

San Joaquin Valley farmers can get help with engines

Modesto Bee, Monday, Jan. 7, 2013

Farmers up and down the San Joaquin Valley can learn next week about grants to help them convert to cleaner-burning tractors, irrigation pumps and other equipment. The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has organized workshops in cooperation with the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service, farm groups and utilities. The meetings include three in the northern valley:

- Stockton: 9 to 11 a.m. Jan. 15 at the San Joaquin County Agricultural Center, 2101 E. Earhart Ave., near Stockton Metropolitan Airport
- Modesto: 1 to 3 p.m. Jan. 15 at the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau, 1201 L St.
- Merced: 9 to 11 a.m. Jan. 16 at the Merced County Farm Bureau, 646 S. Highway 59.

For more information on the grant program, call (559) 230-5800 or go to www.valleyair.org.

Transit district penalized \$35K

Bus emissions not properly tested, recorded

By Alex Breitler

Stockton Record, Monday, Jan. 7, 2013

STOCKTON - The San Joaquin Regional Transit District will pay a \$35,250 penalty for failing to adequately monitor emissions from its diesel buses, according to a settlement agreement.

That agreement, announced recently by the California Air Resources Board, is the result of confidential negotiations that will allow the district and the state to avoid costly litigation, the air board said.

According to the agreement, the district failed to test and keep records of smoke emissions from its fleet in 2009, 2010 and 2011.

In addition to failing to test and report, the district did not meet emission reduction requirements by the end of 2010, the agreement said.

Public transportation is generally cleaner than single-car travel. Nevertheless, "Clean air should be a priority for all businesses in California, including transit fleet operators," Air Resources Board Enforcement Chief Jim Ryden said.

District spokesman Paul Rapp said Friday that the violations were procedural. The district was testing the buses once each calendar year, he said; however, the tests were not performed precisely on a 12-month rotating schedule as required.

In other cases, some test results simply hadn't been signed.

"It was on us," Rapp said. "We're going to own up to the fact that it was supposed to be done a certain way, and we weren't doing it right."

Additional training has been provided to district staff, Rapp said, which was another requirement of the settlement.

The state noted that the district was a first-time violator and said the district made "unusually diligent efforts to comply and to cooperate with the investigation."

The district is in the middle of modernizing its fleet, switching out older, dirtier diesel buses for newer hybrids and, later this spring, two all-electric buses. All of the Stockton-based diesel buses are expected to be changed out this year, Rapp said, though some diesel buses will still be used for inter-city routes.

Legal Notices : Legals

Merced Sun-Star and Modesto Bee, Sunday, Jan. 6, 2013

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY UNIFIED AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT - NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO RULES AND REGULATIONS - NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held on February 21, 2013, at 9:00 AM, or as soon thereafter as may be heard, at 1990 East Gettysburg Avenue, Fresno, California. The public hearing may also be attended via video teleconferencing at San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District's (District's) regional offices at 34946 Flyover Court, Bakersfield, California or at 4800 Enterprise Way, Modesto, California. At the public hearing, the District's Governing Board will consider amending a rule affecting the counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tulare. The following action will be considered at the hearing: Adopt proposed amendments to Rule 1020 (Definitions). NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that, pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 40727.2 a rule consistency analysis of the proposed amendments to Rule 1020 is not required; the proposed amendments to Rule 1020 do not add emission limits, operating parameters, or recordkeeping requirements. NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the adopted amendments to Rule 1020 will be submitted through the California Air Resources Board to the United States Environmental Protection Agency for incorporation as part of the California State Implementation Plan (SIP). The proposed action would constitute a SIP revision. NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that all interested persons desiring to be heard or to present evidence on said matters may appear at said hearing. Interested persons may view the proposed rule at the District offices and online at www.valleyair.org/workshops/public_workshops_idx.htm. Copies of the proposed rule and related documents will be made available on and after January 22, 2013. To obtain copies of the documents, please call (559) 230-6100, or FAX your request to Mr. Donny Hockett at (559) 230-6064. Written comments regarding the proposed amendments should be addressed to Ms. Lisa Van de Water, SJVUAPCD, 1990 East Gettysburg Avenue, Fresno, CA 93726 or at Lisa.Vandewater@valleyair.org. For comments to be fully considered and addressed before the public hearing, comments received by 5:00 PM on February 5, 2013 will be ensured consideration ahead of the February 21, 2013 Governing Board public hearing. For additional information on the proposed rule amendments, please contact Ms. Van de Water at Lisa.Vandewater@valleyair.org or at (559) 230-6100.

Approval of truck stop is appealed

By Reed Fujii, staff writer

Stockton Record, Saturday, Jan. 5, 2013

A proposed 12-acre truck stop off Interstate 5 at Flag City near Lodi remains on an environmental review merry-go-round.

A court-ordered environmental impact report of the proposed Love's Travel Stop found that air pollution from the truck stop could be adequately reduced but that it would generate "significant and unavoidable traffic impacts."

Still, the county Planning Commission approved the project Dec. 20, ruling that its benefits - creating jobs, generating taxes, boosting the area economy and providing additional overnight parking for truckers - outweighed its impact on traffic congestion.

However, Pilot Flying J, which operates a Flying J-branded truck stop opposite the development site, appealed that decision. It claims the EIR was inadequate and that the commission "lacked sufficient and substantial evidence to support" its ruling in support of the would-be rival truck stop.

That appeal will be heard by the county Board of Supervisors, possibly in early February.

It was Pilot Flying J that raised objections to the Love's project, just north of Thornton Road and Highway 12, after its first approval by San Joaquin County planners, in May 2011. The Knoxville, Tenn.-based company eventually sued the county, claiming the initial review was inadequate, which led to the court-ordered EIR.

The Love's Travel Stop plans call for a facility with 24 fueling stations, a convenience store and fast-food restaurant. Company officials have said they invest an average \$7.5 million in a typical truck stop, which would generate about 40 full-time jobs, as well as sales and property taxes.

Cemex agrees to ban on Jesse Morrow Mountain mining

By Kurtis Alexander, staff writer

The Fresno Bee, Friday, Jan. 4, 2013

Mining giant Cemex signed off on a mining prohibition for Jesse Morrow Mountain, officially ending the company's long and controversial push for a sand and gravel quarry in the Sierra foothills.

Company officials said last month they would restrict mining on their rural 2,000-acre property. But skeptics weren't sure the company would follow through on the pledge after 10 years trying to dig.

Cemex made the concession as part of a deal with Fresno County. In return for the mining prohibition, county leaders honored an unusual request: to rehear the company's failed environmental impact report for the originally proposed quarry.

Why Cemex wants to revisit the environmental report for the quarry when mining is no longer permitted on the mountain left many scratching their heads and critics thinking the company might still try to mine.

But company officials said that an approved environmental report simply adds value to their property. They said they intend to sell the land.

County Supervisor Henry Perea, who has been skeptical of Cemex's intentions, said he's pleased to see the company secure the mining restriction.

"Considering where we were a few months ago when we were faced with the possibility of mining that mountain, we're now in an excellent position," he said.

Cemex's plan for a quarry and processing plant had raised widespread fears of air pollution, traffic and destruction to a mountain that flanks the gateway of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

Jesse Morrow Mountain sits off Highway 180 about 20 miles east of Fresno.

The mining prohibition was solidified in a restrictive covenant filed with the county Recorder's Office on Thursday afternoon. County Administrative Officer John Navarrette also signed the document.

The covenant works by putting a mining restriction on the property that can only be undone if both signees -- the county and the landowner -- consent. County consent requires approval by at least four of five members on the Board of Supervisors.

Perea acknowledged the mining ban isn't ironclad, but he said there were enough checks in place to make a quarry project very difficult to get off the ground.

The original quarry plan was opposed by three of four board members. The fifth board member, Supervisor Judy Case, recused herself from project discussions because of a conflict of interest.

The quarry never had an official up or down vote because the project's state-required environmental review wasn't approved.

One more safeguard for the mountain is still possible. The Board of Supervisors last month suggested that another stakeholder, such as a land trust, enter into the restrictive covenant. This would mean that a third party would also have to agree to any plan to undo the mining prohibition.

A third party has not yet been found, and the deal between the county and Cemex does not require it.

[Letter to the Fresno Bee, Sat., Jan. 4, 2013:](#)

Don't top off

One source of Valley air pollution and risk to groundwater safety is spilled fuel at filling stations. One cause is the practice of many customers who insist on "topping off" their fuel tanks.

In all cases, when a contemporary fuel nozzle used on a contemporary automobile in proper repair shuts off, the tank is full and there is no room for additional fuel.

The only result they gain is limiting the function of their emissions controls, spilled fuel and general waste, to say nothing about the waste of time, including the time of customers waiting their turn.

Unfortunately, old habits die hard and many people continue to do this even though it's a practice with a number of downsides, and no benefit.

Our poor air quality has many causes and this is only one. But by attacking bad practices one at a time we can make a difference. In the interest of clean air, fuel conservation and, in general, more bang for the buck, those who have been doing this should show consideration for themselves and others. Stop and don't make further attempts to add what, at best, could be a tiny amount of fuel.

Stephen A. Montgomery, Bakersfield