

Betsy Reifsnider

08-11-4

Help for Today...
Hope for Tomorrow

Catholic Charities
Diocese of Stockton

G. Richard Fowler
Executive Director

December 11, 2008

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Chairwoman Mary Nichols and Members of the Board
California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95812

**RE: Proposed Statewide Truck and Bus Regulation
and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Truck Regulation**

Dear Chairwoman Nichols and Board Members:

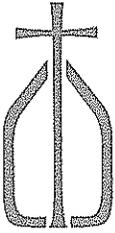
Catholic Charities, Diocese of Stockton urges the Air Resources Board to enact the strongest possible regulations governing diesel truck and bus exhaust emissions without delay. The Stockton Diocese serves the counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Calaveras, Alpine, and Mono.

We urge you to take strong action for several reasons:

- 1. People's lives are at stake, especially children, the elderly, and the poor.** According to the study conducted for the Air Resources Board by Dr. Jane Hall of California State University, Fullerton, "Children under the age of 5 are exposed to unhealthy ozone concentrations on more days than adults. Blacks and Hispanics experience somewhat more frequent exposures to elevated levels of PM_{2.5} than non-Hispanic whites do. These disadvantaged groups all stand to gain relatively more from successful pollution reduction efforts."
- 2. Many people exposed to unhealthy levels of air pollution cannot afford health insurance.** According to the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, one-fifth of children and non-elderly adults with daily or weekly asthma symptoms were uninsured for all or part of the year. In San Joaquin County, over 20% of non-elderly residents do not have health insurance. In Stanislaus County, the figure is 21%. The uninsured are forced to seek help at hospital emergency rooms, or not at all.
- 3. Pollution from particulate matter jeopardizes the Central Valley economy.** Dr. Hall's study found, "In the San Joaquin Valley overall, the cost of air pollution is more than \$1,600 per person per year, which translates into a total of nearly



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\$6 billion in savings if federal ozone and PM_{2.5} standards were met.” For San Joaquin County alone, the savings would be \$761,000,000. In Stanislaus County, the savings would be \$686,000,000.

By meeting federal ozone and fine particulate standards, the Central Valley could save \$28 billion annually in health care costs, school absences, missed work and lost income potential from premature deaths.

The Central Valley already has some of the highest poverty rates in California. In San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties, the poverty rate stands at 15% and the child poverty rate at almost 20%, according to the California Budget Project. Our people cannot afford these high levels of air pollution.

4. Central Valley agriculture will suffer if greenhouse gas emissions from heavy-duty vehicles are not strictly regulated.

According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, “If global warming continues unchecked, rising temperatures and potential changes in precipitation patterns will pose serious challenges for California’s agriculture and forestry industries... higher temperatures will increase crop demand for water, while supply will become less reliable due to declining snowpack in the mountains.

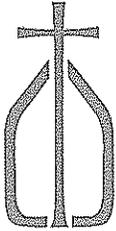
Higher temperatures will also alter the range of crop-damaging pests and microbial diseases. Finally, global climate change may enhance ozone pollution, which harms plant growth and makes them more susceptible to disease and pests... High-value fruit crops such as almonds, cherries, and apricots may no longer be able to be produced in California. Unchecked global warming is expected to impair wine-grape growing throughout the Central Valley by mid-century.”

5. Workers in the trucking industry should not be treated as second-class citizens when it comes to their health.

Truck drivers have an excess lifetime cancer risk. Studies show that truckers have higher rates of lung and heart disease than most people because of their increased exposure to diesel soot. Reducing diesel particulate matter will improve the health of people in the trucking industry and the general public who live or work near diesel vehicles.



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6. Children will benefit from reducing diesel emissions from school buses.

According to the Environmental Defense Fund, diesel pollution inside typical school buses can be five times higher than the outside air. Children who ride a diesel school bus may be exposed to as much as four times more toxic diesel exhaust than someone riding in a car directly in front of it.

Finally, we join many environmental and public health groups in urging the Air Resources Board to strengthen the proposed Truck and Bus Regulation and Greenhouse Gas Truck Regulation the Proposed Statewide Truck and Bus Regulation as follows:

- Adopt the proposed global warming and toxic emissions regulations without delaying implementation dates or weakening health protections.
- Provide greater health protection for agriculture-related trucks.
- Expand the global warming requirements to achieve greater greenhouse gas and nitrogen oxide reductions.

Thank you for taking this historic step to safeguard the health of California's people, our economy, and our environment.

Sincerely,

Betsy Reifsnider
Environmental Justice Coordinator



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