

Plans for L.A. Port Focus on Pollution

Mayor's task force hears several environmental measures designed to cut levels of toxic emissions

By Jack Leonard and Deborah Schoch
[Los Angeles Times, Thursday, Dec. 30, 2004](#)

Port of Los Angeles officials unveiled an array of environmental initiatives Wednesday that could become part of the city's bid to curb rising levels of air pollution at the fast-growing facility.

Among the measures are proposals to take aim at ship engines that belch high levels of toxic emissions, to convert the rail line from the port to electric power, and to replace older trucks with newer models with cleaner burning engines.

Environmentalists and local community representatives welcomed the suggestions, which were released at the same time new port calculations indicate recent antipollution efforts alone will fail to rein in pollution.

"These are all good," said Noel Park, a San Pedro resident and longtime port critic who sits on the port's Community Advisory Committee. "We believe that the survival of these communities as a viable place to live is in the balance."

Representatives from the railroad and shipping industries said they would need more time to study the proposals. But they noted that port officials have yet to calculate the costs of the measures and said that legal obstacles might rule out some initiatives.

Sharon Rubalcava, who represents a prospective terminal operator, said she believed that requiring diesel-powered ships to add expensive new electric-powered equipment to use while docked could be challenged in court by ship owners.

"I don't think it would survive a constitutional challenge," she said.

Port staffers presented the proposals at a meeting in San Pedro of a task force appointed by Los Angeles Mayor James K. Hahn. Hahn has asked the 28-member team — drawn from the ranks of industry, labor, community and environmental groups — to deliver a blueprint to meet a pledge he made to keep emissions from the port at 2001 levels.

Hahn's sister, L.A. Councilwoman Janice Hahn, who represents San Pedro, attended the meeting and praised the effort to put a lid on the region's largest single source of air pollution.

"This is not just a harbor issue," she said. "This is an issue for the entire L.A. Basin."

The task ahead will not be easy. Port emissions have already risen beyond 2001 levels despite efforts to roll back pollution with measures such as encouraging shipping companies to use electricity for shipboard operations on docked vessels.

In 2001, the port produced nearly 20,000 tons of nitrogen oxides and 1,000 tons of particulate matter — specks of dust and soot that can be inhaled into the lungs and increase the risk of cancer and heart disease. By 2012, according to a draft report released by port officials Wednesday, nitrogen oxide emissions could increase by 8,712 tons and particulate matter could climb by 906 tons.

Port officials have yet to calculate how much the proposals would reduce pollution, but plan to do so in the next few weeks.

Hahn's task force is scheduled to submit a draft plan to the mayor by the end of February.

[Editorial in Fresno Bee, Thursday, Dec. 30, 2004](#)

Dust busters

With particulate matter, trouble comes in very tiny packages

PM10 sounds like the name of an over-the-counter cough medicine; it's just the opposite.

PM10 is shorthand for particulate matter that measures 10 microns or less. These microscopic particles hang in the air where they can combine with other particles to form noxious gasses or, when closer to the ground, collect in our lungs. They contribute to asthma attacks and a host of other respiratory problems.

Starting Friday, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District hopes to have a prescription for reducing these hazardous particles in the air.

Emissions from cars, trucks, wood fires and factories create PM10. So does dust kicked up by tractors and other farm equipment. In all, 147 tons per day enter the Valley's atmosphere.

Last year, Fresno Sen. Dean Florez pushed through legislation to remove agriculture's waiver under the Clean Air Act. With the waiver gone, farmers must become part of the PM10 solution. Researchers say ag can remove 34 tons of PM10 per day. Farmers must select at least one method of PM10 reduction from each of five categories -- with their five-part plans due Friday. In all, there are around 150 "conservation management practices" from which to choose. Local air officials will then assess each plan for its PM10 reduction.

If all 6,400 plans total 34 tons, everyone's happy; if not, additional measures will be considered. That could mean including more farmers (currently those farming less than 100 contiguous acres are excluded) or requiring more than five dust-reduction measures in each plan.

Farmers are stepping up to face this difficult task -- with some grumbles, but stepping up nonetheless. Thousands of growers have attended workshops so they can get this right. With each plan, they must pay a fee.

One concern is that the air district is relying on guesswork to measure compliance. We need accurate measurements. The district hopes scientists at universities such as the University of California, Davis, where much work has already been done, and UC Merced will provide the hard data.

Until then, this will have to do. We all breathe the same air -- farmers and environmentalists alike. PM10 makes everyone less healthy; it's time to clear the air.

[Thursday, Dec. 30, Stockton Record, Letters to the Editor](#)

Quality of life is what counts

It's quite telling that community development director Jim Glaser, Mayor Gary Podesto and the Stockton City Council roll out the red carpet for Bay Area commuters.

Yet they turn a blind eye to Morada residents when they voice opposition to developments -- like the atrocious 2,000-home Empire Ranch subdivision -- on reasonable environmental and quality-of-life grounds.

It's hardly news that the cost of living in the Bay Area is ridiculous.

Why should Stockton residents -- who've lived in, worked in and contributed to the area for generations -- sacrifice their quality of life for Bay Area commuters?

They do nothing for our city but pave over our farmland; pollute our already rancid air; further increase our crime; buy cheap, foreign-made merchandise at big-box retail chains that drive mom-and-pop businesses away and exploit their workers; snarl our already-congested streets and highways; and drive the cost of living through the roof.

Thanks to Glaser and his ilk, Stockton's on its way to becoming an armpit.

Don't bother trying to discuss it with him, though. Bay Area commuters and their property-tax dollars are his top priority -- not Stocktonians concerned about quality of life.

By Susan Moll
Stockton