

# Resolve to go a little greener

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Thirty-nine years after the first Earth Day, going green is getting a lot of attention in personal lifestyles and public policy.

Local leaders have been farsighted enough to launch and support the Green Valley Initiative, a coordinated effort to position the Inland Empire as a center for green jobs and sustainable development.

In Washington, the debate is raging over whether and how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions: by EPA regulation or by a cap-and-trade system that would allow industrial sources to sell emission allowances to each other.

But there's no debating on this Earth Day that we can all make small behavioral changes that could add up to important improvements in our environment and help trim what it costs to maintain it.

In San Bernardino County, two factors rise to the top of discussions about environmental stewardship: smog and water.

Suffering some of the worst smog in the nation, county residents have a vested interest in reducing air pollution. Smog has been implicated in asthma problems and reduced lung capacity in our children, so there's really no excuse for us not to do what we can to reduce air pollutants.

For most of us, that means less driving, especially alone. On this Earth Day, why not commit yourself to taking Metrolink instead of driving once a week or once a month? Or taking the bus, car-pooling or riding your bike to work once a month? Or resolve to cut out one errand-type trip a week by better planning of your shopping forays.

Of course, you could buy a hybrid car to reduce your emissions, improve your gas mileage and help revive the economy. But even better if you're a commuter would be to find a job closer to home and reduce your daily distance. That's why we say the development of more good jobs here in the Inland Empire is the most promising way to cut smog.

The hot weather we've had this week turns our attention to what we'll face this summer in terms of water supply. Water imports are being cut because this is the third dry year in a row, reservoirs are low, and court rulings have limited the water that can be pumped south from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Local cities and water districts need to make up the difference, which is best achieved by conservation.

About three-quarters of a typical family's water use goes to outdoor irrigation, so that's the place to start. Most people water grass more than they need to, so try cutting out one day a week or reducing the watering period on your automatic timer. Find out what's the least water you can give your lawn without harming its health and use that much; boost the watering a bit when temperatures hit 100 for a few days in a row, but always water early in the morning to reduce evaporation, and cut back again when the weather cools.

That kind of going green not only helps save the Earth, it helps you keep some green in your wallet.