

Outdoor Burning Ban

Residents in the Monterey - Santa Cruz Air Pollution Control District can be fairly sure that a ban on most types of outdoor burning will go into effect in the district in the not too distant future.

Proposed changes in the Air Pollution Control District's regulations were delayed this week for some technical changes, but probably will be submitted to the Air Pollution Control Board around the first of the year.

It is estimated today that outdoor burning contributes about 14 per cent of the amount of particulates in the air, plus about 9 per cent of the unburned hydrocarbons.

The ban on burning is going to create some hardships on folks with a great deal of household rubbish or yard debris. In many cases it will be necessary to make special hauls to the municipal or county dumps or to seek special trash service.

These problems are part of the price we must pay if we are going to strive harder to maintain the clean air of the Monterey Bay area.

One of the problems which caused the delay in action by the Air Pollution Advisory Committee this week is how to handle the more complex question of burning in more remote areas.

State Fire Rangers posed the question that banning burning of brush in remote

areas could create just as great a hazard as the pollution issue by raising the level of fire danger.

They pointed out that families living in remote areas, far away from any existing dumps, would probably toss their debris into the gorges and canyons which are located throughout the mountain areas, and form extreme fire hazards.

The fire officials also stated that state law requires the elimination of brush adjacent to residences.

Another fire official stated that in the Topanga Canyon fire in Los Angeles County the debris in canyons throughout the area became a major problem for fire-fighters. "The debris filled areas were dangerous, explosive torches," he declared.

One possible solution to the problem may be to allow some debris burning in the rainy season, perhaps a month in the late fall and another in the spring so that citizens in the remote areas could destroy brush and forest area debris.

There is no doubt that the fire problem in areas such as the Santa Cruz Mountains and many remote sectors of the San Lorenzo Valley as well as in the remote areas of the Monterey coastal sector create special problems which may require special treatment.

Hopefully, the committee and the Air Pollution Control Board will be able to reach a reasonable solution.

We agree completely with the idea that the ban on burning in more populated areas must be approved. It is another essential step in the continuing fight against greater air pollution.

Industry is making considerable headway in reducing the amount of pollutants in most instances although some far greater improvements must be made, including cleaning up the dust at the Lone Star Cement plant at Davenport.

But some of the major new steps in the air pollution fight are going to reflect more upon the habits and expenditures of the individual.

Reducing the pollutants from automobiles will not only mean that the new cars will probably cost more, but they will cost more to keep the air pollution equipment in good operating condition.

As a result, motorists can expect their maintenance bills to go up even if the engineers are more successful in developing equipment to reduce the pollutants from the internal combustion engine.

The ban on burning will also add to the cost burden of individuals, but without question the importance of keeping the air clean is worth the price.