

## **Forklifts focus of overhaul**

### **State air board's plan angers growers who seek funding for upgrades.**

By Jennifer M. Fitzenberger / Bee Capitol Bureau

Friday, August 26, 2005

SACRAMENTO — A single forklift can pollute as much in eight hours as 700 new passenger cars — a fact that has the state air board developing regulations aimed to clean up the heavy equipment.

The regulations could affect thousands of gas-powered forklifts throughout California.

But forklift dealers and farmers, who generally have older fleets, say the regulations pose an undue burden and state officials are leaving them with few options.

"None of us are opposed to bringing equipment into compliance and helping the air quality, but it should be for all the units going forward and not penalize the units that have been in place for years," said Audie Burgan, owner of J.M. Equipment Co. Inc. in Fresno.

At a meeting this week, state lawmakers scolded California Air Resources Board officials, saying forklift dealers were left out of the loop during the development of the rules and that false hope was given to farmers that a popular state fund might help them buy newer, cleaner machines.

"No disrespect intended, but this is a big screw-up for this being such a huge surprise," Assembly Member Barbara Matthews, D-Tracy, told state board officials. "Everything is starting to come down on the heads of agriculture."

State board officials say they didn't realize that dealers would take such a heavy financial hit and pledged to work with them.

"They are willing to do everything in their power to minimize the impact on industry," said Catherine Witherspoon, executive officer to the board.

The new rules would affect gas-powered, spark-ignited equipment. Most of those machines are forklifts, but certain sweepers, scrubbers and airport ground-support equipment also would be regulated.

Roughly 100,000 forklifts exist in California, about half of them with spark-ignited engines. The other half — electric and diesel-powered forklifts — would not fall under the regulation.

The forklift rules would put emission limits on fleets beginning in 2009. Large fleets would have to meet more stringent averages than midsize fleets. New forklift engines would have to be built to a higher air-quality standard.

The changes could take 13 tons of hydrocarbon and nitrogen oxides per day out of California's air by 2010 — the equivalent of taking half of the state's motorcycles off the roads.

Hydrocarbon and nitrogen oxides combine to form ozone, which can reduce lung function and aggravate asthma. The Valley's air basin is among the dirtiest in the nation.

"We're going after not only new engines, but we're also asking that equipment already in the field also be dealt with," said Tom Evashenk, manager of the Zero Emission Vehicle section of the state air board.

The rules would be a bit different for farmers, who typically keep forklifts longer than other business owners because they use them sporadically — just a couple of months per year during busy seasons. Regulations would give additional time to growers.

But farmers say they would have to replace, not fix, most of their forklifts because many of them are very old. Forklifts built before 1990 are difficult to retrofit, but newer models can be fitted with a device that costs about \$3,500 each to make them compliant.

At least 70% of forklifts used in agriculture were built before 1990 — some date back to the 1940s. New forklifts can cost as much as \$30,000 apiece. Growers estimate it would cost the agriculture industry a total of \$47million to replace its oldest forklifts.

Early discussions with regulators led farmers to believe they would be able to tap state Carl Moyer Program money to buy new forklifts. The program provides incentives for growers to get rid of high-polluting diesel engines.

But farmers recently learned that forklifts might not qualify for Carl Moyer funds. They say it's not fair for the state board to make a rule and not include a funding source.

"Where do you get the funds? The funds have got to be with the rule," said Manuel Cunha, president of the Nisei Farmers League in Fresno. "The impact on my industry and the small dealers will be devastating."

Dealers, who sell and rent forklifts by the hundreds, will have to retrofit or replace many of their older machines.

No customer will want to buy or rent a noncompliant forklift, they say.

Burgan's business has a couple of thousand forklifts. About 500 would not comply with the new rules.

Retrofitting all of them would cost \$1.75 million.

Burgan said he can't pass the whole cost on to the customer because the marketplace wouldn't sustain it.

"That's a substantial hit to our bottom line," Burgan said.

There are about 50 dealers statewide, about 15 of which are in the Valley. Burgan said the rules could put some companies out of business.

Dealers are upset because they say state officials didn't discuss the proposed regulations with them early in the planning process, when they could have helped negotiate the rules.

Manufacturers sold noncompliant forklifts as recently as November without dealers knowing about the impending rules, said Assembly Member Mike Villines, R-Clovis. He said dealers found out just in the past few months.

Said Villines: "They should have been negotiating with them from the beginning."

The board is scheduled to take up the forklift matter on Sept. 15 in Diamond Bar.

## **Energy strategy laid out**

### **State trying to fight global warming, greenhouse gases**

David R. Baker, staff writer

S.F. Chronicle, Friday, August 26, 2005

State regulators approved a far-reaching road map Thursday for California's energy future that tries to fight global warming by limiting greenhouse-gas emissions.

The plan, approved by the California Public Utilities Commission, represents the state's latest attempt to balance economic growth with increasingly urgent environmental concerns.

It updates a road map from 2003 and further refines some of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's goals, identifying ways to implement those broad policies. The governor has appointed two of the commission's five members, and the agency has moved to enact many of his energy proposals.

The Energy Action Plan II isn't binding. Rather, it recommends courses of action to guide future decisions on building power plants, improving energy efficiency and promoting alternative sources of power.

"I am particularly pleased that the updated energy action plan outlines key actions to mitigate climate change, because it demonstrates the agency's strong support for Gov. Schwarzenegger's recently announced goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions," said Commissioner Dian Grueneich in a statement.

Some elements of the plan will please environmentalists. Others could horrify them.

The plan calls for a "cap and trade" system to limit greenhouse gases. Such systems set overall limits for the amount of gasses companies can emit, allowing relatively **pollution**-free firms to trade "credits" with others exceeding the limits. The road map also encourages building new transmission lines to allow alternative power sources such as wind farms to feed into the state's electrical grid.

But it also supports using liquefied natural gas -- anathema to many environmentalists -- to fuel the state's power plants. Residents of Ventura County and Long Beach are fighting efforts to build liquefied natural gas import facilities in or near their communities, fearful that the fluid could leak or explode.

The energy plan also calls for more research into new technologies for using coal in power plants -- a subject some environmentalists view with deep suspicion.

Still, Sheryl Carter with the Natural Resources Defense Council praised the commission for emphasizing climate change in the report, an addition to the earlier road map.

"This time around, they added a focus on global warming, and we strongly support that," said Carter, director of the council's Western energy programs. "It's obviously becoming a much more visible issue, nationwide and not just in California."

Schwarzenegger has broken ranks with many Republicans to make the fight against climate change a priority. The utilities commission has followed suit. It drafted the latest action plan along with the California Energy Commission, and many of the document's ideas will require the efforts of both agencies.

Some elements of the first action plan already have had an effect. In planning for California's future energy needs, the commission agreed in 2003 to a "loading order" -- the steps the state will take to meet growing power demand -- that placed greater emphasis on efficiency and the use of renewable resources than on building conventional electrical plants.

So far, they seem to be sticking with those priorities, said Bob Finkelstein with The Utility Reform Network watchdog group.

"In fairness to them, most of what they did was consistent with the loading order -- 'We'll first try for efficiency, then renewables, then fossil fuels as a last resort,' " he said.

## **Dust plan required for building, digging**

Modesto Bee, Friday, Aug. 26, 2005

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District is reminding builders, contractors and excavators that they need a dust-control plan before most construction-related projects can begin. Anyone submitting a dust plan also needs to attend a three-hour dust-control training workshop conducted by the air district. For more information on classes or a copy of the rule, visit [www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org) or call the district office in Modesto at 557-6400.

[Letter to the Bakersfield Californian, Friday, Aug. 26, 2005:](#)

### **Supports bill on air board**

The San Joaquin Valley is one of the most polluted regions in America, frequently beating out Los Angeles as the air basin with the worst air quality. Sixteen percent of our children suffer from asthma.

There are more than 1,200 premature deaths each year in the valley due to particulate matter pollution and over \$350 million dollars a year are spent on cardiopulmonary illness.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Board needs broader representation and more expertise to develop and implement clean air plans.

The "Healthy Children, Healthy Communities and Healthy Economy in the San Joaquin Valley Act of 2005" (SB 999-Machado) expands the board's membership from 11 to 15 members to include additional representation from urban areas and members of the public.

Bakersfield, Fresno and Stockton, the three largest metropolitan areas, would gain a permanent seat on the board. Two non-elected (public) members with residency in the district and expertise in medical health and air quality science would be appointed by the California Air Resource Board.

The League of Women Voters supports this legislation and asks concerned citizens to contact their Assembly person in support of SB 999.

-- LOIS WATSON, President, League of Women Voters, Bakersfield

[Letter to the Lodi News Sentinel, Friday, Aug. 26, 2005](#)

## **Nuclear power still the most viable option**

With California adding houses and industry, the call for more power is inevitable.

All the windmills and solar panels can't come close to producing power for houses that aren't even built.

California's power plants are fueled by natural gas, which is being used up at an alarming rate. Coal is dirty and can't pass Clear Air Act standards.

The Diablo Canyon is a 1,100-megawatt nuclear power plant in San Luis Obispo County that supplies enough electricity for 750,000 homes. It takes up a relatively small amount of land. No need for wind or sun.

Diablo operates 24/7/365 producing clean power. Technology has come a long way.

The only better way to get cleaner power is through hydroelectricity, but water -- lots of it -- is needed. In a dry year, hydro plants can't produce enough and must rely on other sources.

In the next 10 years or less, there's a good chance of seeing specially designed ships that carry liquefied natural gas from a foreign country and off load in Stockton.

Ed Walters, Lodi

[Sacramento Bee editorial, Friday, Aug. 26, 2005](#)

## **Inefficiency standards**

### **New rules are worse than inadequate**

The eagerly awaited proposed new federal fuel standards for light trucks and sport utility vehicles came out this week. As expected, they are a disappointment to anyone who really cares about reducing America's dangerous dependence on foreign oil, slowing the production of greenhouse gases, cleaning the air or saving consumers money at the pump. Even worse, a noxious provision has been inserted into the proposed rules that would bar California from enforcing its historic law to reduce greenhouse gas law.

The Bush administration's proposed rules call for a modest tightening of fuel economy for some mini-vans, light trucks and SUVs. Fuel efficiency standards for such vehicles would increase by amounts ranging from a tepid 2.2 mpg to a dismal 0.8 mpg over four years.

The administration claims that would save 10 billion gallons of gasoline over 15 years (the average life of a vehicle). At today's consumption levels, that's less than a month's worth of fuel, not nearly what this country needs to save nor what is easily achievable even with today's available technology.

Also, because the proposed rules establish six new categories of light trucks based on weight, they could actually encourage automakers to make more of the worst gas hogs. The biggest SUVs and Hummers aren't touched by the new rules at all.

Not only do the new standards fail to make real progress on fuel efficiency, but a provision could prevent California from regulating carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The Bush administration had already joined the nation's auto-makers in a suit to invalidate California's greenhouse gas law. Now it has included a provision, buried on page 150 of the 169-page fuel standards report, that states, "A state law that seeks to reduce motor vehicle carbon dioxide emissions is both expressly and impliedly preempted." So much for California's efforts to protect the air.

With gasoline approaching \$3 a gallon, the biggest gas-guzzling SUVs beginning to lose their appeal among consumers and greenhouse gas emissions a recognized global crisis, the administration had a perfect opportunity to demand serious fuel efficiency improvements from the nation's auto makers. Instead it produced a rule that offers short-term protection to the most backward-looking elements of the auto-industry, a boon to oil company executives and an attack on states that seek to protect the environment and the health of their citizens.