Air Resources Board

Alan C. Lloyd, Ph.D.
Chairman
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San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution Control District

Kenni Friedman
Chair
1990 East Gettysburg Avenue
Fresno, CA 93726-0244

April 22, 1999

Dear Madam/Sir:

Smoke Management Workshop in the San Joaquin Valley

We invite you to participate in a workshop that is being co-sponsored by the California Air Resources Board (ARB) and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (San Joaquin Valley District). The purpose of the workshop is to discuss proposed concepts for revisions to regulations governing agricultural burning. Both the ARB and the San Joaquin Valley District are developing improvements to the smoke management program for the Valley and statewide.

Workshop Date, Time, and Place

Monday, May 17, 1999
1-5 p.m.
San Joaquin Valley District Offices: Fresno, Modesto, and Bakersfield

In-Person Presentation:
San Joaquin Valley District Office, Governing Board Room
1990 E. Gettysburg Ave.
Fresno

Remote Video-Teleconferencing Facilities:

San Joaquin Valley District Office	San Joaquin Valley District Office
4230 Kiernan Ave., Suite 130	2700 M Street, Suite 275
Modesto	Bakersfield

Agricultural burning refers to the intentional use of fire for vegetation management – both in agricultural areas such as fields and orchards, as well as in wildlands such as rangeland and forests. These revisions would cover growers who burn agricultural waste, as well as land managers who use prescribed burning on rangelands and forests.

California's existing agricultural burning regulation has generally been effective in managing current levels of burning for agricultural and wildland management. However, agricultural burning has caused some short-term, high-impact smoke episodes in downwind communities. In addition, smoke from all types of agricultural burning has the potential to affect California's ability to meet the health-based air quality standards and upcoming national visibility requirements. Anticipated increases in prescribed burning by federal and state forestry agencies further support a regulatory review. Improving smoke management while accommodating agricultural burning is an important step toward healthful air quality for Valley residents and all Californians.

Based on preliminary scoping sessions, the ARB staff has developed a "concept paper" (see Attachment 1) to provide a starting point for discussion at the workshop. San Joaquin Valley District staff will discuss the District's planned program improvements. We also encourage discussion of smoke management issues affecting other districts in the central region of the State.

Following this workshop, ARB and San Joaquin Valley District staff will develop draft, regulatory amendments, which will be discussed at future public meetings. ARB staff plan to finalize their proposal for the Board's consideration and adoption in late 1999. ARB staff's complete proposal will be available to the public for comment 45 days prior to the Board Hearing.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District staff will be presenting conceptual changes to the District's agricultural burn program that would allow a smoke management program. With this proposed smoke management program concept, there would be more days when agricultural burning would be allowed but there would also be a cap in the amount of material that could be burned each day. Prescribed burns will also be handled as part of this smoke management program. The amount of burning allowed to take place on any given day would be determined by several factors including local meteorology, air quality conditions, and atmospheric holding capacity. Other considerations on burn days would be the amount of burning already approved in a given area and the potential impacts on downwind populations. Localized and regional air quality impacts are expected to be reduced with this system.

All meeting facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. If accommodation is needed, please contact Ms. Bertha Bache, ARB, at (916) 327-6181 two weeks prior to the meeting. Persons with hearing or speech impairments can contact ARB by using Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (916) 324-9531 or (800) 700-8326 for TDD calls from outside the Sacramento area.

We look forward to discussing our proposal with you. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the workshop location or the concept paper, please contact Mr. Bill Wilson, ARB, at (916) 324-9747, or Mr. Evan Shipp, Valley District, at (559) 230-5809. Written comments should be sent to Mr. Terry McGuire, Division Chief, Planning & Technical Support Division, at the California Air Resources Board.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Kenny
Executive Officer
California Air Resources Board

David L. Crow
Air Pollution Control Officer
San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution Control District

Attachment (1)