

Dairymen to protest cow-emissions figures

By Bob Brownne

[Tracy Press, Wednesday, Aug. 3, 2005](#)

The dairy industry is likely to challenge the final estimate of how much gas air pollution regulators say is produced by San Joaquin Valley cows.

The "emissions factor" announced Monday by David Crow, executive director of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District — 19.3 pounds per cow per year of volatile organic compounds — is a bit less than the 20.6 recommended in late June.

But dairy farmers believe this is still nearly four times the amount of pollution-forming gas that comes from their cows.

Michael Marsh, president of Western United Dairymen, of Modesto, said he plans to be on the district board's Aug. 18 agenda to protest Crow's recommendation. He expects to have plenty of support from the scientists who study air pollution from Central Valley dairies.

Most researchers come up with similar data for gases that come from cows through flatulence and belching, but Crow's numbers have mystery data that the local studies didn't find, Marsh said. That becomes a problem when dairy owners try to reduce pollution from their farms.

"If the scientists are saying we can't detect it, then how do you capture something that isn't there?" Marsh said. "That's what makes this so frustrating."

Local dairy farmer and San Joaquin County Supervisor Leroy Ornellas also said he is dismayed that officials could create new rules and wait until later to tell dairy owners how they can comply.

"The problem is we're being asked to sign on to an agreement without knowing what the back end of the agreement will be," he said. "We're willing to do our part, but short of putting catalytic converters up the rear ends of cows, what do they want us to do?"

The estimate of pollution from cows helps determine which dairies need permits from the district. Under previous regulations, 230 of the valley's 1,500 dairies needed permits. The new numbers mean that as many as 500 valley dairies, those with 1,290 or more cows, will need them.

Air district spokeswoman Kelly Malay said the district will recommend methods for reducing air pollution by the end of June. For example, farmers could change the cows' feed or find different ways to handle and dispose of manure.

"The rule-making process does include a socioeconomic analysis, and we're looking for the most cost-effective control measures," Malay said. "We'll actually be working with the dairy industry on those."

Marsh said he's still skeptical because previous suggestions included constructing machines around manure ponds to capture and burn methane as an energy source.

"What they came up with ... was based on a salesman's brochure," he said, and estimated that one of these miniature power plants would cost about \$1.2 million to build.

Scientists don't all agree that these ponds put out as much gas as the district says.

"Those estimates are not at all established or solid at this point," said University of California, Davis, researcher Frank Mitloehner.

In dispute is one class of gases, volatile fatty acids, which come from manure ponds. Some researchers say the amount of those gases coming from Central Valley dairies is only a fraction of what Crow included in his estimate, which draws on an English laboratory study.

"Most of the researchers who presented information pointed out that three-fourths of what they were using were (gases) that no one had seen on California dairies," said California State University, Fresno, researcher Charles Krauter.

He said other researchers have already tested for these gases and found them in much smaller quantities than the district claims.

Krauter said he has just started a follow-up study, which could confirm or dispute the air district's findings.

Dairy Operators Challenge Pollution Calculation

Dairy operators in the Central Valley are challenging a new assessment of how much cows contribute to air pollution.

By Bob Hensley

[Capital Public Radio, Wednesday, Aug. 3, 2005](#)

After reviewing numerous studies, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has determined that dairy cows emit considerably more smog-producing gases than previously thought. In fact, regulators say cows contribute more to air pollution than motor vehicles.

Dairy industry officials say if the new standards are adopted, larger farms might have to spend as much as one million dollars on pollution control measures.

Michael Marsh of Modesto-based, Western United Dairymen says the additional costs could result in many farmers relocating.

"It does make farmers tend to think, well maybe I should take my jobs and move out of state."

Dairy organizations say the science that the new assessment is based on is flawed and they're going to lobby regulators to reconsider their decision.

The dairy industry in California generates about five billion dollars a year.

Backers of truck toll not giving up

Officials weigh options after Valley road fee left out of federal bill

By E.J. Schultz

[Fresno Bee, Wednesday, Aug. 3, 2005](#)

A clean air proposal to charge toll fees on trucks passing through the San Joaquin Valley did not make it into the federal transportation bill, but local officials are not giving up on the idea.

The amendment, sponsored by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, was opposed by the powerful trucking industry, which generally is against tolls.

"While it was not passed as we would have liked it to be, the opportunities are there for us to do something going forward," said Pete Weber, co-chairman of the Regional Jobs Initiative.

RJI officials lobbied for the proposal along with Fresno Mayor Alan Autry. They say it is a way to attack one of the region's largest sources of air pollution while clearing the way for stronger economic development.

Trucking industry officials have countered that the plan would do little to clean the air because interstate trucks are among the cleaner-burning vehicles on the road.

The plan would levy a fee on trucks driving through the Valley on Highway 99 or Interstate 5. Proceeds would be invested in clean air programs, including giving money to trucking companies to update fleets with cleaner-burning vehicles, Weber said.

Fees could be collected at weigh stations and would apply to trucks with a gross vehicle weight of 14,000 pounds, according to the plan.

While all trucks would be assessed a minimal fee, trucks with the dirtiest emissions would pay the most, Weber said. "If you had a clean engine and you're burning California gas, then you would pay virtually nothing," he said.

The RJI is a mostly volunteer group of business and government leaders trying to double normal job-growth rates in the region between 2004 and 2008.

Weber said the proposal would spur economic development by relieving regulatory stress on industries such as agriculture and food processing, which RJI officials believe are carrying an unfair share of the clean air burden.

Weber was not specific about what other avenues are available to make the plan law. Possibilities could include inserting the proposal into other federal legislation or into a state bill.

Congress passed the nearly \$300 billion transportation bill last week.

It is possible that the Valley toll proposal could become part of a toll "demonstration program" outlined in the bill, said Shannon Long, director of federal affairs for Simon and Company, a Washington-based lobbying firm that does work for the city of Fresno.

The bill calls for 15 "demonstration projects" at "eligible toll facilities." Toll proceeds can be used on emissions reduction, congestion management or highway expansion, according to the bill.

Feinstein will push to make the Valley truck toll one of the 15 projects, said Howard Gantman, a Feinstein spokesman.

But "they have some legal hurdles to get through," said Darrin Roth, director of highway operations for American Trucking Associations. The demonstration programs can be implemented only on existing toll roads, according to the transportation bill. Roads without tolls can qualify if they have high occupancy vehicle lanes, or if new lanes are built.

Interstate 5 is not a toll road through the Valley and does not have high occupancy vehicle lanes along the stretch, according to the California Department of Transportation. So a new lane would have to be built in order to collect the toll, under the rules in the bill.

Collecting tolls on Highway 99 could be easier because it is a state highway. That means tolls could be collected without federal approval, Roth said. But, he added, toll proponents might have to overcome federal interstate commerce laws because trucks coming from other states could be tolled under the plan.

Even then, the toll could face opposition from the trucking industry.

"We would very much be opposed to it," Roth said.

State Helps Clear Air One Car at a Time

By Doane Yawger

[Merced Sun-Star, Wednesday, Aug. 3, 2005](#)

When an older-model car fails a smog test, it could be parked for good if its owner can't afford the expensive repairs needed to fix it. But a state program can come to the rescue while improving air quality as well.

The Consumer Assistance Program runs through the state's Department of Consumer Affairs, Bureau of Automotive Repair. Qualifying low-income individuals can get up to \$500 from the state to get their polluting cars or trucks fixed.

David Hickman owns Advanced Automotive, 1088 E. Childs Ave., one of two Merced auto repair shops participating in the assistance program. He estimates his shop has repaired at least 2,000 cars through the program since 1997; last week they made six CAP-authorized repairs.

"Most of the vehicles are over 10 years old. We get some gross polluters. We are getting more or more newer cars which cost more to fix. I think it's cleaning up the air as best as any program," Hickman said.

The state program paid for 368 repairs from Merced County vehicle owners in the 2004-05 fiscal year which ended Sunday, according to Russ Heimerich, a spokesman for the Department of Consumer Affairs in Sacramento.

Since 2000, the state has paid for smog repairs for almost 1,500 vehicles belonging to Merced County residents, he added.

John Daniel owns Performance Auto Repair, 1145 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, the second local garage taking part in the state program. He and Hickman agree other smog-testing stations in Merced aren't informing people about the Consumer Assistance Program like they should.

"It's a real good program. The object of the program is to maintain cars and help them run cleaner and better. The biggest problem is not many people know about the program," Daniel said.

Lloyd Thorn of Merced is a retired paving company employee. His 1978 Chevrolet El Camino just failed smog testing needed to renew the vehicle registration. He filled out the CAP application, was approved and took the light truck to Advanced Automotive to get the work done.

"I'm 100 percent satisfied. I've owned the El Camino since 1980 and it has 126,000 miles. Now it runs like brand-new; I think the car can run another 100,000 miles," Thorn said.

Repairs on Thorn's El Camino totaled \$434, which included fixing a plugged intake manifold and a defective smog valve.

Daniel said his shop was handling 10 to 15 cars a week last year but now they are averaging six or seven jobs a week. Vehicles repaired generally are 1978 to 1993 models but his shop gets cars as new as 2002.

Most of the vehicles fail the smog tests due to improper maintenance or are just driven a lot. It can take one to three days to complete most repairs but occasionally up to two weeks depending on parts availability, according to Daniel.

Hickman said for a while the Sacramento program had only three people to process applications but supposedly more staff has been added to clear the lengthy backlog. Costs for his services could run from \$38 for a smog check to up to \$900 for some repairs. A typical fix could be as simple as a worn-out gas cap to replacing sensors, catalytic converters, vacuum lines and EGR valves, Hickman said.

Low-income individuals also can apply for economic hardships through the Bureau of Automotive Repair, which gives them a two-year extension to get the smog problems fixed, Hickman said. New renewal notices from the DMV explain the Consumer Assistance Program process.

To qualify for the program, the applicant must be the registered owner, the car must have current registration and the emissions system must not have been tampered with.

An eligibility table is provided for CAP applicants who must pay the first \$20 toward diagnosis and repair. Maximum annual income ranges from \$17,224 for one person to \$58,405 for a family of eight.

Applications must be approved by Sacramento officials before assistance is received. For more information about the program, call 1-866-272-9642.

Air district accords blasted

Bakersfield builders defend agreements with agency officials

By Barbara Anderson

[Fresno Bee, Tuesday, August 2, 2005](#)

Two Bakersfield developers who signed contracts with air officials to fight pollution from their projects defended the pact Monday at an air quality hearing in Fresno.

Environmentalists criticized the way the agreements were executed between the developers and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. And builders expressed concern that the contracts could be used as a precedent in setting fees charged to developers Valleywide for pollution control.

After listening to both sides, Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter, said he applauded the Bakersfield developers' decision to come forward and commit to clean up the air. But Florez said a contract "defeats the purpose of having an evenly applied" rule for assessing developer fees for pollution created from traffic and other activities associated with new developments.

In 2003, the Legislature directed the air pollution control district to evaluate the impact on air quality from developments and develop a fee schedule to mitigate the impact.

The air district is still working on rules for imposing fees on developers.

Florez said the goal of holding the Senate Select Hearing on Environmental Quality in Fresno was to get environmental activists and developers talking about a per-parcel cost that could be agreed on to help clean the air and stop lawsuits.

For the past three years, developers in Kern County have been sued regularly by the Sierra Club over proposed projects and air pollution. The developers usually settle the lawsuits out of court and agree to pay an air impact fee for each home.

A Sierra Club representative said at the hearing he would like to see a strong Valleywide rule for developers. He questioned the air district signing contracts with individual builders.

"It's unclear exactly what they [the contracts] say," said Gordon Nipp, a Sierra Club volunteer in Bakersfield.

Executives at Tejon Ranch Corp. and Castle & Cooke California Inc., the developers of the two Bakersfield-area projects, approached the air district at the end of last year and proposed cutting as much pollution as possible from two large projects. They also agreed to pay the district to eliminate pollution in areas around their developments.

The district has yet to determine the fee to mitigate pollution caused by Castle & Cooke's proposed 7,500-home residential development in Bakersfield.

But Tejon agreed to pay the district \$531,900 to offset pollution from its 15 million-square-foot warehouse and industrial complex about 20 miles south of Bakersfield on Interstate 5. The money will be used to replace old diesel engines at nearby farms.

"We both came out of it with something we could live with," said Joe Drew, representing Tejon.

David Crow, the air district's executive director, said contracts "offer an important opportunity to reflect community standards."

But Mike Webb, representing the California Building Industry Association, said individual agreements between the air district and developers are reason for concern. Contracts could increase the cost of housing, he said, "and reduce housing affordability over time."

New rule lets planners pick project consultants

By GRETCHEN WENNER, Californian staff writer

[Bakersfield Californian, Wednesday, Aug. 3, 2005](#)

Big development projects will be processed differently by the county, supervisors decided Tuesday when voting 4-1 to change the way key reports are handled.

Kern's old rules allowed developers to hire specialized consultants to prepare so-called "environmental impact reports." The massive, expensive documents spell out effects of big projects on plants, air, water, soil and people.

The new rule allows county planners to choose those consultants. Costs will be reimbursed by developers, but consultants will work for and report to county staff.

The change will only affect big projects that require the reports, such as warehouse-type retail stores, large housing tracts, dairies, wind farms and industrial facilities.

The revisions will streamline processing and erase any perception of consultant bias, said Ted James, the county's chief planner who requested the change.

James' department has recently held meetings with developers, consultants and environmentalists to iron out details of the revisions.

Two people spoke during the public hearing.

William Nelson, an environmental consultant from Tehachapi, said sub-consultants should also be hired by the county, not developers.

Gordon Nipp of the local Sierra Club chapter suggested the county also hire the consultants who determine whether the environmental reports are required.

Supervisor Ray Watson cast the only "no" vote.

"I just don't like the sound of it," Watson said.

If project applicants want to hire another environmental consultant to serve as their advocate, they'll have to shell out twice, he said.

"There definitely needs to be an advocate for the applicant," Watson said.

Supervisor Barbara Patrick, who led the motion to approve the changes, said "it is absolutely the direction we need to go."

Supervisor Jon McQuiston said the new policy essentially mirrors the city of Bakersfield's and is a "necessary step forward."

Developers who already paid a deposit before the vote will be able to finish projects under the old rules. Recently formalized plans for the proposed Tejon Mountain Village, for example, a swanky high-end community in Tejon Ranch, will be processed under the old rules.

[Fresno Bee and Sacramento Bee, Editorial, Wednesday, August 3, 2005:](#)

Hybrid hypocrisy

New incentives foolishly skewed in favor of gas-guzzling models

Unfortunately, neither measure makes a useful distinction between good hybrids and bad.

Hybrid cars, which can switch between battery-powered electric motors and gasoline engines, are the latest, hippest symbols of green technology. They are widely viewed as a way for Americans to save money, lessen our dependence on foreign oil and reduce pollution.

The early hybrid models did just that. But in a quest for better performance, many of the latest models, which critics have dubbed "muscle hybrids," sacrifice fuel economy for power.

The federal transportation and energy bills awaiting the president's signature recognize hybrids' fuel-saving potential. Unfortunately, neither measure makes a useful distinction between good hybrids and bad.

The energy bill expands tax breaks for all hybrid cars, giving hybrid buyers not just tax deductions, as previous laws did, but straight, dollar-for-dollar tax credits of up to \$3,000. Under the bill, the higher the fuel efficiency, the higher the credit. That's not a bad thing -- except that the tax credit is based on weight class. So buyers of gas-guzzling hybrids, a big SUV or pickup that uses some hybrid technology, but gets as little as 15.1 miles per gallon, can still qualify for a federal tax credit. That's absurd.

The law also apportions the credits among car manufacturers, allowing for a tax break on only the first 60,000 hybrids sold. So by 2007, buyers of the fast-selling Toyota Prius hybrid that gets 60 mpg in the city won't receive any tax credits at all, while buyers of GM's Chevy Silverado hybrid pickup truck, which gets only 17 mpg, would qualify for more than \$1,000 in federal tax breaks. That's no path to energy independence.

The federal transportation bill contains another ill-considered provision that would permit states to allow drivers of all hybrid cars to use carpool lanes.

Even had the federal transportation bill limited carpool lane access to the most fuel-efficient hybrids, as California law does, it would still be bad policy.

Carpool lanes were not created primarily to save fuel but to reduce congestion. In already crowded urban areas, allowing solo drivers in hybrids access to carpool lanes could clog those lanes, reducing incentives for drivers to carpool.

It also makes it harder for police to enforce the law. Now traffic cops can merely look to see if a solo driver is in the carpool lane to know a violation has been committed. Under the new federal energy measure,

that same cop has to find a sticker that permits some solo drivers to use the lane. It's confusing both to the cops and other drivers.

The federal energy and transportation bills tried to send a signal on hybrids and fuel efficiency. Unfortunately, that signal is mostly muddled.

[Modesto Bee, Editorial, Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2005:](#)

Bush's alliance makes no progress on clean air

Think about this as you swelter in the valley haze, pondering the significance of warmer ocean temperatures, more frequent and ferocious hurricanes, and droughts around the globe:

The Bush administration announced an alliance against global warming Thursday. It is strictly voluntary. It has no goals, targets or timetables. And it duplicates existing and ineffective arrangements with each of the other five nations in the group. In short, it's about what you'd expect from an administration that knows little and cares even less about the environment.

The United States, Australia, Japan, South Korea, China and India are the members of the mighty new coalition. The United States already was pursuing bilateral agreements with each of them. The focus of the agreements is to develop and share energy technology to reduce the amount of "greenhouse gases" associated with global warming.

That's the Bush administration's answer to the Kyoto Protocol, which it refuses to sign.

The White House position on Kyoto is that the United States will do anything necessary to reduce dangerous emissions - but only if it doesn't cost us anything. Some dislocation is inevitable under the Kyoto treaty, at least in the short term, so the Bush administration position neatly and effectively rules out any U.S. participation.

The president claims to be enamored of technological fixes for global warming, and they have an important place in the effort. He likes them so much, that he cut the funding for his own Climate Change Technology Program by \$124million in his budget request. Meanwhile, he signed an energy bill that doled out \$3 billion in tax breaks and incentives to the already immensely profitable oil firms.

It gets worse: On the eve of a final vote in Congress on the energy bill, the Environmental Protection Agency decided to hold back a report that says the fuel efficiency of vehicles on American roads has fallen back to the levels of the late 1980s. We're going backward, not forward - but let's not let that fact affect decisions on important legislation. The Bush administration fought mightily to prevent any tightening of the Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards. Now the energy bill makes no reference to fuel efficiency, declining or otherwise.

Simultaneously, the administration and congressional leaders successfully kept mandates for renewable energy from staining the legislation.

So cars burn more gas, alternative energy doesn't get explored and global warming is addressed solely as a profit-and-loss issue. The air we breathe might be murky, but one thing is clear - this isn't progress.

[Bakersfield Californian, Commentary, Wednesday, Aug. 3, 2005:](#)

Nuclear power not a solution to air quality woes

By FRED SIMON, Bakersfield

In his article on nuclear power plants, history professor Randall Beeman forgot his history. If Americans "believed they could no longer do big things" after 1975, it is for many reasons -- he mentions none.

Just 12 years earlier our president was assassinated; a war that we did not and could not win had just ended; and for the first time a president resigned. Our national confidence as was dubious.

Beeman uses five examples of "monumental" works that exemplify America's past. We can agree these are historically significant, but should they be works of which we should boast? The Manhattan Project? Should we be proud of developing the most hideous weapons ever devised?

We all agree that a significant problem affecting the Central Valley is air quality. Experts see this as a cumulative problem to be resolved by myriad solutions. Yet Beeman simplifies the reasons for our poor air quality to motor vehicles traversing the valley and "the area's many power plants," none of which he discusses. I can imagine the air quality problem resolved, but not through construction of nuclear power plants.

Beeman fails to relate the history of nuclear projects in Kern County and the Central Valley. Does he know about the attempt by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to construct a nuclear power plant northwest of Wasco? Does he know about concerns of citizens regarding this project, questioning the water source to cool the facility; the disposition of salts from cooling towers on farmland surrounding the plant and impacts on climate from water vapor expelled from the plant?

Since this was a city of Los Angeles facility, none of the power would have been realized by Kern County citizens. Lastly, is he aware that Kern County citizens overwhelmingly rejected this project in an advisory election?

Beeman does not mention that the Sacramento Municipal Utility District built and ran a nuclear power plant for many years, only to shut it down because of maintenance problems and inefficiencies. Travel north on Highway 99. Somewhere near Galt, look east and see the cold, lifeless towers still looming on the horizon, a monument to failure.

Beeman's reasons for building nuclear plants sound more like arguments against construction of them. He says those promoting nuclear power "make a strong argument that it has a *fairly* strong safety record" (emphasis added).

If there is an accident at a hydroelectric plant, a wind farm or solar collectors, potential problems are very short term and site specific. We may be without power for a minimal amount of time.

However, an accident at a nuclear power plant will result in long-term problems to human life and our land, air and water supplies.

Our solutions for resolving air quality problems should rest with developing efficient transportation that will not pollute; perfecting solar and wind power; reducing our thirst for more electricity; conserving farmland; and making cities more livable. This is how we should use our ingenuity to create a better world, not building nuclear plants.

Fred Simon of Bakersfield is a landscape architect and planner with his own business. Community Voices is an expanded commentary that may contain up to 500 words.

[Tulare Advance-Register, Letter to the Editor, Tuesday, Aug 2, 2005:](#)

Base air regulations on real science

My position as a consultant to dairies in the San Joaquin Valley provides me with a unique perspective relative to environmental issues. I constantly hear from regulators that our industry doesn't care about or doesn't want to acknowledge environmental regulations.

My response has been and continues to be that, No. 1: As pragmatic practitioners of animal husbandry (the application of scientific principles to the management of animal production), the welfare of the animals is foremost, and, No. 2: Most of the resistance to regulation is directly related to the fact that regulations are rarely science based and frequently conflict with other regulations.

The recent proposed determination of VOC emission factors for dairies is yet another example of regulation ignoring real science. The end result will be the imposition of mitigation technologies that will require extraordinary expenditures with no measurable improvement in air quality. I would love to be a salesman for a mitigation technology where I could confidently market a reduction of 75 percent of emissions even if my product did absolutely nothing.

I am confident in the scientific integrity of the researchers involved in the California studies. I am also impressed with the presentation by Dr. Julia Lester that describes the great scientific integrity of the researchers involved in the California studies. I am also impressed with the presentation by Lester that describes in great scientific detail why the Hobbs et al. study is inappropriate for inclusion in this proposed

emission factor. The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District needs to continue to study emissions on actual California dairies under actual operating conditions to identify emission sources and effective control technologies. The district owes it to the dairy industry and to the taxpayers of California.

There are no epidemiological studies, that I am aware of, which suggest negative health impacts of dairy emissions on either dairy families or their employees. The suggestion that emissions from cows, even in large numbers, produce emissions equivalent to motor vehicles is absurd. I challenge you to spend the night in a closed space with an idling automobile while I spend the night in a similar space with any practical number of cows. We can discuss our experiences in the morning, if you are able.

Dairy owners and managers rely on good science to determine management practices which are in the best interest of their cows, employees, families and their businesses. Let's not squander precious resources on mitigations required by reliance on less than the best science available. I can assure you that the industry and the public will resist impractical and ineffective regulation.

BRUCE LIVINGSTON

President, Livingston Dairy Consulting Inc.

Tulare

[Bakersfield Californian, Letter to the Editor, Wednesday, Aug. 3, 2005:](#)

Solar panel solution

This is in response to the instructor from Bakersfield College and his proposal of nuclear power as a solution to valley air problems. I have another idea.

Instead of establishing terrorist targets (nuclear plants) in our midst and trying to find a solution to the toxic by-products of these facilities, which will last longer than our current civilization, why not follow the governor's idea of having solar panels on all new homes?

Actually, it would probably cost less to install solar on all homes in California than to build, guard and maintain these nuclear plants and the long-term storage of their deadly waste.

Oh, I forgot the poor utilities would suffer and there would go a major source of political funding.

I have solar on my roof and have already eliminated approximately 1590 kg of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in less than a year. Therein lies the solution.

-- RONALD MARVIN, Bakersfield

[Bakersfield Californian, Letter to the Editor, Wednesday, Aug. 3, 2005:](#)

Ban all fireworks

The silence is deafening. Just last month everybody was upset about the Fourth of July fireworks, including the city's fire chief who suggested a total ban on all fireworks -- legal and illegal.

I'm tired of all of the illegal fireworks, tired of neighbors setting off fireworks that explode on or near my home and tired of the very poor air quality for 24 hours.

It is painfully obvious we need an immediate ban on all fireworks within the city of Bakersfield. I'm requesting the City Council take the lead and introduce a motion at the next council meeting to follow the recommendations of the fire chief.

I'm sure the council will take some flak from a few who prosper on the negative effects of Fourth 4th of July fireworks. So be it.

If they cannot muster a majority to shut down fireworks, we will know who is in the back pocket of the local fireworks cartel. If they will not take a responsible position on this very important matter, maybe it is time for all of us who are opposed to all fireworks to get out the petitions.

-- DONALD F. KURTZ, Bakersfield

