



# VALLEY AIR NEWS

A monthly publication of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District - November 2015

## District seeks community support on Clean Air Act Modernization Proposal

Letter by Governing Board members printed in Valley newspapers

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 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](http://www.valleyair.org/2015-Clean-Air-Act-Modernization-Proposal.pdf).

**Residents, use rideshare agencies for all your commute needs.**

**Businesses, use these resources to help meet eTrip requirements.**

The rideshare organization sites listed below provide a variety of resources for commuters, cyclists, carpoolers and businesses Valley-wide.

[MyCommuteConnection.com](http://MyCommuteConnection.com)  
<http://www.valleyrides.com/>  
<http://commutekern.org/>