

Clean-air plans blasted

County board hears complaints

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The idea to reduce traffic and air pollution by requiring parking meters in shopping centers and by giving employers the burden of increasing car pooling drew protests yesterday in Santa Cruz.

For more than an hour, county supervisors listened to public complaints about a report entitled "Transportation Control Measures," prepared for the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District.

The speakers told the board that Santa Cruz County doesn't have a pollution problem, and that adopting some of the suggestions would be unwieldy, costly and an infringement of personal freedoms.

Supervisor Ray Belgard, who represents the Pajaro Valley, said there are some good ideas in the report, but others "for lack of better words, suck."

Supervisors were not being asked to take any action yesterday. The comments will be forwarded to the Air Pollution Control District and to AMBAG, whose staff prepared the report.

"I think it will be reworked," Supervisor Fred Keeley said after the meeting.

The Air Pollution Control Dis-

trict theoretically has the authority to impose its suggestions as law. It hasn't attempted to do so, nor has there been any court cases to test the district's authority.

The idea of requiring parking fees in shopping centers was floated by air pollution control districts in the San Francisco Bay Area late last year and got a chilly reception.

"You'll have people absolutely going nuts" if such a measure is adopted in Santa Cruz County, Doug McConnell of the Aptos Council of Improvement Associations told the board.

McConnell presented a petition opposing the Pollution Control District Report signed by 100 people, and Ronald Price of a group called Neighbors After Good Government delivered a similar petition with 2,170 signatures.

Representatives of The Santa Cruz Operation, a software company that employs 900 people, and Seagate Technology, which has more than 2,000 workers in the county (Scotts Valley and Watsonville), told the board they're already voluntarily participating in a program designed to reduce trips by employees with one person in a car.

Janet Brennan of the Air Pollution Control District staff said the

amount of air pollution has exceeded legal standards on half a dozen days a year, usually in Hollister and the Carmel Valley. Several speakers referred to her statement as evidence there isn't a significant problem in Santa Cruz County.

In addition to charging for parking, the report suggests requiring large employers to have no more than 60 percent of its workers driving alone to work by 1994; requiring high schools and colleges to have no more than 50 percent single-driver commuters; synchronizing traffic signals; efforts to increase mass-transit ridership; and road improvements that reduce congestion.

The county has the authority to impose pollution-reducing laws, but there wasn't any support from supervisors yesterday for the more stringent measures suggested in the report prepared for the Air Pollution Control District.

"I see a lot of enforcement costs," said Supervisor Jan Beautz.

She said there are some good points, such as encouraging people to work at home. But, she said, charging for parking would create a burden on the poor and limiting travel to school would create a burden for school districts, which don't have money for busing.