

Protecting The Air

Recommendations of the Monterey-Santa Cruz Unified Air Pollution Control District advisory committee to establish regulations governing particulate matter is another step ahead in the preventative program to maintain clean air in the Monterey Bay air basin.

The proposals, if adopted by the Control District Board in January, will put this area on the same standards controlling industrial operations as the neighboring Bay Area Air Pollution Control District.

Since that district put in particulate matter controls, the Bay Area has been able to make substantial progress in curbing particulate matter, stemming from industrial production.

Particulates are only a small part of the total pollution problem and industrial particulate emissions play a lesser role than those caused by automobiles. Nevertheless, the control on particulates is an essential part of the overall program to reduce air pollution.

The control standards recommended by the advisory board are the same as those in effect in the Bay Area, according to the control district officials.

They will provide for substantial changes in some operations in the local district, including the Moss Landing and

Natividad plants of Kaiser Refractories and the Pacific Cement and Aggregates cement plant at Davenport.

Some of the same restrictions at the cement plant are contained in the county's use permit which sets a deadline for conformity at the Davenport facility.

Improvements in emission controls will be costly for local industries but they should provide substantial improvements in pollutant control for the area.

Industries in the Monterey Bay area have been extremely cooperative in meeting new controls during the few years the control board has been in operation.

In the issue of industrial particulates, Warren Crouse of the Bay Area Control District, says that Regulation 2 (the particulate matter law) has reduced the amount of potential particulate pollution in the Bay Area from 765 tons to 175 tons.

The outlook for the future isn't as bright as both motor vehicles and jet aircraft contribute to particulate pollution and are increasing at a faster rate than control qualities.

The Bay Area District has nearly 2.5 million motor vehicles while the Monterey-Santa Cruz District has about 245,000 vehicles in an area about 60 per cent as large (in square miles) as the Bay Area so that

the volume of automotive usage is considerably smaller.

While there is no question that a greater concentration of motor vehicles even with new emission control devices poses a serious problem to maintaining clear air, so far tests have revealed only limited, comparatively rare times when photochemical smog has reached a bothersome level in this area.

Nevertheless, it is vital that we work to maintain clean air throughout the Monterey Bay air basin, utilizing all available scientific information.

Most air pollution experts believe that new control devices on motor vehicles will make a marked improvement in air quality within the next few years. But the problem in the huge metropolitan areas in the long view is whether the control improvements can keep up with the growing number of vehicles.

The most complexing part of the motor vehicle pollution problem is the total number of vehicles in use at a given time, especially in the metropolitan areas where traffic congestion is becoming a 12 to 16 hour daily problem.

Fortunately, in an area such as the Monterey Bay region the total usage is considerably less even at peak hours or on the most congested days.