las de 1990.



"Para alcanzar este objetivo, demandamos a los Estados a que trabajen para reducir la dependencia de los combustibles fósiles", señaló el punto primero de la declaración.

"Además, solicitamos una transición justa hacia fuentes y sistemas de energía renovables bajo la propiedad y control de nuestras comunidades locales, para lograr seguridad y soberanía energética".

La declaración también solicita a los países participantes en la Convención de las Naciones Unidas para el Cambio Climático (UNFCCC) que "reconozcan la importancia de nuestro conocimiento tradicional y las prácticas compartidas por los pueblos indígenas en desarrollar estrategias que respondan al cambio climático".

El documento, que será remitido a la cumbre de la ONU de diciembre en Copenhague (Dinamarca) donde se negociará un tratado que suceda al Protocolo de Kioto, señala que los pueblos indígenas están "profundamente alarmados por la aceleración de la devastación climática provocada por el desarrollo insostenible".

Una de las principales demandas de los delegados indígenas durante toda la cumbre de Anchorage ha sido su participación en futuras negociaciones sobre la lucha contra el cambio climático.

En este sentido, la cumbre solicitó a los organismos de toma de decisiones de UNFCCC que establezcan estructuras formales para la participación de los pueblos indígenas.

Y "todas las iniciativas bajo Reducción de Emisiones de Deforestación y Degradación (REDD) deben asegurar el reconocimiento e implementación de los derechos de los pueblos indígenas, incluidas la seguridad de titularidad de tierras".

Otra de las demandas de los grupos indígenas ha sido que la Organización para la Alimentación y la Agricultura de las Naciones Unidas (FAO) establezca un grupo de trabajo de pueblos indígenas "para responder a los impactos del cambio climático en la seguridad y soberanía alimentaria".

Uno de los objetivos de la cumbre ha sido unificar la voz de los entre 300 y 350 millones de personas (alrededor del 6 por ciento de la población mundial) consideradas indígenas y que están repartidas en unos 5 mil grupos distintos que existen en más de 70 países.

La presidenta de la Cumbre, Patricia Cochrane, declaró al inicio de la reunión que ésta es una respuesta a la necesidad de "encontrar un foro para que todos los pueblos indígenas se reuniesen y pudiesen hablar del cambio climático", los problemas que encaran en sus comunidades y "compartir conocimiento e información".

Cochrane añadió que el calentamiento global está alterando de forma radical la forma de vida de los indígenas en todo el mundo y que los informes que llegan de todas las regiones del mundo son alarmantes.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses Gore asks for environmental law. The project proposes to reduce the 2005 emissions level by 20% by the year 2020 and by 83% by 2050.](#)

### **Gore pide ley ambientalista**

Dina Cappiello, Associated Press  
La Opinión, Saturday, April 25, 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C.— El ex vicepresidente Al Gore, quien ganó el Premio Nóbel por sus denuncias sobre los peligros que representa para la humanidad el calentamiento global de la tierra, pidió a legisladores que superen diferencias partidistas y adopten acciones con el propósito de reducir los gases causantes del efecto invernadero, señalando que el tema del clima es el más importante que jamás haya discutido el Congreso.

Gore dijo en una audiencia de la Cámara de Representantes que un proyecto de ley del partido Demócrata que limitaría la emisión de anhídrido carbónico y de otros agentes contaminantes



vinculados al calentamiento global de la tierra resolverá de manera simultánea los problemas del clima, de la economía, y de la seguridad nacional.

"Junto con el resto de la humanidad, enfrentamos la sombría y creciente amenaza de la crisis climática", dijo Gore. Añadió que el Congreso debe actuar "para restablecer el liderazgo de Estados Unidos en el mundo y comenzar, finalmente, a resolver la crisis del clima".

Gore dijo ante el comité de energía y comercio de la Cámara de Representantes que el proyecto de ley es "uno de los más importantes jamás introducidos ante el Congreso". El proyecto propone reducir los gases causantes del efecto invernadero en un 20% de los niveles de 2005 para el 2020, y en un 83% para mediados del siglo. También exige a las empresas de servicios públicos producir para el 2025 una cuarta parte de su electricidad en base a energía renovable.

Gore habló luego de tres días de audiencias en que algunos expertos, republicanos y demócratas moderados, expresaron temores de que el proyecto de ley aumentaría los precios de la energía.

El ex vicepresidente norteamericano rechazó que exista conflicto alguno entre el control del cambio climático y el bienestar económico. Pero también pidió a los legisladores que adopten provisiones para proteger a personas que enfrentarán problemas como resultado de la aprobación de la ley. Entre ellas, mencionó a empleados de industrias que usan fuentes tradicionales de energía, y que podrían perder sus empleos, y aquellos que enfrentan un alza en las tarifas eléctricas.