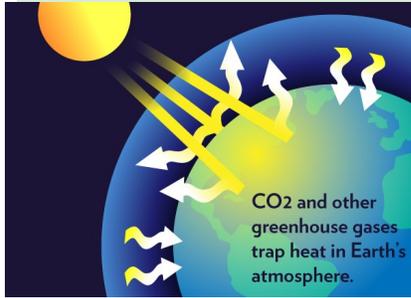


THE GREEN PAGE

Greenhouse Gases: What are they, and why should we care?

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), "The Earth absorbs energy it receives from the sun and radiates the rest back toward space." "Certain gases in the atmosphere, called greenhouse gases, [GHG] absorb some of the energy radiated from the Earth and trap it in the atmosphere. These gases essentially act as a blanket, making the Earth's surface warmer than it otherwise would be. While this 'greenhouse effect' occurs naturally, making life as we know it possible, human activities in the past century have substantially increased the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, causing the atmosphere to trap more heat and leading to changes in the Earth's climate."



"These types of changes can bring about fundamental disruptions in ecosystems, affecting plant and animal populations, communities, and biodiversity. Such shifts can also affect society, including where people can live, what kinds of crops farmers can grow, and what kinds of businesses can thrive in certain areas." Find more info at the EPA's website: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/science/indicators/ghg>.

Greenhouse Gases from San Joaquin County

The County operates for the benefit of the public. We provide services for the health of our people and our land. It makes sense that we are conscious of the affect we, ourselves, have on the people and land. Are we designing our jurisdiction to be sustainable?

AB32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, requires the state to reduce its GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. You can't effectively reduce what you don't measure. PG&E, under the California Public Utilities Commission, provided funding for jurisdictions within its service area to complete Greenhouse Gas Inventories. The inventory can be used as a planning tool.

The County recently completed two inventories to measure the amount of GHG we, as a business, create. Results for the base year of 2005 show us at our worst: before we started using solar power, before our Green Committee established goals, before most of us realized the benefits of e-files. Data for 2010 reveals an astonishing improvement, including energy reductions in almost all departments and a 32% decrease in methane emissions at our two active landfills.

You may remember a few months back that a survey was emailed to all employees. 2012 data was extrapolated into 2005 and 2010 figures, based on number of employees, improvements in vehicles, etc. We achieved an 8% decrease in CO₂E emissions. Unfortunately, almost 90% of us drive alone, but over 80% live within 20 miles of our work sites. Programs like [Commuter Connection](#) help employees find public transit and ridesharing opportunities.

Annual Green Report to the Board

David Louis, Director of Purchasing and Support Services and the Chair of the County's Green Committee, presented our Board of Supervisors with the annual Green Report on April 2. Most department representatives were present to receive the Board's appreciation for their continued improvements and innovations.

