

[Modesto Bee & Merced Sun-Star Guest Commentary, Thursday, Sept. 24, 2015](#)

Area Leaders: Fix the Clean Air Act or we'll suffer the consequences

By Hub Walsh, Dennis Brazil and Bill O'Brien

The federal Clean Air Act was signed into law by President Richard Nixon in 1970 and last amended by Congress in 1990 under President George H.W. Bush. It has served the nation well.

However, over the last 25 years important lessons have been learned from implementing the law. Now it is clear that a number of well-intentioned provisions in the Act are leading to unintended consequences.

Antiquated provisions of the Clean Air Act are leading to confusion while a lack of updated Congressional directives have turned the courts and non-elected government bureaucrats into policy makers.

We urge the Congress and the President to take bipartisan action to modernize the Clean Air Act. Failure to correct the structural deficiencies in the act will lead to economic devastation for San Joaquin Valley residents and businesses without commensurate benefit in improving the region's air quality.

We support and want to retain the core elements in the Act that serve to protect public health through the establishment and pursuit of science-based ambient air quality standards. Over the years, residents and businesses have made significant investments and sacrifices in an effort to reduce air pollution and improve public health throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

With an investment of over \$40 billion, air pollution from San Joaquin Valley businesses has been reduced by more than 80 percent. The pollution released by industrial facilities, agricultural operations, cars and trucks is at an historic low for levels of all pollutants. San Joaquin Valley residents' exposure to high smog levels has been reduced by over 90 percent.

The new standards established under the Act approach the background pollution concentrations in many regions throughout the nation, including the San Joaquin Valley. As written, the Act does not provide for consideration of technological achievability and economic feasibility in establishing deadlines for attaining the associated federal mandates.

When enacting the last amendment to the Act more than 25 years ago, Congress did not contemplate the reality that we face today – where, after reducing pollution levels by over 80 percent, we will still leave a large gap in meeting new standards which cannot be satisfied under the formula-based deadlines prescribed in the act. This sets up regions such as the San Joaquin Valley for failure, in turn leading to costly sanctions and severe economic hardships.

The 2015 Federal Clean Air Act Modernization Proposal presented to Congress by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District will preserve the federal government's ability to routinely reevaluate and set air quality goals to protect health based on sound science while avoiding current duplicative requirements and confusion. The proposed changes would also require strategies that lead to the most expeditious air quality improvement while considering technological and economic feasibility.

In addition, regions, such as the San Joaquin Valley would be able to focus efforts on meeting new air quality goals more quickly by deploying scarce resources in a manner that provides the utmost benefit to public health.

Changes proposed by the district will provide necessary economic and regulatory certainty while retaining public health safeguards.

As logical as it might seem, enacting change given the current political climate in Washington will not be easy. We ask all San Joaquin Valley residents, businesses and policymakers to join us in our efforts to bring about these commonsense changes to the federal Clean Air Act.

See details at www.valleyair.org/2015-Clean-Air-Act-Modernization-Proposal.pdf.

Hub Walsh is a Merced County supervisor; Bill O'Brien is a Stanislaus County supervisor and Dennis Brazil is mayor of Gustine; all are members of the Valley Air District governing council.

Smog clinic event coming up Saturday at Agri-Center

By Luis Hernandez

Visalia Times-Delta, Friday, September 25, 2015

Testing at Saturday's Tune In & Tune Up Car Clean-Up Event will go up to four vehicles simultaneously, said organizer Jose Marin.

And the expected result will be crowd pleasing for those attending the event.

"We want to reduce wait time for drivers," he said. "At past events, wait time was up to three hours. We want to test 525 cars by noon."

Making a return to Tulare, the Tune In & Tune Up event is designed to provide drivers whose vehicle fail an emission's test with a \$500 voucher for repairs. The event is sponsored by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and Valley CAN.

Marin said all vehicle drivers are welcomed. However, the event is seeking to provide service for vehicles 1995 and older. Those vehicles, Marin said, are equipped with a sensor that stimulate much more emissions.

"We want to test those vehicles," he said.

But the Tune In & Tune Up event is open to vehicles of all makes and models.

"This is an event for all," Marin said. "Everybody is invited to participate."

Marin said 60 percent of vehicles tested at the Tune in & Tune Up events failed.

The drivers get significant financial help when it comes to paying for repairs.

In testing and improving those vehicles' emissions, the valley's air improves, Marin said. Generally, the vouchers cover the whole repair bill. For about 20 percent of the drivers, the cost ends up being about \$200.

The certificates are redeemable at designated repair shops in Tulare, Visalia and Tipton. The vouchers, funded by the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District, can only be used for smog repairs, Marin said.

The drivers are not the only ones benefiting from events like Tune In & Tune Up. Getting high-polluting cars fixed also benefits residents.

"Every resident in the San Joaquin Valley benefits by the repairs," he said. "The air quality improves."

Saturday's event is the second and final this year in Tulare. In June, a Tune in & Tune Up event resulted in 391 vehicles tested and about 180 vouchers were handed out.

"People need to take advantage of this event," Marin said.

"This is a great opportunity for local Tulare residents to get a free emission test to determine if their car will pass smog tests," said Gina Burdi, who's with Edelman, a public relations firm.

Marin said he's expecting a big response for Saturday's event.

"We are getting a lot more community support," he said. "We will have a higher number of vehicles at this event."

The June event was also held at the International Agri-Center. Marin said that's the right location for an event like Tune in & Tune Up.

"They have flexible hours and it's a big venue," he said.

This year, there have been 18 Tune in & Tune Up events around the San Joaquin Valley. Since the program started in 2003, more than 12,000 vehicle have been repaired.

After Saturday, there are two Tune In & Tune Up events in the south Valley coming up. West Hills College will host an event on Oct. 17, while there's another one on Dec. 3 in Bakersfield.

How to attend

What: Free emissions testing clinic

When: 8 a.m. to noon, Saturday

Where: International Agri-Center, 4450 S. Laspina St., Tulare.

Information

- Businesses where vouchers received can be redeemed.
- MAS Auto Center, 1442 S. Blackstone St., Tulare.
- AAA Radiators & Mufflers, 1600 S. K St., Tulare.
- MAS Auto Center, 148 N. Burnett Rd., Tipton.
- Auto Tech, 1619 E. Main St., Visalia.
- D & S Service Center, 2500 E. Main St., Visalia.
- Mooney Shell, 2736 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia.

Online

www.valleyair.org

www.healthyliving.com