

From: "Folmer, James" <jfolmer@palmspri.gannett.com>  
To: "James E. Enstrom" <jenstrom@ucla.edu>  
Date: Tue, 3 Apr 2012 09:44:35 -0700  
Subject: RE: Proposed Op-Ed on Particulate Matter Health Effects in CV

**Dr. Engstrom, here's the edited version. I did minimal editing, just a few tweaks to match AP style. I replaced  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  with "micrograms per cubic meter." Please let me know if that's acceptable.**

**Also, I took your website references out of the body of the column and put them in a breakout (below) to make it more readable.**

**It will be in Wednesday's edition. Thanks for the contribution.**

The Desert Sun has recently published a special report and an editorial on the Sentinel power plant that is under construction by Competitive Power Ventures. Substantial concern has been expressed about the impact of the particulate matter (PM) pollution that will be generated by the plant. I would like to provide my perspective on the PM levels associated with the plant and the health effects associated with PM. PM consists of "inhalable coarse particles" (PM10) and "fine particles" (PM2.5).

Based on the April 15, 2010, California Energy Commission air quality assessment for the Sentinel plant, Table 13 indicates that the maximum annual background PM10 level in the Coachella Valley will be increased from 54.9 microgram per cubic meter to 55.33 during plant operation. This represents a "worse case (maximum)" increase of only 0.8 percent. Based on the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) Final 2007 Air Quality Management Plan, the maximum annual average PM10 level in the Coachella Valley (Salton Sea Air Basin) is only 45.7 micrograms per cubic meter.

All these levels are quite similar to the U.S. EPA's 1987-2006 annual standard for PM10 of 50 micrograms per cubic meter. However, this standard was revoked in 2006 due to "inadequate" evidence of long-term health effects of PM10, as summarized in the 2004 and 2009 EPA Integrated Science Assessment for Particulate Matter.

The Desert Sun claim that "the Sentinel plant would increase the (PM10) level to 277 percent above the state standard" is highly misleading because it is based on the California Energy Commission's Table 13 comparison of 55.33 micrograms per cubic meter with the California annual standard for PM10 of 20. But this state standard was established by the California Air Resources Board in 2002 and does not reflect the extensive null evidence on PM10 health effects that has been published since 2002.

In January 2007, the Air Resources Board and AQMD approved \$1,034,358 in funding, half from each agency, for two major epidemiologic studies on the relationship between PM (PM10 and PM2.5) and death in California. The study based on the American Cancer Society cohort was conducted by UC Berkeley professor Michael Jerrett and 13 other investigators.

The study based on the California Teachers Study cohort was conducted by Michael Lipsett of the California Department of Public Health and nine other investigators. A primary purpose of these studies was to produce new California evidence "to assist with the review of ambient air quality standards."

The results of these two studies were published in 2011 and they both found no relationship between PM and total mortality in California. The Jerrett Study found that total mortality during 1982-2000

among about 75,000 California adults was not related to either PM10 or PM2.5 in eight of nine models tested. The Lipsett Study found that total mortality during 2000-2005 among about 75,000 female

California teachers was not related to either PM10 or PM2.5.

The studies found some unexplained evidence of increased cardiovascular disease risk and decreased cancer risk, but there was no overall increased risk of death. These null results agree with the overwhelmingly null results for California that have been published since 2000, which include my 2005 results.

Thus, based on all the evidence described above, there is no health risk associated with PM in the Coachella Valley or in California as a whole and there will be no health risk from PM after the Sentinel power plant is operational. However, since AQMD and others have a different perspective and since The Desert Sun stated that "Robust debate on this issue is needed," I propose that an open forum be organized so that AQMD Executive Officer Barry Wallerstein and I can debate our different views on the health effects of PM in the Coachella Valley. Hopefully, our debate will help resolve the PM health effects issue.

James E. Enstrom is on the research faculty at the UCLA School of Public Health and has been conducting epidemiologic research there since 1973. Email him at [jenstrom@ucla.edu](mailto:jenstrom@ucla.edu)

#### LEARN MORE ABOUT PARTICULATE MATTER

Read the California Energy Commission air quality assessment for the Sentinel plant at [mydesert.com/opinion](http://mydesert.com/opinion)

Websites cited by James E. Engstrom:

[www.epa.gov/pm/](http://www.epa.gov/pm/)  
[www.aqmd.gov/aqmp/07aqmp/aqmp/Chapter\\_2.pdf](http://www.aqmd.gov/aqmp/07aqmp/aqmp/Chapter_2.pdf)  
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To: "James E. Enstrom" <[jenstrom@ucla.edu](mailto:jenstrom@ucla.edu)>  
Date: Wed, 28 Mar 2012 13:11:05 -0700  
Subject: RE: April 5 DSun Op-Ed on PM Health Effects & Enstrom Photo

Photo is fine. I'll try to remember to send you the edited version. Feel free to pester me on Tuesday, but we can never promise exactly when a column will run depending on what's happening in the news.

Thanks.