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[Air district chief asks Congress for rule flexibility](#)

By The Bakersfield Californian

The director of the valley's air pollution control district testified before a congressional subcommittee Thursday about problems with the Clean Air Act.

Seyed Sadredin, director of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, gave politicians a detailed look at the difficulties of working with the myriad rules, bureaucratic policies and court decisions that have calcified around the act over the past 20 years.

He stressed that his goal is not to have the act gutted, but to tweak certain implementation rules to create greater flexibility.

"I'm hoping this is a setting for the beginnings of intelligent fine-tuning of the act," he said after his testimony.

Essentially, he told committee members, the act has been applied in a one-size-fits-all manner without taking into account various regions' unique challenges and that it ignores realities of economy and technology.

The act tasks the Environmental Protection Agency with reviewing the latest, best science every five years to determine if new standards for pollutant concentrations should be set. The act does not say the EPA should take into account whether those standards are economically feasible, nor even technologically realistic.

Without such guidance from Congress, bureaucrats and courts have stepped in to set policy. The result has been overlap, confusion and unmeetable goals.

For example, he said, the San Joaquin Valley is now operating under six different implementation plans for six different standards on ozone and particulate matter.

And the latest standard for ozone being considered by the EPA would require the valley to ban all fossil fuel combustion or have only zero-emission engines from trains and trucks to leaf blowers and pump motors within the next 20 years.

Sadredin suggested various ways to fix some of the problems, including separating the health standards from the implementation schedule. That way standards wouldn't trigger automatic deadlines, as they do now.

Each region could then analyze the best way to achieve those standards under timelines that make sense for its economy and available technology.

Sadredin said he was encouraged by the questions he received from staffers about his ideas on how to fine-tune the act.

But he acknowledged the political realities, noting those who came to watch the "bipartisan" hearing were almost all Republicans. The Democratic leadership was conspicuously absent.

-- *Lois Henry, Californian columnist*

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ABOUT THE HEARING

This was the third forum on the Clean Air Act held by Congressman Ed Whitfield, R-Ky., chairman of the Subcommittee on Energy and Power.

Two other, similar forums were held July 31 and Aug. 2. The stated goal is to understand how the act is being implemented throughout the country.

You can watch Sadredin's testimony here: energycommerce.house.gov/hearings