



The Web Site of The Sacramento Bee

This story is taken from [Sacbee / Politics](#).

Greenhouse gas proposals unveiled

Six measures seek to help reduce state emissions by 2020.

By Jim Downing - Bee Staff Writer

Published 12:00 am PDT Friday, September 7, 2007

State air pollution chief Mary Nichols on Thursday unveiled six new measures to trim California's greenhouse gas emissions, including requirements to streamline big rigs, keep vehicle tires properly inflated and stop cargo ships from idling their engines in port.

With the proposal, Nichols made good on a July promise to the Legislature that she would accelerate efforts to implement Assembly Bill 32, which requires the state to cut climate-warming emissions 25 percent by 2020.

She also soothed critics of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, whose commitment to fighting climate change was questioned earlier this summer following a dispute between Robert Sawyer, Nichols' predecessor as chair of the Air Resources Board, which will vote on the proposals, and members of the governor's staff.

Schwarzenegger fired Sawyer in June after he backed a plan to accelerate the adoption of heat-reflecting "cool paints" for new vehicles, which can help reduce the load on automobile air conditioners and thus save fuel. Critics charged that dispute showed the governor was happy to talk about fighting climate change but unwilling to back proposals that might be unpopular with industry.

"This proposal shows that AB 32 implementation is really back on track," said Bill Magavern, senior representative with Sierra Club California. "I think the message was sent from the top."

The cool-paints provision does not appear on Nichols' list of six measures which, if adopted by the full board, would go into effect by Jan. 1, 2010.

In an interview, Nichols said the agency does plan to introduce a cool-paint regulation at some point in the future but that agency staff members don't think it could be ready by 2010. A mandate for cool paints likely would be bundled with other measures, such as tinted windows, she said.

Of the six measures that Nichols announced on Thursday, only the tire-inflation requirement is likely to impact most consumers -- and then only indirectly. The rule would require mechanics to check and properly inflate tires when servicing a car, something many garages already do. Drivers would not be ticketed for running their tires below the recommended pressure, Nichols said.

Environmental groups applauded the proposals, particularly a requirement to make electric power available to docked cargo ships so they can turn off their engines. In addition to being a source of carbon dioxide, ship exhaust contributes to poor air quality in communities near ports, so electrifying docks would have a double benefit, said Devra Wang, director of the California energy program for the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Nearly half of the emissions reductions under the new proposals would come from a single measure: making tractor-trailers more fuel efficient by requiring proper tire inflation and aerodynamic fairings to reduce drag.

Matthew Schrap, manager of environmental affairs with the California Trucking Association, said the

proposed regulations would further burden an industry already dealing with other air board regulations. He said those include engine retrofits, which cut emissions of tiny particles and smog-forming chemicals but tend to worsen fuel efficiency as well.

All told, the six measures proposed by Nichols would cut the state's annual greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of 2.8 million tons of carbon dioxide. Combined with plans adopted by the air board in June, the state will have committed to annual reductions of about 16 million tons annually. That total amounts to only a fraction of the 170 million-ton-a-year cut required by 2020.

Still, Nichols said she's optimistic that California can meet its long-term target without requiring consumers to make significant lifestyle changes. Though electrical utilities, for instance, likely will struggle to dramatically increase the renewable energy sources in their power portfolio, "that isn't going to be something that's going to affect peoples' ability to turn their lights on," she said.

The air board is set to vote on the measures announced Thursday at a meeting Oct. 25-26. Agency staff will hold a public workshop on the proposals Sept. 17 in Sacramento.

Go to: [Sacbee](#) / [Back to story](#)

This article is protected by copyright and should not be printed or distributed for anything except personal use.
The Sacramento Bee, 2100 Q St., P.O. Box 15779, Sacramento, CA 95852
Phone: (916) 321-1000

Copyright © [The Sacramento Bee](#)