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From the Los Angeles Times

## **Air board acts on greenhouse gas rules**

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State regulators will move cautiously toward reducing greenhouse gases, officials implementing the nation's toughest clean-air standards indicated Thursday.

California Air Resources Board members voted 6 to 3 to adopt "early action" measures that could eventually require cars and trucks to use alternative fuels such as ethanol and bio-diesel, restrict the use of some automobile air-conditioning refrigerants and force landfills to capture methane gas formed by rotting garbage.

But officials ordered staff members to come back in six months with an analysis of concerns raised during six hours of hearings in Los Angeles by business and environmental groups concerned about strategies used to tackle climate change.

Air board members indicated that the emissions restrictions could be expanded — or eased — between now and 2010, when the greenhouse gas control rules are scheduled to begin being enforced.

"Global warming is one of the most serious issues we face today," said board Chairman Dr. Robert F. Sawyer in a statement. "These early actions will realize prompt emission reductions while a more comprehensive plan is developed."

The new low-carbon fuel standard, the control of do-it-yourself automotive refrigerants and use of more sophisticated trash dump technology are mandated by last year's wide-ranging California Global Warming Solutions Act, or AB 32.

Along with Thursday's three greenhouse gas control rules, the state board is required to adopt 32 other measures designed to protect the climate by the start of 2010.

"It's the first step in realizing goals of that act — to reduce greenhouse gases to 1990 levels by the year 2020," said Gennet Paauwe, a resources board staff member.

Tailpipe exhaust causes more than 40% of greenhouse gas emissions, experts say. California relies on petroleum-based fuels for 96% of its transportation fuel needs, according to a resources board report issued Thursday.

Accidental release of HFC 134a, a canned refrigerant used by vehicle owners to recharge automobile air-conditioning systems, contributes a relatively small amount to climate change, the report noted.

Most of California's landfills are already equipped with gas collection systems, although 41 of them are not, according to the staff analysis.

Board staff members said their six-month follow-up report would address concerns raised Thursday by environmentalists, the South Coast Air Quality Management District and the California Air Pollution Control Officers Assn.

The cautious approach to implementation was met with relief by a coalition of business groups.

"There's certainly a lot of uncertainty — of how it will impact the fuel supply, whether it ultimately will cost the consumer more at the pump, whether the biofuels will be there," said Al Lundeen, a representative of the Western States Petroleum Assn., one of the members of the coalition that calls itself the AB 32 Implementation Group.

"Our group is certainly supportive of the direction we're heading. But we don't know that it's going to be cost-effective or technologically feasible, as required under the legislation."

Others were disappointed in the board's stance.

"Today's vote on early action measures was the first big test of AB 32, the state's landmark climate-change law, and our regulators failed," said state Sen. Don Perata (D-Oakland) in a statement. "The air board's action falls far short of the Senate's expectations and what must be done now to reduce the threat to pollution."

Perata said steps should have been taken to also clean up diesel pollution from trucks, buses and port equipment. He urged board members to "follow the will of the governor, lawmakers and the public."

He complained that the Senate asked for a commitment from air board members during their confirmation proceedings to "take bold actions" toward

reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

"Unfortunately, today they flunked the test," he said.

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