

[Fresno Bee editorial](#)

Turning the tide

New legislation will support the task of urban infill, help fight sprawl.

(Published Tuesday, October 1, 2002, 5:15 AM)

Three new bills that became law Sunday will support efforts by Fresno and other California cities to turn back decades of sprawling development, and build tighter, more efficient -- and, ultimately, more livable -- urban environments.

The three bills, signed by Gov. Gray Davis, focus on the need for infill development as opposed to the ever-outward practices that have put such a strain on municipal budgets, water supplies and air quality. They are:

A bill by Assembly Member Patricia Wiggins, D-Santa Rosa, that sets three planning priorities for growth in the state: promoting development and equity in urban areas, protecting environmental and agricultural resources, and ensuring efficient development patterns. It also calls upon the governor's Office of Planning and Research to update its 24-year-old statewide growth plan with an emphasis on infill.

A bill by Sen. Byron Sher, D-Palo Alto, gives a high priority to farmworker housing, low-income housing and infill housing. It offers exemptions in certain cases to California Environmental Quality Act restrictions, which mandate environmental impact reports before projects can be approved by local governments.

The third bill, by Sen. Tom Torlakson, D-Antioch, doubles the amount the California Pollution Control Financing Authority can grant and lend to cities and counties to "smart growth," from \$2.5 million to \$5 million. The funds can be used to clean up hazardous waste sites in poor neighborhoods. The cost of such cleanups is an obstacle to redevelopment.

Some of these principles have already been adopted by Fresno and other cities. State backing will make it easier to achieve those plans. Halting urban sprawl will be one of the most significant efforts in the state in the coming decades, if we are to preserve valuable agricultural land, especially here in the Valley, and build urban densities that make mass transit projects workable.

Reducing vehicle emissions by making urban areas more compact and by getting people out of their cars will do more to clean our increasingly filthy air than any other steps we can take. Any effort that serves those ends, including these new laws, is worth applauding.

[Letter to the Editor, Tulare Advance Register](#)

Air quality: Report was slanted

I would like to respond to the mischaracterizations and several inaccuracies of your Sept. 17 article ["Kids' risks from smog overblown"].

Your report presents harsh judgment based on limited information after a single 11th-hour attempt to contact the authors of the report discussed in his piece.

The report found that infants in the San Joaquin Valley will receive a lifetime worth of cancer risk in their first 21 days of life. The majority of the cancer risk comes from diesel exhaust particles, while a lesser (though significant) amount comes from nine other toxic air contaminants.

The report made its calculations based strictly on data from the California Air Board, EPA's recommended risk levels, and the inhalation-rate-to-body weight ratio for children, all of which are authoritative and widely accepted.

Your report confused risk with actual rates of cancer and quoted sources who would discount the report because it focused only on cancer risks from air pollution.

We agree that Californians could reduce risk of cancer in other ways. Our research however, looked at air quality, and when it comes to California's air quality, the primary concern remains: The federal government has arrived scientifically on particular goals for cleaner air that we are far from reaching.

Bob Kard, of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, had it right that the public's transportation decisions and smart industry regulation should combine to determine a desirable outcome as a "team effort".

The EPA should propose tough new standards for on-road and off-road diesel vehicles and generators. Cleaner technologies and alternative fuels are already available that can reduce the health risks to the public without waiting for disease rates to serve as a late impetus for sound policy.

THOMAS NATAN

Research Director

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Letter to the Editor, The Record

Stop moaning and groaning

If you do not like where you are living, leave.

I was born here, moved to L.A. in my late 20s, then moved back. I moved to San Jose in my late 30s, then moved home again.

You need to deal with your neighborhood or pay the \$1,500-a-month rent (not counting utilities) you have to pay for a reasonable house. We grew up with peat dirt during the windy months. Implants moan and groan about that. **We also grew up with the smoke that comes our way when the farmers burn their fields.**

Well, God forbid any burning goes on anymore. People who moan and groan have no clue how much food the Stockton area alone provides the entire world. **Why don't you work on car pooling?** I am so tired of people, who have only recently moved into *my* city, moan and groan. If they don't like it here, they should move away and leave all of us po' country folk alone. It used to be terrific!

Cheryl Cutlip

Stockton