

## Scorching heat expected in Valley over weekend

By Marty Burleson

Visalia Times-Delta and Tulare Advance-Register, Saturday, June 27, 2009

The high-pressure system responsible for a Midwest heat wave has merged, above California, with a second system from the Pacific.

The expected result: sinking, warming air and a spike in electricity bills.

"The AC definitely will be running more," said Cal Sisto, consulting meteorologist with Cal Sisto Weather Services.

National Weather Service forecasters are calling for the highest summer temperatures so far: 103 on Saturday and 104 on Sunday. Scott Borgioli, meteorologist for WeatherAg, is calling for a Sunday high of 106.

The Visalia Transit Center has been designated a cooling center, open to the community from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. through Monday.

"The only means of escape will be to get to a pretty good elevation in the Sierra or out to the coast," Sisto said.

No records are expected to be broken. While normal end-of-June temperatures are in the low 90s, the record highs through June 30 are 108 and 110, Borgioli reported.

Low temperatures should be in the upper 60s.

Triple-digit highs are expected throughout next week. There's a possibility of slightly lower temperatures upper 90s ' for the July Fourth weekend, Borgioli said.

Health officials warn that children and senior citizens are particularly vulnerable when temperatures soar. In addition, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District projects that air quality next week will fall under its "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" category and could drop to the "Unhealthy" level, which means possible breathing or health problems for everyone.

Pets and other animals also should be closely monitored during the coming heat wave, said Lena Cooper, kennel supervisor for the Valley Oak Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

"People tend to forget about pets," she said. "A lot of animals come in and their owners say, 'My animal had heat stroke' or 'My animal passed away.' "

Some pet-care tips from the SPCA:

- Be certain outdoor pets have access to fresh, clean water at all times.›
- Secure plastic water bowls, never metal, to the ground so your pet can't accidentally tip them over. You can dig a small round hole and place the water bowls inside.
- Ensure that your pet has access to shade at all times of the day.
- Your dog might be in the shade when you leave for work, but the sunlight moves throughout the day. Don't allow your pet to be stranded in the scorching sun.
- If your pet is overcome by heat, use cool not cold water to cool him down and immediately contact your veterinarian.
- If you run or jog with your dog, take frequent water breaks for yourself and your dog. Try to do your running/jogging during the earlier morning hours.
- Remember that asphalt and concrete get hot quickly. You have rubber soles on your feet; your dog does not. On hot days, leave your dog at home.
- When the weather is dangerously hot, keep pets inside.

Additional Facts

The forecast

- Saturday: 103
- Sunday: 104
- Monday: 104
- Tuesday: 101
- Wednesday: 100
- Thursday: 100
- Friday: 100

Source: National Weather Service

## **GET orders study to figure out how to best serve future bus riders**

BY JOHN COX, Californian staff writer

Bakersfield Californian, Saturday, June 27, 2009

Bakersfield's public transit system simply cannot serve everybody, so it's not going to try any longer.

"We just can't do that cost-effectively," the CEO of Golden Empire Transit, Karen King, conceded Thursday in an interview at the agency's bustling downtown hub.

Don't get her wrong: King's not giving up, just refocusing on what GET can and should do best.

So, in an effort to reinforce its relevance while also influencing public policy-makers on issues as far-reaching as housing density and air pollution, GET is teaming up with the Kern Council of Governments to order a study of local public transit.

The \$300,000 study is about to go out to bid, and could take up to two years to produce. It is expected to contain recommendations for immediate action, as well as suggestions for measures to be taken in five-year increments over the next 25 years.

Much of the idea is to determine how GET can best serve the people it considers most likely to use the service in the foreseeable future: commuters, students, environmentally minded travelers and people with limited access to cars.

Plans for the study come at a time of optimism at GET.

The agency recently received \$8.2 million as part of the federal economic stimulus. And its year-over-year ridership numbers are up 29 percent through May, thanks partly to commuting patterns that still reflect, to some degree, last year's fast increase in fuel prices.

Also, GET is riding high from a successful public-private partnership that created a commuter route between Bakersfield and the IKEA facility at the foot of The Grapevine. King said she hopes to see more projects like it.

### **Gaining influence**

Beyond that, GET's clout among other public agencies may be on the rise. A new anti-sprawl law gives public transit agencies a seat at regional planning discussions, while a separate law aimed at curbing global climate change requires widespread shifts that may encourage the use of public transit.

In the past, public transit has not been a focus of local government, GET Chairwoman Patricia Norris said.

But now, as city and county officials take a fresh look at metropolitan Bakersfield's master plan, King said GET aims to play a more influential role -- especially on the topic of growth, which she said cannot be stopped but can be planned for wisely.

"Part of what we're hoping is that (the study) will capture the attention and the imagination of policy-makers in the Bakersfield area," she said.

One likely outcome of the study, King said, is a reordering of GET's bus routes, which have not been overhauled since the mid-1980s. She hopes that any such change will result in faster service, and that it will reflect population growth trends.

GET's funding partner for the study, the council of governments, has essentially the same goal: greater efficiency and higher speed.

"The problem is, it takes (commuters) three hours under the current routing system" to get to their destination, the council's administrative analyst, Robert Phipps, said. "That's a disincentive."

Agency Vice Chairman Howard Silver said he anticipates that the study will lead not only to more cooperation with businesses in the area, but also better service for GET riders.

"I hope to be able to see in the not-too-distant future ... a system double the size that we have now that can really make a difference to the citizens we see in the community," Silver said.

## **A climate change for Tracy growth**

by Eric Firpo/ TP staff

Tracy Press, Saturday, June 27, 2009

The threat of global warming is going to change how Tracy grows in the future.

It's too early to say what those changes will look like exactly, and what global warming will ultimately mean for development.

But it's not too early to state that Tracy and other cities are coming under intense pressure to move away "from 'business as usual' and toward a [low-carbon future](#)," as Attorney General Edmund G. Brown said in a state document describing how cities must aim to cut greenhouse gases at the very earliest stages of planning for growth.

Brown's office, in fact, recently made an example of Stockton, threatening last year to join a Sierra Club lawsuit against the city over changes to its general plan, changes that state officials believed veered from new laws that mandate big cuts to greenhouse gas emissions.

Brown and others in his office agreed with the Sierra Club that Stockton's proposed changes to its general plan would have failed to adequately reduce carbon emissions. The city settled with the state's justice department in September 2008.

Now, as Tracy tries to change its own general plan, it faces demands from the Center for Biological Diversity, which this month filed 92 pages of comments from attorney Jonathan Evans.

Evans lists dozens and dozens of shortcomings with changes Tracy wants to make to its general plan, which aims to lay the groundwork for growth over 10 years instead of 30 and shrink the amount of land that might be developed in the future.

But it still leaves thousands of acres slated for sprawling growth that the center argues falls far short of new requirements to cut greenhouse gases, save water and energy, and shrink commuter miles, to name a few.

Among many suggestions, the center urges the city to embrace "smart growth," building up instead of out.

Tracy and other cities may look to Stockton's settlement agreement with Brown to see what might be acceptable.

Stockton had to come up with a "climate action plan" that forces the city to monitor greenhouse gas emissions and set a target for cuts.

Since the settlement, Stockton has set an interim target to reduce its emissions 28 percent by 2020, roughly the same as the state's 29 percent target.

A "climate action plan" advisory committee has met once a month since January, said Barbara Berlin, deputy director for community development and planning in Stockton.

The city also must find a way to have people drive less, including commuters, and come up with green building techniques for the Stockton City Council to adopt, Berlin said.

Stockton is also required to come up with ideas about how to retrofit city buildings to lessen their carbon footprint and to find and plug holes in the city's public transit system. That's in addition to balancing sprawl and "infill" development.

Some requirements must be finished by an October deadline that Stockton will almost certainly ask to push back, Berlin said.

And Stockton must make the changes at a time when the city faces a \$45 million fiscal hole because of a gaping budget deficit.

"Tough stuff," said Berlin, whose last day on the job is Tuesday because she was laid off. "Much of what we are required to do is in our general plan, without the timelines. That's the difficulty."

Tracy is still trying to figure out how it will respond to comments by the center, said senior planner Victoria Lombardo.

But for a while now, the city has seen greenhouse-cutting laws and regulations coming, and several months ago talked about teaming up with the state's department of conservation and a company called Town Green.

Tracy could be a sort of testing ground for cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and it could get money from the state for doing so.

The Tracy City Council didn't jump at the chance when plans were presented last year, but that was before Stockton's settlement with the state and the ominous comments by the center.

"What that might do is accelerate the approach we're moving on," said Andrew Malik, the head of the city's planning and engineering department.

### **Smoke thins, but air remains unhealthy**

Sacramento Bee, Sunday, Jun. 29, 2008

The blanket of [smoke](#) hanging over the Sacramento Valley thinned a bit today, but officials continued to caution against breathing too deeply.

The outdoor air remains unhealthy, they said, especially for the young and old and people with respiratory or other health problems.

That said, Sunday was an improvement as mild temperatures and calmer winds helped firefighters make progress on the more than 1,000 wildfires burning across the state, many ignited by lightning strikes.

"This is pretty much the clearest day we've had in six days," said Jamie Arno, a spokeswoman for the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality District.

Smoke from fires has produced some of the worst air quality in a decade for the Sacramento region, canceling sports events, outdoor get-togethers and leading some to wear breathing masks.

"Our advice is: If you can see or smell smoke, get out of it and go inside," Arno said.

### **CSUS receives federal stimulus funds for research**

By Bill Lindelof

Sacramento Bee, Saturday, Jun. 27, 2009

Sacramento State has received another \$332,000 in federal stimulus funds, which will be used for research and planning.

About \$258,000 of the funding will go for study of an advanced way to sample [hydrocarbon emissions](#) from vegetation, paying for one graduate student researcher and an undergraduate.

The remainder will go to provide funds to create training programs for math and science teachers.

An \$18,000 award received earlier this month supplemented a grant to study sugar-based molecules that potentially could be used to fight viruses such as HIV.

Federal money meant to stimulate the nation's economy includes \$33 million to create paid research opportunities this summer and next for college and high school students and science teachers nationwide, according to the university.

## **State leads the way in climate-change rules**

David R. Baker, Matthew B. Stannard, staff writers  
S.F. Chronicle, Sunday, June 28, 2009

When California passed sweeping laws to fight global warming nearly three years ago, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and other state politicians hoped the move would force a reluctant federal government to act.

They got their wish.

The landmark climate-change bill approved Friday by the House of Representatives copies whole chapters from California's global warming playbook. Its limits on greenhouse gas emissions are similar to those in the state. So is the method for cutting emissions, a complex system called cap and trade.

In addition, the bill's emphasis on energy efficiency, especially in new buildings, is pure California, and its limits on new coal-burning power plants parallel California's.

"California's fingerprints are all over it," said Carl Zichella, regional director for the Sierra Club. "You look at the major components of this legislation and you see the leadership California has provided over the last eight years."

It's no accident. Los Angeles Democratic Rep. Henry Waxman co-wrote the bill. San Francisco's Nancy Pelosi, the House speaker, corralled the votes to pass it. Rep. Mary Bono Mack of Palm Springs was one of only eight Republicans to vote for the bill, sealing its victory.

"I'm sure she's been under a lot of pressure," her fellow Energy and Commerce Committee member, Rep. Jerry McNerney, D-Pleasanton, said after the vote. "(But) she has a lot of new energy technology in her district, and she understands where that can create jobs."

Critical role

McNerney, whose background is in generating wind energy, said the California congressional delegation played a critical role in the passage of the bill.

"I wouldn't want to say we were setting the agenda; we're offering a lot of leadership and doing a lot of the heavy lifting," he said. "We wouldn't have gotten this done without the delegation."

The California connection hasn't been lost on the bill's opponents, either.

"As goes California, so goes the nation," warned an editorial from the conservative Competitive Enterprise Institute. "Nowhere is this adage truer than in environmental policy, thanks to Democrats' eagerness to impose the Golden State's radical eco-agenda on all Americans."

California isn't the only state with global warming programs. Many states, tired of waiting for federal action, have drafted policies to cut carbon dioxide emissions, although California was the first to write that goal into law.

Twenty-four states are developing cap-and-trade systems, most of them working in regional blocks that cover the West, the Midwest and the Northeast. The House bill's other lead author, Rep. Ed Markey, hails from Massachusetts.

## Renewable power

Two dozen states also require their utilities to use more renewable power, setting minimum limits that electric utilities must meet or beat by specific dates. California law, for example, requires all utilities to get 20 percent of their power from renewable sources by the end of 2010.

That's the toughest such standard in the nation, illustrating another reason the federal legislation takes cues from California. In general, California has adopted regulations on greenhouse gases, renewable power and energy efficiency faster than the rest of the nation and the rules here tend to be tougher than they are elsewhere.

"We've set the highest standards, we've had the most aggressive program and we've blazed the way," Zichella said.

Many Californians who have pushed hard for federal legislation on climate change worry that the House bill is too weak. But Peter Darbee, chief executive officer of Pacific Gas and Electric Co., said the system it would create to cut greenhouse gas emissions could be honed and improved once it wins approval.

"My own view is that we need to get a basic platform in place, and it's important we do so sooner rather than later," said Darbee, who spent part of last week in Washington lobbying for the House bill. "Then when we have it in place, we can see how it works. We may see that it performs exactly as projected, which most things don't."

## Suspending some programs

If the House bill, called the American Clean Energy and Security Act, survives the Senate, it would suspend some of the state climate-change programs but leave most of them running.

For example, the bill would set a minimum requirement for the renewable power each state must use - about 15 percent by the year 2020. But states with more stringent standards, such as California, would be able to enforce their higher limits.

"It doesn't say, 'Oh, California should dial back,' " said Energy Secretary Steven Chu, the former head of Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. "It certainly will not trump the more aggressive (states)."

There is one key exception. The bill would suspend for five years all state-run cap-and-trade systems. Cap-and-trade systems set a declining limit on greenhouse gas emissions and then force companies to buy and sell credits to emit specific amounts of gas.

California plans to start a cap-and-trade system in 2012, creating a carbon dioxide market that would include six other Western states and four Canadian provinces. Mary Nichols, head of the California agency charged with creating the market, said the state would push forward despite the federal bill. That way, California and its neighbors may be able to influence the rules of the proposed federal carbon market.

"For the time being, it's extremely important for all concerned that we continue to work on these issues because we've already seen how much our willingness to get out there and address these issues has benefited the nation as a whole," said Nichols, who chairs the California Air Resources Board.

## Different goals

As outlined in the House bill, the federal cap-and-trade system would cut greenhouse gas emissions 17 percent from 2005's levels by the year 2020, while California's proposed system would cut roughly 15 percent.

By 2050, the federal system would slash emissions more than 80 percent, compared with 83 percent under California's system.

There are other similarities. The House bill would require new buildings to be 30 percent more energy-efficient in 2012 and 50 percent more efficient by 2016. California has set, and continuously tightened, energy-efficiency standards for new buildings since the 1970s.

Under the federal plan, strict emission limits would be placed on new power plants burning coal. By 2020, all new coal plants would have to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 65 percent. From now to 2020, new coal plants would have to slash their emissions by 50 percent. Coal plants would not be able to comply with such limits without capturing emissions and storing them underground, experts say.

#### Stricter rules

California, by comparison, simply forbids new coal plants unless they reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to the level of a power plant burning natural gas.

Perhaps most critically, the House bill would not prevent states from exploring other ways to fight climate change, allowing them to continue innovating.

"This is the bright spot ... this bill does not take away their authority to impose regulations or policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions," said Danielle Fugere, Western Regional Program Director of Friends of the Earth, an environmental group that opposed the bill as too weak. "You'll see continued motion in the East Coast and the West Coast."

### **Farmers cut cows' emissions**

By Lisa Rathke

The Associated Press

Modesto Bee, Friday, June 26, 2009

COVENTRY, Vt. — Vermont dairy farmers Tim Maikshilo and Kristen Dellert, mindful of shrinking their carbon footprint, have changed their cows' diet to [reduce the amount of gas](#) the animals burp — dairy cows' contribution to global warming.

Coventry Valley Farm is one of 15 Vermont farms working with Stonyfield Farm Inc., whose yogurt is made with their organic milk, to reduce the cows' intestinal methane by feeding them flaxseed, alfalfa and grasses high in Omega 3 fatty acids. The gas cows belch is the dairy industry's biggest greenhouse gas contributor, research shows, most of it emitted from the front and not the back end of the cow.

"I just figured a cow was a cow and they were going to do whatever they were going to do in terms of cow things for gas," Dellert said. "It was pretty shocking to me that just being organic wasn't enough, actually."

The dairy industry contributes about 2 percent to the country's total greenhouse gas production, said Rick Naczi, a vice president at Rosemont, Ill.-based Dairy Management Inc., which funds research and promotes dairy products. Most of it comes from the cow, the rest from growing feed crops for the cattle to processing and transporting the milk.

To satisfy consumers' demands for sustainable production, the DMI's Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy is looking at everything from growing feed crops to trucking milk to reduce the industry's greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent by 2020. That would be the equivalent of removing about 1.25 million cars from U.S. roads every year, said Naczi, who manages the program.

One way is by feeding cows alfalfa, flax and grasses, all high in Omega 3s, instead of corn or soy, said Nancy Hirschberg, head of Stonyfield's Greener Cow Project. The feed rebalances the cows' rumen, the first stomach of ruminants, and cuts down on gas, she said. Another way is to change the bacteria in a cow's rumen, Naczi said.

The idea of regulating cow burps has drawn derision at times in the Northern San Joaquin Valley. One letter to the editor of The Modesto Bee in 2005 called it "idiotic, illogical and patently stupid."

Yet diet changes have been suggested by the California Air Resources Board as a way to comply with its new rules on reducing greenhouse gases. This could be a challenge for many dairy farmers, who consider corn a key part of producing milk at reasonable cost.

Since January, Coventry Valley Farm has reduced its cows' belches by 13 percent. At another farm, they've gone down 18 percent.

Maikshilo and Dellert also have noticed a difference in their cows. The coats of the black-and-white Holsteins and brown Jerseys are shinier and they've had fewer foot problems and no stomach ailments, they say.

So far, it hasn't cost them any more for their custom-made grain, which the cows only get in the winter. Now they're out grazing on grass in the pasture, getting as many Omega 3s. And the vet bills have gone down.

It's a win-win for farmers, Naczi said.

## **Obama pushes Senate to act on climate measure**

By CHARLES BABINGTON Associated Press Writer

Modesto Bee, Saturday, June 27, 2009 11:02:04 PM

WASHINGTON -- ] Hailing the House, President Barack Obama put pressure on senators Saturday to follow its lead and pass legislation to [limit greenhouse gas emissions](#), helping usher the U.S. into a new age of energy efficiency.

"Now my call to every senator, as well as to every American, is this: We cannot be afraid of the future. And we must not be prisoners of the past," the president said in his weekly radio and Internet address. "Don't believe the misinformation out there that suggests there is somehow a contradiction between investing in clean energy and economic growth. It's just not true."

The legislation, which the House narrowly approved Friday night, would place the first national limits on emissions of greenhouse gases from major sources - such as power plants, factories and oil refineries - to reduce the gases linked to global climate change. It would also start moving the U.S. away from fossil fuels and toward cleaner power sources, such as geothermal, wind, solar and more nuclear generators.

The potential impact on people's daily lives is great. If the proposal, which faces an uncertain fate in the Senate, were to become law, it could make it more expensive for people to heat, cool and light their homes; mean more smaller, fuel efficient and hybrid electric cars; and create more "green" jobs, or environmentally friendly ones. Windmills and solar panels might replace smokestacks.

The complex bill, would require the U.S. to reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions by 17 percent from 2005 levels by 2020 and by 83 percent by midcentury.

Opponents complain about the costs and say some industries will simply move their operations and jobs out of the U.S. to countries that don't control greenhouse-gas emissions.

House Democratic leaders said the bill helped accomplish one of Obama's campaign promises and would make the U.S. a leader in international efforts to address climate change when negotiations take place in Denmark this year.

"We passed transformational legislation, which will take us into the future," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., after the 219-212 vote.

Success will be tougher in the Senate. Majority Leader Harry Reid says he wants to take up the legislation by the fall. Sixty votes will be needed to overcome any Republican filibuster.

The "razor-thin vote in the House spells doom in the Senate," said Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla.

The White House and congressional Democrats argued the bill would create millions of green jobs as the nation shifts to greater reliance on renewable energy sources such as wind and solar and development of more fuel-efficient vehicles - and away from use of fossil fuels such as oil, gas and coal.

Republicans saw it differently.



This "amounts to the largest tax increase in American history under the guise of climate change," declared Rep. Mike Pence, R-Ind.

In the Republicans' weekly radio and Internet address, House GOP leader John Boehner of Ohio said, "By imposing a tax on every American who drives a car or flips on a light switch, this plan will drive up the prices for food, gasoline and electricity."

But Obama said the measure would cost the average American about the price of a postage stamp per day.

## **Landmark climate bill squeaks through**

Carolyn Lochhead, Chronicle Washington Bureau  
S.F. Chronicle, Saturday, June 27, 2009

Washington - -- House Speaker Nancy Pelosi spoke time and again of preserving "God's beautiful creation" as she mustered all the skills she learned, at her father's knee in Baltimore and in San Francisco's liberal salons, to muscle sweeping climate change legislation to narrow passage Friday.

Pushing for the vote while uncertain she would win it was the highest-stakes decision of the San Francisco Democrat's career. President Obama, joined by former Vice President and greenhouse guru Al Gore, worked the phones to woo the backing of reluctant Democrats from coal states, farm states, manufacturing states and poor states.

Even German Chancellor Angela Merkel weighed in from the hallway off the speaker's balcony, thanking "dear Nancy" for overseeing what Merkel called a sea change in U.S. policy on climate change.

For all its muddy compromises, and those to come in the more conservative Senate, the climate legislation would begin to tilt the equation of energy policy in the United States, capping greenhouse gas emissions

for the first time, boosting production of renewable electricity, investing in clean-energy technology and attempting to loosen the vise grip that foreign oil producers hold on the nation's economic and foreign policy.

Tauscher stays

The 219-212 vote was so close that Walnut Creek Democrat Ellen Tauscher, confirmed by the Senate the night before as the nation's top arms control official, delayed her resignation until after passage. Tauscher spent much of the day presiding over the historic vote, fending off GOP delay tactics and taking an emotional moment to bid farewell to her colleagues and announce her wedding today.

Tauscher was late to her pre-nuptial dinner after Republican leader John Boehner of Ohio staged what looked like an old-fashioned Senate filibuster, using his privileges as a leader to spend more than an hour ridiculing page after page of the bill and delaying the final vote until well into the evening.

When he relinquished the floor, Pelosi gave a fist pump. "No matter how long Congress wants to talk about it," she said, "we cannot put off the future."

Still, her decision to seize a brief window before the July 4 recess to push through the contentious legislation could leave Democrats at risk in next year's midterm elections. The legislation arrives as gasoline prices and unemployment are rising along with sea levels. With the economy stuck in deep recession, the promise of fresh taxes on energy, the economy's most basic input, is a big risk for Democrats and a potential opportunity for Republicans.

No guarantee

Nor is there any guarantee the legislation will clear the Senate, where failure would leave vulnerable House Democrats hanging with nothing to show for a risky vote. Such a course would

parallel the infamous BTU energy tax proposed by President Bill Clinton nearly two decades ago. That tax cleared the House by a single vote cast by a hapless Pennsylvania first-term Democrat who promptly lost her seat after the Senate buried the bill.

Senate passage will be in the hands of California Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer, an ardent proponent of cap-and-trade limits on greenhouse gases who often clashes with conservatives. Boxer plans action in her Environment and Public Works Committee by the end of July and believes she laid a path through the minefield of regional interests in a trial run on a similar bill last year that secured 54 votes, before Democrats added to their Senate majority in November's election.

'A moral issue'

Pelosi framed the legislation as a national security issue, a health issue and above all "a moral issue for us to pass on God's beautiful creation to the next generation in a responsible way."

Her opponents, including nearly every Republican and 44 Democrats, warned that the legislation is economic suicide, and the "most colossal mistake ever in the history of the United States Congress." They warned that imposing caps on carbon dioxide will raise energy prices and force more manufacturing to China and other nations that do not limit greenhouse gases while doing little to limit global warming.

The bill would raise energy costs for consumers a postage-stamp's worth a day, according to Democrats relying on estimates from the Congressional Budget Office, or by \$1,500 a year according to opponents who contend the costs are woefully underestimated.

For all the politics at play on both sides, the debate was often emotional, pitting Democrats who believe they are opening a new, clean-energy frontier for economic growth against Republicans who pleaded with waverers to "save our country" from economic ruin

"Dozens of burgeoning companies at the cutting edge of green technologies are poised for an explosion in innovation," said Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Palo Alto.

Rep. George Radanovich, R-Fresno, in a reference to oil-rich Venezuela's president, retorted: "If you like getting your oil from Hugo Chávez, you'll love getting your breakfast, lunch and dinner from him too."

Losing jobs

Democrats, some of them from the industrial Midwest, said jobs have already gone to China under GOP energy policies and reminded Republicans that former President George W. Bush bemoaned the U.S. "addiction to oil" in the same chamber.

The legislation split coastal Democrats from their newer colleagues in the more conservative interior from labor union and farm-heavy states such as Michigan and Missouri.

Working with Los Angeles Democrat Henry Waxman, the bill's chief author, Pelosi was forced to accept key compromises with farm-state Democrats led by Collin Peterson of Minnesota, the Agriculture Committee chairman Pelosi bowed to last year to enact a costly and anachronistic farm bill.

Farm groups fear that higher energy prices could feed into their fuel and fertilizer costs. Peterson won major concessions that could open a lucrative new agricultural market for carbon offsets gained through no-till farming and reforestation, as well as protection for corn-based ethanol.

In April, when Pelosi began cobbling together the fragile Democratic coalition behind carbon dioxide limits, she showed reporters a black desk statue of a coal miner, carved out of anthracite. She said it was a gift to her father, the late Rep. Thomas D'Alesandro Jr., D-Md., from a colleague in the coal-producing part of the state. Pelosi's father passed it on to her when she was elected to Congress in 1987.

She also displayed the statue to members from coal states, she said, to show them that their interests would not be ignored. In fact, Pelosi gave what many Democrats felt were overly generous emissions allowances to coal-fired electricity plants.

"We're all going down that path together, or else we can't go down that path," she said. "And we must go down that path."

Key provisions of climate and energy bill

The House legislation calls for:

**Reducing greenhouse** gases by 17 percent by 2020 and 83 percent by 2050 by allowing pollution permits to be bought and sold.

**Limiting emissions** from major industrial sources, including power plants, factories and refineries. Agricultural emissions would be exempted.

**Controlling carbon dioxide** from the burning of fossil fuels and limiting six other greenhouse gases.

**Allowing companies** to meet emission-limiting targets by investing in offset projects such as tree planting and forest protection.

**Requiring electric utilities** to produce at least 12 percent of their power from renewable sources by 2020 and save up to 8 percent in energy efficiency.

**Imposing tighter** standards on new coal-fired power plants and providing \$1 billion a year to capture carbon dioxide from such plants.

**Establishing standards** requiring new buildings to be 30 percent more energy-efficient by 2012 and 50 percent more efficient by 2016.

**Protecting consumers** from rising energy costs by giving rebates and credits to low-income households.

*Source: Associated Press*

## **House passes major energy-climate bill**

In the Hanford Sentinel, Saturday, June 27, 2009

WASHINGTON -- In a triumph for President Barack Obama, the Democratic-controlled House narrowly passed sweeping legislation Friday that calls for the nation's first limits on pollution linked to global warming and aims to usher in a new era of cleaner, yet more costly energy.

The vote was 219-212, capping months of negotiations and days of intense bargaining among Democrats. Republicans were overwhelmingly against the measure, arguing it would destroy jobs in the midst of a recession while burdening consumers with a new tax in the form of higher energy costs.

The House's action fulfilled Speaker Nancy Pelosi's vow to clear major energy legislation before July 4, and sent the measure to a highly uncertain fate in the Senate.

Obama lobbied recalcitrant Democrats by phone from the White House as the debate unfolded across several hours, and Al Gore posted a statement on his Web site saying the measure represents "an essential first step towards solving the climate crisis." The former vice president won a Nobel Peace Prize for his work drawing attention to the destructive potential of global warming.

On the House floor, Democrats hailed the legislation as historic, while Republicans said it would damage the economy without solving the nation's energy woes.

It is "the most important energy and environmental legislation in the history of our country," said Rep. Ed Markey of Massachusetts. "It sets a new course for our country, one that steers us away from foreign oil and towards a path of clean American energy."

But Rep. John Boehner, the House Republican leader, used an extraordinary one-hour speech shortly before the final vote to warn of unintended consequences in what he said was a "defining bill." He called it a "bureaucratic nightmare" that would cost jobs, depress real estate prices and put the government into parts of the economy where it now has no role.

The legislation would require the U.S. to reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions by 17 percent from 2005 levels by 2020 and by about 80 percent by mid-century. That was slightly more aggressive than Obama originally wanted, 14 percent by 2020 and the same 80 percent by mid-century.

## **Historic climate bill passes House in close vote**

By Renee Schoof and David Lightman

In the Modesto Bee, Sacramento Bee, Saturday, Jun. 27, 2009

WASHINGTON – By a narrow margin, the House of Representatives on Friday took the first legislative step in U.S. history to reduce the heat-trapping gases building up in the atmosphere and gradually shift America to cleaner sources of energy.

With strong pressure from President Barack Obama to move ahead on one of his priorities, and over the strong objections from Republicans, the House voted 219-212. Eight Republicans voted yes; 44 Democrats voted no.

The measure is still a long way from becoming law. The Senate now will work out its own version, and the results of a planned vote there this fall are uncertain.

"This is a revolution. This is a moment in history," said Rep. Ed Markey, D-Mass., one of the main authors of the bill. "This is what the American people were calling for in the election in 2008, a fundamental change that breaks our dependence on foreign oil, creates jobs and [reduces the pollution](#) we put up in the atmosphere."

Markey said the bill would put the first enforceable limits on global warming pollution, "create millions of new clean energy jobs with whole new industries with incentives to drive competition in the energy marketplace" and save Americans money by updating efficiency standards on buildings and appliances.

But Rep. John Boehner, the House Republican leader, used an extraordinary one-hour speech shortly before the final vote to warn of unintended consequences of the bill, the Associated Press reported. He called it a "bureaucratic nightmare" that would cost jobs, depress real estate prices and put the government into parts of the economy where it now has no role.

The bill was an important political test for Obama and House Democratic leaders.

Much of the House debate Friday focused on what the bill would mean for American household budgets. The mandatory reduction of emissions would raise the cost of energy from coal, oil and natural gas. However, the bill also contains many provisions that are intended to protect consumers and prevent job losses.

Money for these protections and for such efforts as training workers for new jobs in renewable energy and preventing tropical deforestation would come from the sale of permits for each ton of emissions of greenhouse gases. The number of tons of emissions allowed would decline each year starting in 2012.

Opponents said the bill would raise electricity and other prices and cost jobs. Citing a Massachusetts Institute of Technology study, Rep. Tom Price, R-Ga., said it would cost \$3,100 per household.

The study's authors, however, have said that Republicans misinterpreted their work.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office found the bill would cost the average household \$175 a year in 2020. The Environmental Protection Agency estimated a lower cost and said that the measure would lower utility bills by 7 percent because of increases in efficiency.

Democrats who supported the bill said it would result in a net increase in jobs. In addition, part of the money from emissions permit sales would go to compensate industries such as steel and paper that would be put at a competitive disadvantage.

"This bill is a tremendous opportunity to prevent a dangerous threat while creating millions of new jobs and driving new growth. It will end our dependence on foreign oil and keep us more secure," said Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Los Angeles, chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, who led efforts to craft the bill.

The cap on emissions set in the legislation would reduce them by 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020 and 83 percent below 2005 levels by 2050. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2007 said that deeper cuts would be needed to improve the odds of avoiding serious climate disruption such as rising seas and ocean acidification.

Recent studies show cuts should go beyond recommendations based on the panel's findings, said Bill Hare, a panel author and fellow at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany.

Many environmental groups supported the bill but said they'd like to strengthen it. Greenpeace USA and others, however, opposed the bill, saying it had been weakened too much and fell short of the emissions reductions needed to reduce the risk to climate.

On Friday, Obama said: "There's going to be more to do. We're not going to get there all in one fell swoop, but I'm very proud of the progress that's being made, and I think the energy bill that's being debated in the House is part of that progress."

Obama made the remarks before the vote during a press conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Merkel, Obama and other leaders of the Group of Eight industrialized nations will meet in July to discuss what actions their countries should take to improve chances for an international climate treaty in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December.

"This is, indeed, a sea change that I see," Merkel said before the vote. "This really points to the fact that the United States are very serious on climate."

## **In Close Vote, House Passes Climate Bill Measure Aims to Change Energy Use**

By Steven Mufson, David A. Fahrenthold and Paul Kane  
Washington Post, Saturday, June 27, 2009

The House narrowly passed an ambitious climate bill yesterday that would establish national limits on greenhouse gases, create a complex trading system for emission permits and provide incentives to alter how individuals and corporations use energy.

The bill passed 219 to 212 after a furious lobbying push by the White House and party leaders won over farm-state Democrats who had complained that it was too costly, and liberals who wondered if it was too watered down to work. Even after that effort, 44 Democrats voted against the legislation.

The bill, if it became law, would lead to vast changes in the ways energy is made, sold and used in the United States -- putting new costs over time on electricity from fossil fuels and directing new billions to "clean" power from sources such as the wind and the sun.

It would require U.S. emissions to decline 17 percent by 2020. To make that happen, the bill would create an economy that trades in greenhouse gases. Polluters would be required to buy "credits" to cover their emissions; Midwestern farmers, among others, could sell "offsets" for things they didn't emit; and Wall Street could turn those commodities into a new market.

Delaying the vote, Minority Leader John A. Boehner (R-Ohio) spoke for about an hour, reading long sections of a 300-page amendment unveiled at 3 a.m. yesterday.

When the bill finally passed, with eight Republicans voting yes, supporters praised it as a major milestone in the fight to slow climate change. Earlier attempts to cap emissions had stalled in Congress; this bill's surprisingly swift passage in the House marked a political victory for President Obama and Democratic leaders.

Obama had made the bill one of his two major domestic priorities, along with health-care reform. And this week he stepped in, lobbying some undecided lawmakers, playing down the costs to consumers and promoting the measure as a "jobs bill" that would create opportunities in the renewable-energy and energy-efficiency sectors.

One of the bill's co-sponsors, Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), said: "The American people wanted change in our energy and climate policy. And this is the change that the people are overwhelmingly asking for." He called it "the most important energy and environment bill in the history of our country."

The drive to regulate greenhouse gases now moves to the Senate, where passing climate legislation could prove more difficult.

House conservatives blasted the more than 1,300-page bill, saying it would add crushing costs to energy and ship millions of jobs to countries such as China that do not have climate regulations. They also said there was a lack of clarity in the bill's provision to create carbon offsets, certificates in which companies in the United States and overseas could claim credit for avoiding emissions or taking them out of the air.

"In the midst of the worst recession in a generation, this administration and this majority in Congress are prepared to pass a national energy tax," said Rep. Mike Pence (R-Ind.).

The heart of the bill is a "cap" that would lower greenhouse gas emissions to 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020 and to 83 percent below those levels by 2050. It would enforce the cap by requiring many sources of such pollution, including power plants, factories and oil refineries, to amass buyable, sellable credits equal to their emissions.

The bill's co-sponsors, House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Henry A. Waxman (D-Calif.) and Markey, rejected Obama's proposal to auction all emission allowances and use most of the revenues for tax cuts. Instead the measure would give away 85 percent of the annual emission allowances to consumers, coal-intensive manufacturers and utilities, as well as a variety of clean-energy interests, such as biofuel developers and superconductor makers. Most of those free allowances would be phased out in 10 to 20 years.

That set off a lobbying feeding frenzy, with 880 business and interest groups registered to lobby on the bill.

Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin C. Peterson (D-Minn.) won concessions giving the Agriculture Department, instead of the Environmental Protection Agency, the authority to run a program that would give offsets to farmers who use tilling techniques that would keep carbon dioxide trapped in the soil.

For many environmental groups and liberal Democrats, these compromises made yesterday's victory somewhat sour. But many said they hoped the bill could be made stronger in the Senate.

"The bill still requires the first comprehensive, national limits on global warming pollution that get tighter every year," said Daniel Lashof, of the Natural Resources Defense Council. He added that the bill's Democratic advocates "are the strongest environmental champions one can hope to have. People aren't happy about all the compromises, but you have to give them the benefit of the doubt."

Yesterday's 5 1/2 -hour floor debate featured Democratic leaders who called the bill a historic move against global warming, and Republicans who said its costs would pitch the country into economic ruin. Eight Republicans supported the legislation, a small number but a better show of GOP support than Obama received on key items such as the \$787 billion stimulus bill and a \$106 billion war-funding bill.

There were moments of unrehearsed drama: Liberal Rep. Lloyd Doggett (D-Tex.), who in the morning issued a release saying he opposed the bill because it was "too weak" and moved "billions from the public to polluters," took the floor in the afternoon to say he had changed his mind.

"I believe there is still some hope to make improvements once it gets out of the House," Doggett said. "Better to have a seat at the table to try to influence the change that is needed in this legislation."

Republicans also ridiculed Waxman's deal-making in pursuit of votes. "If you haven't made your deal yet, come on down to the floor," Rep. Joe L. Barton (R-Tex.) said. He sarcastically complimented Waxman for cutting deals in public. "It's unprecedented, but at least it's transparent," he said.

In one such instance, Democratic leaders signaled support for a \$50 million national hurricane center in the central Florida district of freshman Rep. Alan Grayson (D), who originally held out support for the legislation. Grayson voted for the measure.

And then came the fili-Boehner.

House tradition allows the speaker, the majority leader and the minority leader to ignore the usual time limits on floor speeches. So, at the end of four hours of debate, Boehner opened a binder containing the 300-page amendment.

"Don't you think the American people expect us to understand what's in this bill before we vote on it?" Boehner said, to cheers from Republicans.

He read numerous passages -- highlighting items such as credits for Fannie Mae-financed efficiency measures and plans for grants to study consumer behavior on energy use -- and offered critiques. Then, Rep. Ellen O. Tauscher (D-Calif.), who was presiding over the chamber on her final day before moving to a State Department post, said his time had expired.

## **Analysis: Climate bill may spur energy revolution**

By H. Josef Herbert, Associated Press

In the S.F. Chronicle and other papers, Saturday, June 27, 2009

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Congress has taken its first step toward an energy revolution, with the prospect of profound change for every household, business, industry and farm in the decades ahead.

It was late Friday when the House passed legislation that would, for the first time, require limits on pollution blamed for global warming — mainly carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels. Now the Senate has the chance to change the way Americans produce and use energy.

What would the country look like a decade from now if the House-passed bill — or, more likely, a water-down version — were to become the law of the land?

"It will open the door to a clean energy economy and a better future for America," President Barack Obama said Saturday.

But what does that mean to the average person?

Energy touches every corner of the economy and in countless ways can alter people's lives.

Such a law would impact how much people pay to heat, cool and light their homes (it would cost more); what automobiles they buy and drive (smaller, fuel efficient and hybrid electric); and where they will work (more "green" jobs, meaning more environmentally friendly ones).

Critics of the House bill brand it a "jobs killer." Yet it would seem more likely to shift jobs. Old, energy-intensive industries and businesses might scale back or disappear. Those green jobs would emerge, propelled by the push for nonpolluting energy sources.

That could mean making or installing solar panels, repairing wind turbines, producing energy-efficient light bulbs, working for an environmental engineering firm or waste recycler, making equipment that harnesses carbon from coal burning and churning out energy-saving washing machines or air conditioners.

Assembly line workers at factories that made gas-guzzling cars might see their future in producing the next generation of batteries or wind turbine blades — an emerging shift, though on a relatively small scale today. On Wall Street, commodity brokers would trade carbon pollution credits alongside oil futures.

Farmers would see the cost of fertilizer and electricity go up. More windmills would dot their pastures. And a new source of income could come from selling pollution credits by planting trees or changing farming methods to absorb more carbon dioxide.

Energy would cost more because it would become more expensive to produce. For the first time there would be a price on the greenhouse gas pollution created when coal, natural gas or oil are burned. Energy companies would have to pay for technologies that can capture the carbon emissions, purchase pollution allowances or shift to cleaner energy sources.

It all costs.

Investors would see a new line item on companies financial reports: the cost of carbon permits.

Some increases would be reflected in the prices of goods and services, economics say. It might mean shelling out more for a toy because plastic, a petroleum based product, is more expensive, or paying more for a house because of new efficiency requirements.

Not all the higher energy cost would show up in people's utility bills. Households, as well as business and factories — including those, for example, making plastic for toys — could use less energy, or at least use it more efficiently. The poorest of homes could get a government check as a rebate for high energy costs. That money would come from selling pollution allowances for industry.

Energy experts in government and industry say a price on carbon pollution would lead to new ways to make renewable energy less expensive, while emphasizing how people can use it more wisely.

Potential changes to how homes are built and even financed seem likely as energy efficiency is taken into account in building codes and the cost of mortgages. With the cost of energy increasing, homeowners and businesses would have greater incentive to use more energy efficient lighting, windows and insulation.

But don't think that the traditional sources of energy would disappear.

Coal, which today accounts for half the electricity produced, would continue as a major energy source, though a less polluting one, energy experts forecast. That would mean capturing the carbon released when coal is burned.

It's a technological hurdle with a complication: "not in my back yard" complaints over what to do with the billions of tons of carbon dioxide captured from power plants and pumped beneath the earth. Would people feel comfortable having it stored near or under their homes, factories and businesses?

Scientists studying climate change say carbon capture from power plants is essential if the country is to take up the challenge against global warming.

The cleaner energy economy also put nuclear energy front and center. Does the U.S. build new power plants? If so, where, and where does all the waste go? Nuclear energy makes up about one-fifth of the nation's electricity today.

The House-passed bill contains provisions to make it easier to get loan guarantees and expands the nuclear industry's access to loans for reactor construction. An Environmental Protection Agency analysis that shows modest future costs from a low-climate energy world assumes a



significant expansion of nuclear energy. The Senate could add more incentives for the nuclear industry.

The new energy world would rely more on natural gas. This abundant fossil fuel emits carbon but is relatively clean when compared with coal. But people would have to decide whether to accept new pipelines that are needed to ship the gas around the country — just as they would have to deal with the need for new power lines to move solar and wind energy to where it's needed.

## **Winners and losers emerge in climate bill**

By CHRIS KAHNAP Energy Writer

Modesto Bee, Saturday, June 27, 2009

NEW YORK -- In addition to raising energy prices, the climate legislation that's winding through Congress would create a parallel financial system with a carbon-based currency.

The House on Friday narrowly passed landmark legislation meant to [curb greenhouse gas emissions](#) and create an energy-efficient economy, voting 219-212. President Barack Obama on Saturday urged senators to follow suit.

Everyone from small farmers to nuclear energy companies would be forced to re-evaluate their place in the new order. Power plants, factories and refineries would feel the first impact if the federal government moves ahead with plans to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 17 percent from 2005 levels by 2020 and by about 80 percent near the end of the century.

The sharply debated bill's fate is unclear in the Senate. A major struggle is expected with 60 votes needed to overcome a certain Republican filibuster.

How much it will affect other industries is still a matter of intense debate, though the primary winners and losers are already emerging.

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The Winners:

Solar, wind, geothermal and other renewable energy companies, including nuclear, are some of the obvious winners in a carbon economy.

In addition to the billions of federal stimulus dollars they expect to receive, those industries can expect to see a huge boost in investment as utilities and power companies are forced to cut their carbon emissions. Companies like Florida Power & Light Co., Arizona Public Service, Southern California Edison and others are already investing in solar farms and other renewable energy projects, and they'll likely spend even more to increase the mix of carbon-neutral energy sources.

Farmers also will find new ways to make money in a carbon economy. Carbon consultants like the International Carbon Bank & Exchange in Florida see huge potential in agriculture for managing carbon emissions. Farmers that till their soil differently or apply new environmental techniques can get money by cooperating with a polluter as a carbon "offset."

Owners of large tracts of forest land also will get a lot of interest from the business community. Like farmers, environmental experts see them as a huge player in the carbon economy because of their natural ability to absorb carbon.

Louis Blumberg, director of climate change for the Nature Conservancy's California chapter, envisions a system in which forest owners could make money simply by signing an agreement to cut down fewer trees for lumber.

The Nature Conservancy did just that last year with the Conservation Fund, a nonprofit agency that owns about 24,000 acres of redwood and douglas fir forest northwest of San Francisco. The groups changed the logging schedule on the property, and the fund expects to receive about \$2 million from Pacific Gas and Electric, which participates in a regional climate initiative similar to the one that the Waxman-Markey bill would create around the country.

"This is really a model of what can happen," Blumberg said. "Property owners everywhere want to figure out a way to be part of this."

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#### The Losers:

Anyone who pays an electric bill would likely feel the impact of climate legislation. Utilities will try to raise rates as they invest in cleaner-yet-more-expensive energy sources. Some have already announced plans to do so. Petroleum companies also may try to import more of their refined gas and heating oil from countries with no carbon law, which will raise costs.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office and the Environmental Protection Agency both issued estimates of how the climate bill would affect energy costs.

The CBO estimated the cost at \$175 a year for the average household. The EPA forecasts \$80 to \$110 a year.

The American Petroleum Institute disputed both estimates, saying the bill could cost the average household up to \$3,300 by 2020.

"That is more than a few postage stamps," API President Jack Gerard said in a slap at Rep. Edward Markey, D-Mass. Markey has compared new energy costs to a postage stamp per day.

API has tried to paint the bill as a job killer that would choke off efforts to pull the economy out of recession.

"While we support creating new jobs, the legislation offers an unnecessary and false choice of eliminating good jobs in the oil and natural gas industry to create green jobs," Gerard said.

Oil and gas companies have spent record amounts of money lobbying Congress recently as they try to blunt the impact of the bill.

Refiners, in particular, say the inherent costs in the legislation could shift some fuel production outside the U.S., where refiners would not be bound by its provisions.

The National Petrochemical & Refiners Association also says the legislation hurts them two different ways, by capping emissions from refineries as well as emissions from the fuels they produce. But refiners say they are not receiving enough credits.

The association says the legislation could cost U.S. refiners as much as \$58 billion a year.

Coal miners also are worried because it might cut into demand for coal, which is loaded with carbon. Mining also uses a lot of energy, so the rise in energy costs would hurt their bottom line.

The country gets about half of its electricity from coal. Some utilities that rely on coal to generate much of their electricity worried about initial versions of the legislation that they said would lead to skyrocketing rates. The current version will mean much smaller increases, they said.

Columbus, Ohio-based American Electric Power said the legislation will send rates about 25 percent higher by 2015; the initial version would have meant rate hikes of 65 percent to 75 percent.

Another big utility that relies on coal, Charlotte, N.C.-based Duke Energy, said the legislation creates regulatory certainty for an industry that spends billions on capital expenditures annually. If Congress does not act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will after the U.S. Supreme Court gave the agency authority to regulate emissions under the Clean Air Act, Jim Rogers, Duke's chairman, president and CEO, said in a letter to U.S. Rep. James Clyburn obtained by The Associated Press.

"While the EPA may have the technical expertise to create environmentally sound regulations, it lacks the explicit legislative authority to craft an environmentally sound program that minimizes costs to consumers and our economy," the letter said. "So leaving the EPA with the responsibility

to develop and implement a program that will touch every aspect of our daily lives is neither appropriate nor in the best interest of our nation."

Rogers said the initial legislation would have required consumers in states where fossil fuels make up the majority of electric generation to pay double - first to purchase the allowances to keep current generation operational and then for investments in low-carbon technology.

Wayne Leonard, chairman and president of New Orleans-based Entergy, said his company is looking at its alternatives such as biomass and expanding production from its nuclear plants to cut emissions.

John Porretto in Houston, Mark Williams in Columbus, Ohio, and Tim Huber in Charleston, W.Va., contributed to this report.

[Bakersfield Californian, Letter to the Editor, Monday, June 29, 2009:](#)

### **Make some waves**

I'm an ole Bakersfield boy now kicking back in Margaritaville. And one of my daily pleasures is to read the internet version of The Californian. Recently, I just finished Lois Henry's fine column covering the horrors of 2.5-micron particulates caused by restaurant charbroilers ("Air regulations about to grill restaurant owners," June 17).

Against the backdrop of a national fiscal mess fed, in a large part, by California's exorbitant contribution. Especially during a very intense period in which our state government is trying something refreshing: To live within its means trying to fill a \$24 billion budget shortfall without penalizing the widows and orphans.

Please tell me why we sit back quietly while permitting a group of manifestly unqualified government minions to search for fly droppings in our pepper shakers.

Lois's excellent discovery and reporting of this spectacular fiscal idiocy should cause us to quickly contact our elected representative and vehemently question the wisdom of bureaucrats' poorly thought-out actions based upon unproven or unverified data.

The restaurant business is one of the last bastions of hope for single mothers and many others trying to make ends meet during these miserable financial times. If you cause one restaurant to fold because of this unchecked idiocy, how many other innocent, hard-working people lose their jobs?

Come on, fellow Bakersfield folks, let's go out and really make some waves.

BOB HURLEY, Rosarito, Baja California

[Bakersfield Californian, Letter to the Editor, Monday, June 29, 2009:](#)

### **Treason at meeting**

I attended the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District governing board meeting on June 18. Apparently, one of the board members, Merced County Supervisor Mike Nelson, made an inappropriate remark at the last meeting and apologized profusely at the start of this meeting. However, several environmental groups and the Center for Race Poverty and the Environment did not accept this apology. A number of these folks spoke up and asked the supervisor to resign.

Approximately 100 of these folks attended the meeting in Bakersfield. A member of state Sen. Dean Florez's staff was in attendance. During the presentations, the attendees were asked to refrain from applauding about five times, but they didn't listen and were very disrespectful! After their last speaker made her presentation, they rudely left the meeting, chanting all the way out of the building. They also chastised the board because a number of the provided translation headphones didn't work.

I wanted to make a statement supporting the supervisor, but because of the noise, I could not hear the last call for comments. The senator's staff member should have assisted in quieting the crowd, but she didn't. She should be reprimanded, accordingly, or fired.

Foreign speaking folks disrespected this duly-elected official and asked for his resignation. I believe this is treason.

MIKE POLYNIAM, Bakersfield

[Letter to the Fresno Bee, Sunday, June 28, 2009:](#)

'Global warming hoax'

'Bankrupting America'

Sure wish you had published Thomas Sowell's column on the "Great Global Warming Swindle." His point that global warming deniers are treated just like holocaust deniers is especially to the point.

The media, the universities and even corporate America are on the bandwagon, and no amount of science seems to have any effect on their hysteria. Clean air and clean water are worth working for, but bankrupting America for an unjust cause could be tragic far down the road.

Roy V. Bailey

Re "Higher fuel costs may be stalling economic recovery" [story June 24]: If the only reason gasoline is 30 cents more per gallon here than the average in the other 48 states is the unique "environmentally friendly" blend only brewed here, the people of California will be just ecstatic over the future cost of other energy production after Congress passes the purely political cap-and-trade and carbon-emission programs.

We should be outraged by the actions of the Lisa Jackson-led Environmental Protection Agency stifling any dissent regarding the global warming hoax. They do not want to be impeded by mere facts and real science, President Obama's comments to the contrary: "Under my administration, the days of science taking a back seat to ideology are over." Actually, the whole point of the global warming movement is about nothing but political power and social engineering.

*Roy V. Bailey, Sanger*

[Tri-Valley Herald and Contra Costa Times Guest commentary, Saturday, June 27, 2009:](#)

**Readers' Forum: Chevron safety guarantee ensures jobs**

By Jim Rogers

Judge Barbara Zuniga's recent decision finding that the Environmental Impact Report on Chevron's hydrogen renewal project was defective will hopefully serve as a wake-up call to let Chevron know that the approval process was badly flawed.

We need the jobs and the replacement of aging, dangerous equipment and facilities, but we need ironclad safety guarantees that heavier, dirtier crude will not lead to worse air pollution.

Many studies have shown that people in polluted, congested areas are losing about a year off their life expectancy due to air pollution.

Although there are other contributors to this deadly plague besides refineries (e.g. diesel and auto exhaust), we shouldn't give a license to Chevron that would possibly result in dirtier, more lethal, air pollution for decades to come.

Chevron and environmental groups have been arguing about various highly technical measures to ensure that the project doesn't result in dirtier air. Neither side wants to see the 1,100 workers currently working on the project get laid off. Fortunately, there's a way to ensure safety and that the project can continue.

Rather than rely on mind-numbingly complicated formulas about machinery, thru-puts and grades of crude oil, there is a simpler solution.

Chevron should agree that the emissions will be measured periodically (every three or five years or so) and, if the air is dirtier, then Chevron's approval to process the heavier, dirtier crude is yanked.

A neutral party (e.g. the air board) would monitor the effect on air quality.

Critics claim that Chevron's proposed technological fixes won't successfully ensure that the air won't get worse, and Chevron's experts claim that the critics' proposed fixes won't ensure that the air won't get worse.

It is hard to find outside independent experts who will vouch for either set of proposed fixes being an absolute guarantee. But the people of Richmond have suffered enough asthma, and premature deaths from living in an area with diesels, cars and heavy industry emissions.

We deserve an absolute guarantee.

In the '90s, as a Contra Costa County supervisor, I wrote the county's Good Neighbor Ordinance, imposing strict safety requirements on quick-buck refinery operators who prioritized short-term profits by cutting corners on safety with predictable (and lethal) results. (Not coincidentally, the routine explosions and toxic clouds stopped happening once the toughest-in-the-nation Good Neighbor Ordinance was passed.)

I don't have warm fuzzy feelings about Chevron. But I do think Chevron walks the talk on safety — and they honestly believe their project's complicated set of technological fixes will avoid dirtier air.

They may well be right, but independent safety experts aren't so sure.

That's why I voted against the project when it was approved by the Richmond City Council, on a hotly contested 5-4 vote, without an ironclad safety guarantee.

It's time for both sides to get out of their foxholes and end the protracted political and legal warfare by adopting this compromise clear-air proposal.

In a deep recession, with record unemployment, we can't afford laying off 1,100 local workers, and we can't afford dirtier air.

And we don't have to have either.

*Rogers is a member of the Richmond City Council.*

[Orange County Register blog, Friday, June 26, 2009:](#)

### **OC study: Premature births linked to heavy air pollution**

posted by Pat Brennan, green living, environment editor

More premature babies are born to mothers exposed to high levels of air pollution, UC Irvine researchers say in a new study based in part on data gathered in Orange County.

Pregnant women who live in polluted areas also are at greater risk for preeclampsia, a condition involving high blood pressure that is dangerous for both the mother and her fetus, according to the study published this week in the journal, "Environmental Health Perspectives."

"You get concerned maybe if you live close to a freeway, or if you live next to a major arterial with busy traffic," said Jun Wu, a UC Irvine assistant professor in the program in public health and epidemiology and the study's lead author.

Wu and the other researchers at UCI and UCLA examined more than 81,000 records of single babies born between 1997 and 2006 in four hospitals, one in Long Beach and three in Orange County. They matched them to pollution estimates for the women's home addresses using a computer model of how pollution disperses, considering only those pollutants associated with roadway auto exhaust.

They found that for very premature births — those occurring at fewer than 30 weeks — the risk goes up 128 percent when mothers are exposed to high levels of nitrogen oxides.

Exposure to high levels of nitrogen oxides and fine particle pollution increased the risk for preeclampsia by as much as 42 percent, the study showed.

When exposure to pollution is averaged over an entire pregnancy, the risk for preeclampsia increases 11 percent for nitrogen oxides.

While other studies have shown an association between air pollution and premature birth, Wu said she was struck by the strong association for very premature births.

The researchers examined records from Anaheim Memorial, Orange Coast Memorial in Fountain Valley, and Saddleback Memorial in Laguna Hills, as well as Long Beach Memorial.

[Orange County Register blog, Friday, June 26, 2009:](#)

### **State to require sun-blocking car windows**

posted by Pat Brennan, green living, environment editor

New cars sold in California must include windshields that block or absorb the sun's rays beginning in 2012, the state Air Resources Board ruled this week.

The new regulation is meant to keep cars cooler, cutting the need for air conditioning, saving energy and reducing emissions that contribute to global warming, the agency says.

To meet the new rules, car windows will have to block 33 percent more of the sun's heat-producing rays than cars windows do today. Because the rays being blocked are in the infrared part of the spectrum, the windows would not require tinting, and will look no different from present-day car windows, said air board spokesman Stanley Young.

"It uses a very microscopic sputtering of metal particles that act as tiny invisible mirrors," Young said.

With more of the sun's heat blocked, cars interiors should be about 14 degrees cooler, SUV or pickup interiors about 12 degrees.

The reduction in use of air conditioning is expected to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 700,000 metric tons by 2020 — the equivalent of taking 140,000 vehicles off the road for a year, the agency says.

The two-step regulation requires cars sold for the first three years to block 45 percent of the sun's heat-producing energy, windshields at least 50 percent; in 2016, car windows must block 60 percent.

The agency says it will cost an average of \$70 for the first three years to comply, and \$250 after 2016.

It's one of several measures adopted by the agency to cut greenhouse gas emissions, including a low-carbon fuel standard and a requirement that smog-check and other maintenance facilities check tire pressure.

[Fresno Bee Earth Blog, Monday, June 29, 2009:](#)

### **Counting carbon**

By Mark Grossi

There's an interesting carbon calculator online that also offers a ranking of the countries around the world. Which country is No. 1 in tons per person?

I'll give you two guesses, but you're only going to need one. It's the United States with 29 tons per person for the year 2001, according to the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

The figure probably has changed in the last eight years, but did it go up or down? I'm hoping down, particularly since Americans are driving millions of miles less now because of the economy.

Australia was second with 21 tons. Canada had 20. Western Europe was close behind. As you can imagine, Asian, African and South American countries were far down the list.

[Opinion in the Modesto Bee, Sunday, June 28, 2009:](#)

## **Cap-and trade system rewards special interests**

By Andrew P. Morriss

"Cap-and-trade" sounds fabulous: those who [emit carbon dioxide](#) will have to obtain permits for their emissions. If they are able to reduce emissions cheaply, they will cut their emissions, enabling them to sell the permits they don't need to those who can't cut emissions as cheaply.

Thus, the efficient are rewarded, the environment saved. But once you read the fine print, cap-and-trade doesn't look as good.

First, for the system to be effective the permits must be worth something. Permits are valuable only if there are not enough of them available for current emissions levels.

President Barack Obama originally proposed selling the permits through an auction, but special interests have already watered the bill down to provide that 80 percent of the permits will be given to existing emitters. The same thing happened under the European Union's plan, which failed miserably. As a result of the giveaway, the desired reductions won't appear.

Let's ignore that problem and imagine Congress decides on a system that will cut emissions.

As American legislation, the cap-and-trade system applies only to American emissions, but only 22.2 percent of the world's carbon-dioxide emissions come from U.S. sources.

Since it is world emissions that potentially affect the climate, reducing just one country's emissions does little good unless worldwide emissions are cut. As major sources like China (18.4 percent), European Union (15 percent), Russia (5.6 percent), India (4.9 percent) and Japan (4.6 percent) have not yet agreed to reduce their emissions, and many developing countries' emissions are increasing as their economies grow, reducing U.S. emissions merely puts American firms at a disadvantage to their foreign competitors.

Worse, by reducing U.S. emissions before we reach an agreement with other source countries, the United States would give up its most valuable negotiating chip without getting anything in return.

Since many major emitters including China and India have shown no willingness to reduce emissions on their own, a unilateral move by the United States makes it less likely that we will be able to negotiate an effective worldwide agreement.

Even if we could get other countries to sign on, a cap-and-trade system that works will be an economic disaster because it will raise the price of everything.

Unlike many other pollutants, carbon-dioxide emissions are the product of the combustion of carbon-based energy sources such as coal, oil, wood, and natural gas. Some 98 percent of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions are energy related.

Cutting carbon-dioxide emissions thus isn't a matter of tweaking an existing process or adding a filter to a smokestack -- it requires either dramatic changes in energy production or major reductions in energy use.

For example, the federal Energy Information Administration's calculation of total system costs for land-based wind generated power turn out to be more than 50 percent greater than conventional coal or natural gas power.

Solar photovoltaic electricity costs four times the cost of power from coal or natural gas. Even if we could quickly increase wind's contribution from the 1.3 percent of electricity it generated in



2008, and reduce the percentage generated from fossil fuels from 70.9 percent, the cost of doing so would be staggering.

Yet to actually produce reduced emissions, cap-and-trade must significantly raise energy prices, and so the price of everything made using energy will go up. Such widespread price increases will likely produce both inflation and unemployment, returning us to the stagflation of the 1970s.

Cap-and-trade sounds good, but what it offers is either a chance for politicians to reward special interests or a road to economic ruin. As players in a struggling world economy, we can't afford either.

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[Opinion in the Modesto Bee, Sunday, June 28, 2009:](#)

## **Cap-and-trade will allow us to lead the clean energy industry**

By Amy F. Isaacs

The current clean-energy dividend legislation will not make U.S. businesses less competitive in the global market; on the contrary, it will secure America's place as a leader of the future of the industry.

Few pieces of legislation can have a more profound effect on the U.S. economy than the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009.

The bill will break our dangerous reliance on foreign oil, make our nation the world leader in clean energy jobs and technology, and cut down on dangerous factors which accelerate the deteriorating atmosphere. Freedom, independence and self-sufficiency are at the heart of who we are as a nation, and they should be at the heart of our strategy for energy independence.

What exactly does the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 mean for U.S. businesses? A clean energy dividend system, also referred to as cap-and-trade, could generate new funds to invest in America's future.

The clean energy dividend system would [limit carbon emissions](#) and require companies that produce or use carbon energy to buy carbon emission credits from the government or an open market.

The revenue generated by auctioning carbon allowances can be used to finance public projects and put millions of Americans back to work transforming our homes, buildings and transportation needs for new energy efficiency standards with jobs that can't be shipped overseas.

We cannot compete in the 21st century with a 20th-century mindset. Opponents of clean energy dividends argue that it would disproportionately burden the states that rely on coal for electric generation and-or energy-intensive industries like aluminum, concrete and steel.

They fail to realize, however, that this legislation is about our future and that it will create the demand for new highly marketable technologies.

Pennsylvania's Democratic Rep. Mike Doyle, who represents the Pittsburgh area, has expressed his concern that the pollution penalty could put American steel mills and cement factories at a disadvantage to overseas competitors that do not have pollution restrictions.

Does this mean we should loosen our child labor laws so that we can compete with sweatshops? No -- we should set the example and invite other nations into the clean energy cash back solution.

It also is important to remember that, if the clean energy dividend system is enforced, the manufacturing sector will have a boost of new investment and have the opportunity to supply the parts and products needed for the next frontier in American business.

The returns from the emission credits could also help to revitalize the workforce, leading to significant job creation. For example, the Federal Highway Administration estimates that every \$1



billion spent on transportation infrastructure adds up to \$6 billion in GDP and creates at least 35,000 jobs here in the United States.

The clean energy dividends will also boost the traditional American manufacturing sector to start supplying the parts and products needed for the next frontier in American business.

The United States led the world in manufacturing of the first automobile; we should lead the market again with the manufacturing of the next generation of fuel-efficient cars, energy-efficient products and safe energy technologies.

Acting now to ensure our commitment for energy independence and clean energy not only affects the air we breathe and the water our children drink, but it also positions the United States at the head of the future of the energy, manufacturing and technology debate.

We've led the world in the past, and now it's time that we lead again. Leading this debate will help American businesses. It's time we start to export energy and technology, not jobs. Industry can plan, invest and grow.

Isaacs is the national director of Americans for Democratic Action ([www.adaction.org](http://www.adaction.org)), America's largest and oldest independent liberal lobbying organization. Readers may write to her at ADA, 1625 K St. NW, Suite 210, Washington, D.C. 20006.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses Democrats receive a historic vote approval on environmental law that will open up a new era on US political energy more favorable to the environment. For more information on this or other Spanish clips, contact Claudia Encinas at \(559\) 230-5851.](#)

## **Demócratas logran aprobación de ley ambiental**

AP

La Opinión, Saturday, June 26, 2009

WASHINGTON (AP).- Los demócratas de la Cámara de Representantes ganaron el viernes una histórica votación sobre el proyecto de ley para combatir el calentamiento global y que abre una nueva etapa en una política energética de Estados Unidos más favorable al ambiente.

Los republicanos, que se opusieron, alegaron que se trataba de la mayor carga tributaria energética que hayan tenido los estadounidenses.

La votación de 217-205, aprobó el proyecto de ley, que cuenta con el respaldo de la Casa Blanca, para que sea sometido al plenario del Congreso.

Sin embargo, 30 demócratas votaron en contra, en un reflejo de las profundas divisiones que ha provocado el proyecto. Tanto los defensores de la medida como sus detractores coincidieron en que significa un mayor costo en los precios energéticos, pero hubo divergencia en el impacto que tendrá en los consumidores.

La ley impondría limitaciones, por primera vez, en la emisión del dióxido de carbono y otros gases de inversión térmica procedentes de plantas de energía, fábricas y refinerías, que son vinculados al calentamiento de la Tierra. A la vez que apartaría al país de la dependencia de combustibles de materia orgánica, como el petróleo, para reemplazarlos por otras recursos energéticos renovables y más eficientes.

El presidente Barack Obama ha convertido a la medida en prioridad máxima en su primer año de gobierno. El presidente, a la par de funcionarios de la Casa Blanca y líderes demócratas trataron de asegurar votos para su aprobación. La presidente de la Cámara de Representantes Nancy Pelosi ha jurado que logrará la aprobación de la medida antes del receso de la legislatura con motivo de las vacaciones de los legisladores por el feriado de la independencia estadounidense del 4 de julio.

En el Senado, que aún deberá debatir el proyecto, se prevé que la lucha será más intensa.

El destino del proyecto de ley en la cámara dependía de la decisión de unas docenas de demócratas, en su mayoría conservadores y moderados de distritos que ganaron por estrecho

margen y que temen las ramificaciones políticas si respaldan a la Casa Blanca y a su liderazgo en la medida.

"El proyecto de ley contiene cláusulas que protegen a los consumidores, mantiene bajos los costos, contribuye a una transición cuidadosa para la industria para una economía de energía limpia y fomenta los esfuerzos de reducir las emisiones de gases", destacó la Casa Blanca, en una declaración de respaldo al proyecto de ley.

En cambio los republicanos, que han calificado el proyecto de ley como una pesada carga tributaria energética para los estadounidenses, alegan que será un "eliminador de empleos" especialmente en partes cuya economía depende del sector energético.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses US approved environmental law against climate change in order to reduce carbon emissions.](#)

## **EU aprobó ley sobre cambio climático**

### **Busca reducir emisiones de carbono**

AFP

Univision, Saturday, June 27, 2009

WASHINGTON - La Cámara de Representantes de Estados Unidos aprobó el viernes por estrecha mayoría un histórico proyecto de ley que busca reducir las emisiones de carbono, responsables del cambio climático.

Pasará al Senado

El proyecto, una de las grandes prioridades del presidente Barack Obama, fue adoptado por una escasa mayoría de 219 votos contra 212, apenas uno más del mínimo de 218 votos necesarios para su adopción.

El texto debe ahora ser puesto a consideración del Senado, que decidió fijarse mediados de septiembre como plazo para pronunciarse al respecto.

La ley busca reducir las emisiones de CO<sub>2</sub> (dióxido de carbono), principal gas causante del efecto invernadero -origen del cambio climático-. En ese sentido, propone la creación de empleos ecológicos y disminuir la dependencia de las fuentes de energía importadas.

Luego de meses de conversaciones con los representantes de los Estados dependientes del carbón y del petróleo, y con los legisladores de estados agrícolas productores de etanol, los responsables demócratas -que aceptaron dar compensaciones- alcanzaron un acuerdo para votar el texto.

Ahorro de energía

El proyecto prevé la creación de un sistema de mercado de derechos de emisiones denominado "cap and trade", donde los derechos serán vendidos u otorgados gratuitamente para las industrias más vulnerables (acero, vidrio).

Además, los grandes proveedores de servicios para hogares deberán obtener 15 por ciento de su electricidad a partir de energías renovables (eólica, biomasa, solar, geotérmica) antes de fines de 2020. Además, se les exigirá un 5 por ciento de ahorro anual con la implementación de medidas de eficacia energética.

Según un análisis de la Agencia de medio ambiente de Estados Unidos (EPA) divulgado esta semana, la puesta en marcha del proyecto de ley costará a los hogares estadounidenses de 80 a 111 dólares por año. Para la Oficina de presupuesto del Congreso (CBO), un organismo independiente, este costo será de 175 dólares anuales.

El texto votado en la Cámara, titulado "Ley estadounidense de energía limpia y seguridad" (American Clean Energy and Security Act), tiene como objetivo lograr para 2020 una reducción de las emisiones de gases con efecto invernadero de 17 por ciento en relación al nivel de 2005, y de 83 por ciento para el año 2050.