

Judge sides with water districts on federal delta smelt plan

By The Associated Press

In the Modesto Bee, San Francisco Chronicle and other papers, Monday, Nov. 16, 2009

FRESNO, Calif. — A federal judge says the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation should have considered the environmental impacts before moving forward with a plan to protect a threatened California fish species.

The Fish and Wildlife Service rewrote its rules governing the management of the delta smelt last year. The plan caused cutbacks in the amount of freshwater that could be pumped to farms and cities south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

A group of water districts sued, saying the resulting water shortages were causing other environmental problems. They pointed to the depletion of the underground aquifer and more air pollution from fallowed farm fields.

The districts, environmentalists and federal agencies will meet in court soon to discuss how the pumps should operate while the government examines the plan's environmental impacts.

This week at the capitol

Emissions plans aired

Sacramento Bee, Monday, November 16, 2009

TODAY: The California Air Resources Board meets from 9 a.m. to noon on its plans to set an emissions cap for the state's cap-and-trade program. From 1 to 4:30 p.m., the board will discuss an updated economic analysis of AB 32, the landmark measure that requires the state to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. Both sessions are open to the public. Find them in the Sierra Hearing Room at Cal-EPA, 1001 I St., Sacramento.

Group urges gov't to invest in electric cars

By Ken Thomas - Associated Press Writer

In the Merced Sun-Star and San Francisco Chronicle, Monday, November 16, 2009

WASHINGTON -- A group of businessmen on Monday launched a new coalition to urge the federal government to make a major investment in electric transportation, pointing to electric cars as the best way to confront the nation's dependence on imported oil.

Top executives with more than a dozen companies, including Nissan Motor Co., Fedex Corp., electric utility PG&E Corp. and battery developers A123 Systems Inc. and Johnson Controls-Saft, announced the formation of the Electrification Coalition to lay the groundwork for millions of electric cars to reach U.S. highways.

Issuing a lengthy plan to electrify the nation's fleet, the coalition urged Congress to pass a series of tax credits and loan guarantees to bring 14 million electric cars to the road by 2020 and more than 100 million by 2030. The group envisions a network of electric vehicles in six to eight cities in the short term and an expansion across the country, making 75 percent of all vehicle miles traveled powered by electricity by 2040.

"There's no pie-in-the-sky here," said Frederick W. Smith, FedEx's chairman, president and CEO. "It's simply a matter of organization, a matter of will and a matter of execution."

Participants, however, acknowledged that the proposals would be expensive and would require a major commitment from Congress. The group's blueprint would cost more than \$120 billion over eight years and promote tax credits for the installation of advanced batteries, loan guarantees for the retooling of plants, and tax credits for public charging stations and home charging equipment.

"Ultimately the consumer will make the judgment about where this country goes, but from the standpoint of public policy we can set the stage for it," said Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., who joined the group for its announcement.

Nissan President and CEO Carlos Ghosn said the auto industry was working quickly to develop zero-emissions cars in response to concerns about oil security, tighter emissions requirements in the United States and elsewhere and a public thirst for alternative vehicles not tied to petroleum.

Ghosn said the world market of 600 million vehicles is expected to expand to 2.5 billion vehicles in 2050 with the growth in vehicle purchasing in developing nations such as China and India, making electric cars a must. Nissan is releasing the Leaf, an all-electric car, in limited numbers next year and plans to put the vehicle into mass-production globally in 2012.

"The time is right for electric cars - in fact the time is critical," Ghosn said.

Low-emission locomotives may boost public health

By Kari Lydersen

Washington Post Tuesday, November 17, 2009

A new crop of "ultra-low emission" short-haul locomotives could have significant public health benefits, according to rail industry officials and federal health experts, who suggest that they could help decrease the risk of cancer and heart and respiratory disease for people living near rail yards.

Switcher engines that move train cars between tracks in rail yards make up a small percentage of the trains in service nationwide. But their emissions have a disproportionate health impact, since an engine idling in a rail yard near an urban area affects far more people than one chugging across the Plains.

Railroad companies typically retire their oldest, and dirtiest, locomotives to rail yards and rarely buy new ones, industry officials say. But government incentives and pressure on state and municipal governments to meet federal air-quality standards have created a market for clean, new switcher engines.

An independent, family-run Illinois company has emerged as the industry leader in this niche.

Last Tuesday, an engineer fired up a shiny red-white-and-blue GenSet N-ViroMotive amid rusted engine blocks and jumbled train parts in the Chicago suburb of Dixmoor. After an initial puff of brown smoke, its three stacks yielded no visible sign of emissions. There was also no smell, and there was moderate noise.

The train was a stark contrast to an old, yellow locomotive the engineer had brought to life minutes earlier, spewing thick, bluish diesel fumes.

The GenSet emits up to 90 percent less nitrogen oxide and particulate matter than does a traditional engine carrying freight and passengers for short distances or operating in switch yards. It has modern pollution controls and uses three smaller engines instead of one large one, allowing the engineer to use only as much power as needed. Traditional locomotives run at full throttle even when only idling to keep warm or wait for track clearance.

Since the GenSet's emissions reduction stems largely from cutting unnecessary power usage, its efficiency diminishes over cross-country hauls, where an engine needs to run at full horsepower for long distances.

"If you're looking at a specific location, they're very useful in terms of reducing emissions," said Mike Rush, associate general counsel of the Association of American Railroads. "If you're looking at an industrywide perspective, they're helpful but only for a small percentage of locomotives."

The N-ViroMotive GenSet is made by National Railway Equipment Co. In the past few years, it has delivered about 300 GenSets to customers including the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Fifteen of the locomotives were purchased by rail company CSX, with help from federal programs to improve air quality. While the emissions reduction from these engines is still small compared with CSX's fleet of nearly 4,000 locomotives nationwide, the impact on several individual rail

yards is significant. CSX rail yards in the Bronx and North Jersey now use only GenSet locomotives, having retired four dirty, old locomotives from each facility.

The key to curbing emissions so dramatically on long-haul locomotives lies in a process known as selective catalytic reduction, says Ken Hofacker, an executive with Progress Rail Services, which also makes GenSets. SCR devices cleanse exhaust, but they are typically very large -- too large for engines that must slip through tunnels and across narrow bridges.

Rail companies have invested millions in various, incremental ways to reduce emissions on the long-haul locomotives that make up the bulk of their fleet. But without strong government incentive programs akin to "Cash for Clunkers," Hofacker doesn't think railroad companies will rush to buy new locomotives.

"People are fixing up old beaters instead of buying new ones," he said. "There will have to be government assistance to get these green technologies going. It's like a hybrid car -- it's new, it's a little different, people might be worried about repairs if something goes wrong."

Dan Walters: Port traffic bon voyage

O.C. Register, Tuesday, Nov. 17, 2009

As America's trade with the Far East – principally China – expanded massively during the 1980s and 1990s, California reaped the benefits as the gateway for both exports and imports.

With trade emerging as a major component of the state's very diverse economy, traffic and payrolls blossomed at its major ports.

California now is mired in its worst recession since the Great Depression, and international trade has been seriously damaged. Imports and exports through the state's air and sea ports, the most recent Department of Commerce data show, are running at least one-fifth below last year's already depressed levels.

Exports in September were the lowest since 2005, notes Jock O'Connell, a University of California trade analyst.

Economists who chart the state's future assume that, if and when recovery occurs, California will once again reap the benefits of international trade. But will it? It's entirely possible that California will never again see the level of international commerce that it experienced during mid-decade.

The flow of international cargo is changing in ways that may bypass California, and the state's politicians seem bent on making shipping increasingly expensive.

East Coast ports have been expanding their ability to handle waterborne shipments directly to and from Asia, without cargoes having to be transhipped by rail or truck. The route will grow even more viable in a half-decade, when a much-expanded Panama Canal begins handling much-bigger container ships.

Vancouver, British Columbia, has also boosted its cargo capacity and is offering Asian shippers direct access to the Midwest, a hotly competitive market.

Meanwhile, California politicians, especially those representing the Los Angeles-Long Beach port complex, have largely adopted the posture that ports are a nuisance, creating noise and air pollution. They have championed new fees to offset the impacts.

Just last week, Sen. Dean Florez, a Democrat who represents the San Joaquin Valley but wants to become lieutenant governor, staged a hearing at the Port of Los Angeles to air local complaints about effects of port traffic.

While paying lip service to the ports' importance, Florez declared that it's important "to ensure that those profits do not come at the expense of the health of surrounding communities."

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, meanwhile, is carrying water for the Teamsters union, trying to force independent truckers to become employees and join the union under the rubric of fighting pollution.

The politicians seemingly don't understand that California ports are in a highly competitive global market. Even a minor differential in costs, a few dollars per container, can send business and jobs away.

We simply cannot assume that we will prosper because we're Californians. Those days are gone forever.

Survey: Gov'ts see climate change as aid challenge

The Associated Press

In the Merced Sun-Star and San Francisco Chronicle, Tuesday, November 17, 2009

NAIROBI, Kenya -- A global network of aid agencies says world powers consider climate change the most significant challenge to humanitarian work.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies says rich, middle-income and poor nations expect aid agencies to face more demands caused by climate change-related emergencies such as floods.

The group's conclusion is based on a survey the federation commissioned of the G-20 nations and Kenya. Climate change got the most unprompted mentions.

World leaders will meet in Copenhagen next month for a key climate summit. President Barack Obama and other leaders have said it is unrealistic to expect the summit to complete a full treaty to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

[Merced Sun-Star Editorial, Tuesday, November 17, 2009](#)

Our View: Check the air before you light that fire

As the popular song goes, "Baby, it's cold outside."

Or, at the very least, baby, it's getting mighty chilly out there in the early mornings and evenings, as we wander through fall on our way to winter.

So, now's the perfect time to toss a few logs on the grate and curl up in front of a nice, warm fire. Right?

Well, maybe -- but only if you "Check Before You Burn."

That's the slogan the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District uses to remind us that the annual restrictions on fireplace use are in effect now through February.

Residential wood burning can pump dangerous levels of soot, ash, dust and other particulate matter into the Valley's air. That pollution in turn has serious health implications, increasing bronchitis, asthma, lung disease and other breathing problems, and raising the risk of heart attack and stroke.

To reduce the pollution, each day the air quality agency issues one of two wood-burning forecasts: "Wood Burning Prohibited" on days when the air and weather conditions are poor, and "Please Burn Cleanly" on days when the risk is lower.

On "Burning days," any and all wood burning is prohibited -- including in fireplaces, outdoor chimneys and fire pits. Exemptions are granted to homes where natural gas service is not available, or where burning solid fuel is the only source of heat. Burning on no-burn days can result in a fine.

On "Burn Cleanly" days, only dry, seasoned wood or manufactured logs should be used, to minimize pollution.

The important thing is to always "Check Before You Burn."

About 4:30 p.m. each day, the air district issues its county-by-county burning forecast for the following day. You can find it by calling (800) SMOG INFO, by logging on to

www.valleyair.org/aqinfo/WoodBurnPage.htm, or by subscribing to a daily e-mail alert at www.valleyair.org/lists/list.htm.

Or you can just look on our weather page under the headline "Fireplace status."

[Visalia Times-Delta and Tulare Advance-Register, Tuesday, Commentary, Nov. 17, 2009:](#)

UC Merced: A catalyst for Valley's prosperity

by Steve Kang

Earlier this fall, the University of California, Merced marked a major milestone as we welcomed our fifth — and by far our largest — incoming class of students. Of the 3,400 students enrolled this fall, compared with just 875 in our inaugural year, nearly 100 are from Kings and Tulare counties. These results should make everyone in the Greater Visalia area very proud.

We all benefit when the doors of higher education are opened to the future leaders of our region, our state and our nation.

While enrollment growth may be the best single measure of year-to-year progress, economic investment may be the best measure of potential long-term impact. Solid growth continues on this front as well. Since UC Merced began administrative operations in 2001, the value of construction contracts awarded to San Joaquin Valley businesses and goods and services purchased within the Valley has reached more than \$450 million. In Kings and Tulare counties alone, that number is about \$3.3 million, while the statewide total is approaching \$1 billion.

Although this growing level of investment hasn't been enough to offset the most difficult financial climate our region has seen in decades, it is clearly helping to stabilize the regional economy, create new jobs and position us well for future financial progress when the underlying state economy rebounds.

These two factors — enrollment growth and economic contribution — are fundamental to our mission as the first UC campus established in the San Joaquin Valley. They're also closely related. College-attendance rates have long been recognized as a leading indicator of future economic vitality. The Valley's chronic battle with poverty and unemployment is attributable, in part, to a level of performance on this important measure that has been well below state averages for decades.

Now, that's changing. We are thrilled to report that students from throughout the Central Valley are applying to the 10-campus UC system at a dramatically higher rate than ever before. Compared with 2004, the year before UC Merced was established, applications from Central Valley students in 2008 increased by 41 percent and admissions increased by 45 percent. These results reflect a growing awareness that education is the key to personal opportunity and long-term financial achievement. As I walk through our bustling campus this fall, I see many other signs that something special is happening here.

I see the most diverse student body of any UC campus, one that proudly reflects the character, the hopes and the aspirations of our culturally rich state.

I see striking new buildings constructed to such high environmental standards that our young campus is already recognized nationally as one of the "greenest" in the country.

I see world-class faculty mixing comfortably with students at all levels in a way seldom seen on larger campuses. I see students engaged in real-world research projects that expose them to the most fundamental and rewarding form of learning — the discovery and application of new knowledge.

Despite an extremely challenging economic climate throughout California, UC Merced remains on track to enroll 5,000 students by 2013. We are moving forward with the construction of new academic buildings and student housing to accommodate that growth, using sustainable design and construction techniques that are setting new standards for environmental responsibility. We are strengthening our basic science curriculum to provide a strong foundation for the development of a fully accredited medical school when the state's economy turns around.

Our faculty members are winning millions of dollars in grants (nearly \$23 million in our 2008-09 fiscal year) to underwrite primary research into the Valley's most pressing problems, including regional health disparities, water quality and supply, [air pollution](#), energy supply, climate change and more. Discoveries from this research will have far-reaching benefits throughout the region, the state and the world.

UC Merced's presence in the Valley is also helping to attract significant new levels of federal and state funding for important regional needs. For example, the major health-care reform measure passed Nov. 7 by the U.S. House of Representatives includes \$500 million for the development of medical schools in federally designated health professional shortage areas throughout the country, which could potentially help expedite the launch of a medical school at UC Merced. Similarly, the \$11 billion water bond approved earlier this month by the state Legislature includes \$10 million in water-research projects to be led by our Sierra Nevada Research Institute.

We sincerely hope the communities that welcomed us here are seeing these unmistakable signs of progress. Times are tough throughout the Valley, but we truly believe the long-term prospects for our region have never been better. We are extremely pleased to be a catalyst in the process of improving the Valley's quality of life and lifting our region to its fullest potential.

Steve Kang is chancellor of University of California, Merced.

[Manteca Bulletin Commentary Saturday, Nov. 14, 2009](#)

Bay Area exports their problems to San Joaquin Valley

By Dennis Wyatt, Managing Editor

Back in the days when Manteca Police referred to Pennebaker Apartments as the police substation due to multiple calls on a daily basis, it should have been clear what ails California is the fact the wealthiest counties in this state often dump their problems on the poorest.

The owners of the complex were unable to fill it up so they offered first month rent for \$99 with no deposit or last month in advance required. There were at least a few – if not more – people on welfare who claimed they were sent this way by Santa Clara County. The verifiable instances were those who said they did so when asked what brought them to Manteca. How widespread the practice is – or was – of dumping welfare recipients on other counties is open to debate.

It does, however, reflect a bigger problem of the "haves" in California solving their problems at the expense of the "have nots."

San Francisco, as an example, has an atrocious record of providing housing for the working class and the middle class. As a result, those people have been fleeing The City in favor of the East Bay. The East Bay, in turn, was overwhelmed which sent many people east of the Altamont Pass and into the Northern San Joaquin Valley in search of affordable housing to buy during economic growth periods. That, in turn, made it hard on people in Manteca who have working class jobs to be able to afford to both work and live here.

The same dump down effect is happening with the state prison population. Part of Governor Schwarzenegger's prison plan is to increase the number of inmates housed in San Joaquin County by 80 percent. That means we'd have one state prisoner for every 100 residents in the county or twice the statewide rate. We'll go from 4,253 inmates to 7,620 inmates. Yes, it will generate jobs with the workforce going from 6,500 up to 8,200 employees. It also means the dependents of those prisoners often move closer to where they are incarcerated to be near their loved ones. That means more absent father households in the county as it is tough to fill that role when you're locked up 24/7 for five years to life.

Rest assured there won't be a push to build prison facilities in the Bay Area as the land is too costly; Besides the Bay Area NIMBY folks – not in my back yard – more often than not have the wealth, clout, and wherewithal to hire lawyers to fight the state and block new correctional institutions.

The fight over water also has the trappings of the “haves” versus “have nots” with a unique twist that the areas with water – surface and underground – tend to be the weak sisters economically and in terms of political power.

If you think the powerful and rich sections of this state don't have it better, just walk the streets of Oildale, Avenal, and Delano deep in the Southern San Joaquin Valley where unemployment has soared past 20 percent due to the drought.

You don't see the lawns of Los Angeles and Orange County laid to waste and browning due to the cut back in state and federal project water supplies except, of course, where there are foreclosures. It is more important that we keep the grass green in LA than poor people working in Delano.

Is that a sound policy for California in this economy? Of course not. But then again the “haves” - those with the votes and the money – can pretty well have their way in California. As a result the San Joaquin Valley – long dubbed the new Appalachian of the United States by federal poverty experts especially as you head south – suffers from lack of water and gets to have imported affordable housing problems as well as criminal problems of the wealthier counties dumped on them.

The disconnect is astounding.

It took years of lobbying [air quality](#) people to get the Bay Area to be held responsible for air pollution that they generate that ends up blowing over the Altamont Pass and ultimately ends upon hanging over Bakersfield to reduce visibility to mere miles on stagnant summer days. The Bay Area's argument was that they had no air pollution problem so why should they adhere to the same tough air pollution control standards imposed on the Central Valley that they decried as anti-business due to high costs. Forget the fact a good portion of their air pollution was being sent this way and then south due to wind patterns in the Bay Area.

San Joaquin County has had its economy hurt for years by serving as a patsy in part for Bay Area air pollution. We've also had people who live and work here financially squeezed out of the housing market and struggle to afford rents thanks to the San Joaquin Valley being the de facto affording housing solution for the East Bay.

And now we are posed to take on more crime and lose agricultural jobs so the “haves” can rid themselves of their convicted criminals and associated problems of incarcerating them plus have water to keep their lawns green.

[Merced Sun-Star, Commentary, Tuesday, November 17, 2009](#)

Des Johnston: Delay tactics kill jobs

On Oct. 27, a handful of individuals announced they would be filing suit to overturn the city of Merced's certification of the Wal-Mart distribution center environmental impact report.

That's how it's done; first you scour the EIR for a flaw (real or contrived), then cry foul and finally run to the courthouse.

If hard-core project opponents don't get their way via the public participation process, they sue to get their way.

Apparently, they know what's best.

If the City Council had voted Wal-Mart down, that would have been the end of it. We would see Wal-Mart pick up its blueprints, shake the dust from its shoes, and move on. The project would be over.

That's the way the project review and approval system work, and though not always kind to business, it's fair.

We would continue to worry over unemployment, foreclosures and our tattered neighborhoods. We would be downcast, but that's where the chips would fall, and stay, because we have a democratic system that we trust and stand by.

We trust that it's good, even when it doesn't give us the votes we want. There would be no lawsuit to force the city to allow Wal-Mart to build.

Just prior to the City Council's decision to certify the Wal-Mart EIR, representatives from a coalition of local groups in favor of certifying the EIR met to ask the opponents to accept the council's decision and to promise that we would do the same.

The opponents' response came three weeks later with the filing of the suit.

So why is it that California Environmental Quality Act lawsuits, which delay or kill projects, are so easily filed and so often successful? Is this really providing the kind of check-and-balance that our system of government intends?

Whatever the answers, savvy and singularly minded project opponents know how to exploit it, and over the past 20 years, have developed an alternative process that weakens CEQA, planning laws and an otherwise reasonable public process.

Large corporations such as Wal-Mart will weather such attacks, but such suits are the death knell for smaller businesses that do not have the resources to keep up the fight.

In any case, if you listen to Tom Grave, Rod Webster, Joel Knox and Kyle Stockard, it's clear to them that they know what's best. Of course, they know better than Wal-Mart.

They also know better than EDAW (the professional environmental consulting firm hired by the city to prepare the EIR); better than the expert traffic, air quality, and hydrology engineers, scientists and analysts; better than the local, regional and state agency experts who are paid with our taxes to review the accuracy of the studies; better than the city planning staff; better than the city planning commissioners, better than the council members; better than a large majority of the residents of Merced; and better than the democratic process that we took part in when we elected our City Council to represent us and make decisions on our behalf.

This small group of opponents knows what's best; so when our silly processes fail to produce the "correct" outcomes, such outcomes must be disregarded and overturned.

They know the system failed, so it's up to them to pick up the ball where everyone else dropped it, and save us from ourselves. If you go to the Sun-Star Web site and watch the interview with the opponents (www.mercedsunstar.com/108/story/1137352-.html), they say that Wal-Mart can make this all go away, that it doesn't have to be this way if Wal-Mart would just meet their demands.

Like the bully on the playground, if you don't want to get clobbered, simply give him your lunch money.

However long it takes to resolve the suit, we expect that the opponents will have their tummies full, sleep soundly, and will not be dispossessed of their homes.

For others and our town, we will hope that Wal-Mart perseveres; that other jobs will soon fill the gap; that court domination of CEQA will be reformed; and that government of the people and by the people will eventually prevail.

Des Johnston is chairman of the government review committee of the Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce.

[Sacramento Bee, Guest Commentary, Tuesday, November 17, 2009](#)

My View: Small steps can shrink carbon footprint

By Tom Bowman, Special to The Bee

As a business owner, I have watched with great interest major companies defect from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce over the chamber's position on climate change. California's chamber has

chosen a similar, disheartening path by resisting our state's landmark Global Warming Solutions Act, AB 32. Both chambers underestimate the important benefits and overstate the costs of taking a leadership role in the world's climate future. They might be surprised to learn how easy and profitable emissions cutting can be. I know – I am living proof.

Two years ago, I wanted to know whether deep cuts were affordable. Since then, my small company, Bowman Design Group, has slashed its carbon footprint by 65 percent with a few simple steps. We did nothing extraordinary: We traded our SUV for a hybrid and installed compact fluorescent bulbs. We started turning off power strips at night. We replaced several office machines with a more efficient multifunction machine. When our air conditioner broke down, we chose an energy-efficient unit. Our 65 percent emissions reduction was independently verified, but beyond that, we also facilitated telecommuting and carpooling, and combined visits to clients and suppliers with commutes. These steps saved employees 960 gallons of gasoline per year and cut business errands by 43 percent.

These are great results by any measure, but did they cripple us financially? On the contrary, our up-front costs were low and now we are saving about \$5,000 annually. The light bulbs were free and the copier lease did not change, but maintenance and supplies cost less. Trading a car is hard to calculate, but the hybrid saves \$1,500 per year on gasoline and more on maintenance. The air conditioner cost \$7,000, but our old unit had failed, so it was an unavoidable expense.

Here is the big surprise: Our work environment is unchanged, clients are happy, and nobody is sacrificing to save the environment. Other than the free compact fluorescent light bulbs, we used no incentives or tax credits. We simply did what was necessary, and when we totaled the costs and savings, we were ahead.

As California implements the nation's first greenhouse gas emissions cap, small businesses must do their part. We have been bombarded by dire warnings about the costs, but for many small companies, reducing emissions simply means wasting less energy – energy that costs money.

Every unbiased economic analysis, including federal agency reports, concludes that reducing emissions is affordable if we start now. Delay will increase costs, and coping with unchecked warming could threaten our economy. Unfortunately, news stories promoting green-tech solutions and new buildings can create a false impression that going green requires technical knowledge and expensive consultants. State-sponsored incentives are geared toward larger consumers, too, leaving small businesses on our own. It is easy to conclude that cutting emissions is too expensive.

The irony is that small businesses are well positioned to lead the green revolution. Entrepreneurs can make decisions and take action quickly. And cutting costs is always an important incentive. This is why the business community needs reliable information.

The Bowman Design Group experiment proves that slashing emissions well ahead of California's ambitious timetable can be surprisingly easy and cost-effective. Here is the strategy:

- Take simple actions immediately. Switch to energy-efficient light bulbs and plug everything in to power strips that you can switch off at night. Enjoy daylight and fresh air as much as possible. See whether upgrading office equipment lets you consolidate several machines into one. The lease and maintenance costs are likely to be revenue-neutral or better.
- Choose measures that save money and provide other co-benefits. If telecommuting improves productivity while cutting emissions, do it. If adding a skylight provides fresh air while reducing lighting and air conditioning costs, go for it. If replacing a gas guzzler with an energy-efficient vehicle reduces fuel and maintenance costs, you'll be money ahead. If the air conditioner breaks down, replace it with the most efficient unit you can afford.
- Maximize efficiency before investing in expensive new equipment. New air conditioners and solar power are important, but purchase them after you've made your facility as passively efficient as possible. That means insulate, shade the windows, and improve natural lighting and ventilation. Then, when the time comes to invest in air conditioning and solar power, you'll be able to buy smaller, less expensive systems.

This money-saving prescription is a proven way to reduce your greenhouse gas emissions. In the end, energy-efficient businesses will be more profitable businesses. The California Chamber of Commerce should embrace our state's forward-looking climate initiatives because they will make our economy more competitive in the long run. In the short term, the biggest barrier to cost-saving action is a misperception based on misinformation.

Some energy-intensive firms might face difficult challenges, but my company's experience proves that going green is easier than most business owners think. We are taking steps that every company in California should take to ensure a better future for our communities and our families. As business owners, we can improve California's economy and environment at the same time.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses Check before You Burn! The winter program has begun. For more information on this Spanish clip, contact Claudia Encinas at \(559\) 230-5851.](#)

Antes de quemar, pregunte!

Empezó programa de invierno.

Eduardo Stanley,
El Sol, Friday, November 13, 2009

VISALIA — Desde el domingo 8 de noviembre y hasta fines de febrero 2010 estará vigente el programa "Confirma antes de quemar", implementado por Distrito de Control del Aire del Valle, con base en Fresno.

El programa busca reducir las partículas dañinas en el aire que aparecen cuando se prenden chimeneas o se quema basura.

Esas pequeñas partículas, a veces invisibles, son hollín, ceniza, polvo y otras materias. El programa prohíbe el uso de aparatos residenciales para quemar leña.

Altos niveles de partículas contaminantes pueden tener consecuencias serias para la salud incluyendo bronquitis, enfermedades pulmonares y aumentos de riesgo de ataques al corazón. Personas propensas y niños en nuestro Valle son más vulnerables a estos efectos y deben de tener precaución.

Para mejor proteger la salud de todos los residentes del Valle, dependiendo en cual será el pronóstico de la calidad del aire para el próximo día, el Distrito del Aire declarará una de dos pronósticos para el uso residencial de aparatos para quemar leña, como "Prohibido Quemar Leña o "Si Tiene Que Quemar, Queme Limpiamente".

Cuando se declara una prohibición, no se permite quemar combustible sólido como leños, combustible granulado o leños prefabricados en aparatos residenciales como chimeneas o estufones. Las chimeneas, lumbre o fogatas a aire libre también son sujetas a las prohibiciones y las violaciones pueden resultar en multas.

Sin embargo, hay dos excepciones:

- Si la residencia no tiene acceso a servicio de gas natural, aunque haya propano disponible; o
- Si quemar combustible sólido es la única fuente para calentar su residencia.

Los pronósticos están disponibles diariamente a las 4:30 p.m. Puede encontrar el pronóstico de su condado por Internet: <http://www.valleyair.org/aqinfo/WoodBurnPage.htm> o por teléfono, llamando a la línea gratuita: 1-800-766-4463.

Para más información acerca del programa Confirma Antes de Quemar, llame a una de las oficinas del Distrito: en Fresno, 559-230-6000; en Bakersfield, 661-392-5500; y en Modesto, 209-557-6400