

I am very concerned that the Central Valley's air quality is routinely ranked among the nation's worst. In order to improve our air quality, we have to know which pollutants are the most common and where they are coming from. In addition, the topography of the southern Central Valley only exacerbates our air quality issues by trapping pollutants in the Bakersfield and Kern County areas.

In Fiscal Year 2008, I obtained \$1.4 million for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Study Agency to complete the Central California Ozone Study (CCOS). CCOS is a multi-year study, nearing completion, that is designed to provide data and analyses of pollutants in our air to help California public officials develop policies to comply with new federal air quality standards for ozone and other pollutants. Furthermore, results of the study will be provided to local air monitoring agencies to help them better understand the role of local emissions and to identify equitable and effective emission controls to achieve various local, state, and federal clean air, emission, and ozone standards.

In addition to the study, I am a strong supporter of alternative and renewable energies that may help reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and clean up our air. For instance, I support various tax incentives for wind, solar, and nuclear energy, which produce little to no emissions when generating electricity, as well as development of alternatives to gasoline that may not only help reduce car and truck emissions, but also reduce our dependence on foreign sources of oil.

To that end, I have cosponsored legislation (H.R. 2927) that would increase the corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standards, or how many miles per gallon cars and trucks get, for automobiles and SUVs to 32-35 miles per gallon over a reasonable timeframe. This legislation was incorporated in a larger bill that was enacted into law in December 2007. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is currently in the process of implementing this law by developing a rule that would establish CAFE standards for cars and light trucks built between 2011 and 2015. Detailed information on the proposed CAFE standards rule can be accessed on the Internet at www.nhtsa.gov.

Finally, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), acting on a request from the California Air Resources Board, is in the process of designating the San Joaquin Valley air basin as an attainment area for PM-10 large particulate matter because the air meets certain federal clean air standards. PM-10 is one of 6 air pollutants EPA regulates under the Clean Air Act and includes things like pollution from burning fire places, agriculture operations/burning, and construction sites. This is a significant step forward for the San Joaquin Valley and

Q: What can we do to improve the air quality in Kern County?

indicates our air is getting cleaner. The proposal is set to be finalized by mid-summer. Detailed information on this issue can be accessed at <http://www.epa.gov/region09/air/sjvalleypm/> .

This is an extremely important issue in Bakersfield, Kern County, and the Central Valley, and I will continue to work with my colleagues in the 110th Congress to help ensure our air is clean and we can all breathe easy.