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Care for God's Creation

News from the Stockton Diocese Environmental Justice Project

Soot is hazardous to your health

By Richard Chang, Sacramento Bee, July 20, 2012. Jesse and Jessika Hernandez were barely a year old when the twins contracted asthma. Now, at age 10, they grapple with the illness every day, missing school and ending up in a hospital, because of the poor air quality in their native Fresno.

The two were among several dozen that attended the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Sacramento hearing on national air quality standards on July 19th. The agency is proposing a change to the annual standard for soot and is seeking the public's input

At the hearing, regulators got an earful. Some decried the agency for not protecting public health, while others blamed regulations for driving them out of business. "It's a difficult balancing act," said Errol Villegas, program manager for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. "How do we balance public health with jobs?"

The stakes for California are high. It is one of the worst soot-polluted states in the country. The American Lung Association said 70 percent of California's soot pollution originates in the transportation industry, with trucks, trains and airplanes the biggest polluters. The remaining 30 percent comes from power plants, manufacturing and home sources.

<http://www.sacbee.com/2012/07/20/4643552/epa-hears-public-views-of-changes.html>

How to go from hazardous to healthy

Catholic Charities is working with a coalition of local planning, public health, and environmental justice groups to make sure that traditionally under-represented communities are part of a once-in-a-generation opportunity to decide how the San Joaquin Valley will grow.

A new state law, SB 375, encourages local governments and transportation agencies to work with local communities to develop a "Sustainable Communities Strategy" addressing issues such as public transportation, clean air, and affordable housing. Help Catholic Charities work with the San Joaquin and Stanislaus Councils of Governments to plan how we want our communities to work for decades to come. To volunteer, call: 209-444-5925 or email betsyr@ccstockton.org

"We are called to assist the earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own -- indeed, to embrace the whole creation in all its diversity, beauty, and wonder."

- Wangari Maathai

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How many watts did you drink today?

By Dan Brekke, the California Report, KQED, June 10, 2012.
Ever wonder how much juice it takes to move water? When you open that faucet, it's more than water that's flowing.

A few years back, number crunchers at the California Energy Commission tried to add up how much electrical power (and other forms of energy) goes into using water in California. The bottom line number they came up with: 19%. That is, nearly a fifth of all the power generated in California — as well as huge quantities of natural gas and diesel fuel consumed in the state — goes into water-related uses. You might call that report, entitled "California's Water-Energy Relationship," The Great Wake-Up Call.

The idea that so much power could go into this one vital activity—moving and treating and using water—is both stunning and captivating. And it has spurred both state agencies and water and power utilities into action. Learn more at:

<http://www.kqed.org/news/science/climatewatch/waterandpower>

August opportunities

Saturday, August 4, Turlock: "Tune In & Tune Up" with a **free** smog check and repair from 9 am to 3 pm at the Stanislaus County fairgrounds, 900 N. Broadway, Turlock, sponsored by Valley Clean Air Now and San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. For info, email: turlockevent@valley-can.org or call: 1-800-806-2004.

Monday, August 8, Stockton: Screening of "Over Troubled Waters," at 7:00 pm at Empire Theater, 1825 Pacific Avenue. This beautiful, compelling documentary, narrated by Ed Begley, Jr., follows the fight by local people to protect the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta from destruction and to advocate for wiser water policies.
<http://overtroubledwaters.org>

Wednesday, August 15, Sacramento: Central Valley Air Quality Coalition's (CVAQ) ninth annual Clean Air Action Day at the State Capitol. Join 100 CVAQ volunteers who will visit their state legislators and lobby for clean air. Register by August 6th at: www.calcleanair.org and click "campaigns."

About the Stockton Diocese Environmental Justice Project...

Since 2005, the Environmental Justice Project has worked "to educate and motivate Catholics to a deeper reverence and respect for God's creation, and to engage local parishes in activities aimed at dealing with environmental problems, particularly as they affect the poor." The Project brings a unique Catholic voice to the public policy debate in the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada.

Websites to Care for Creation:

Catholic Charities, Stockton Diocese: www.ccstockton.org

National Catholic Rural Life Conference: www.ncrlc.com

Catholic Climate Covenant:
www.catholicclimatecovenant.org
