

Air board expansion fails in the Assembly

Permanent posts for Fresno, two other cities were sought.

By E.J. Schultz / Bee Capitol Bureau

Fresno Bee, Thursday, August 31, 2006

SACRAMENTO — The state Assembly this week rejected legislation that would have reshuffled the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District board to give a bigger voice to the region's three largest cities, including Fresno.

Senate Bill 999 would have expanded the district's board from 11 to 15 members, giving permanent seats to Fresno, Stockton and Bakersfield. A physician and scientist also would have been added to the board.

The bill needed 41 votes to pass but only got 35, as a majority of Valley lawmakers voted no. The Senate passed a version of the bill last year.

The bill is eligible to be voted on again by the Assembly but must be passed by the time the Legislature adjourns for the year at the end of the day today. Supporters, including Assembly Member Juan Arambula, D-Fresno, were scrambling to find the needed votes, but a new vote hadn't been taken as of 6 p.m. Wednesday.

The proposal was supported by a majority of the Fresno City Council but opposed by the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, which represents more rural areas, although Supervisors Henry Perea and Susan Anderson are listed as supporters.

Opposition also came from regional farm bureaus and the boards of supervisors in Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced and Stanislaus counties. And the district itself was against the proposal, arguing that the current arrangement is working and shouldn't be tinkered with.

Assembly Member Barbara Matthews, D-Tracy, called the bill a "solution in search of a problem," adding during floor debate Tuesday that "there is no evidence that the current system is broken."

Assembly Member Greg Aghazarian, R-Stockton, questioned why agriculture wasn't represented in the new positions.

"It leaves out the most important stakeholder," he said.

Environmental groups had been pushing the bill as a way to diversify membership and give more input to urban areas.

"Fresno is the the biggest city in the Valley, and to not have a representative from the city on the board is an issue of fairness," said Rey Leon, co-chairman of the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition, which represents environmental, medical and public health organizations.

He was in Sacramento this week along with several other Valley environmentalists who are lobbying for several bills to be taken up in the end-of-session flurry. Lawmakers will be voting on hundreds of bills before adjourning for the year today.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District covers an eight-county region from San Joaquin County to Kern County and has the responsibility of managing regional efforts to meet federal air quality standards.

Current board membership includes eight county positions and three city positions. The city appointments are overseen by the League of California Cities. The city of Fresno has not had a seat on the board since 1993, and Stockton has never had a seat on the board. Bakersfield is finishing its two-year term and will not be eligible to serve again until next decade.

The rules state that a small, medium and large city must be represented.

Bill author Sen. Mike Machado, D-Linden, notes in the bill analysis that the legislation "helps the San Joaquin Valley face its challenging future by adding new perspective, expertise and accountability to air quality management decisions, and by including representatives from the Valley's largest cities to more adequately reflect the Valley's changing demographics."

The district opposed the bill because "we think we have a system that's working well," said staff member Tom Jordan, noting that more than 500 rules or amendments have been adopted since the district was founded in the early 1990s.

"Our board's done a good job," he said. "We feel like the board has met all its obligations."

In other lawmaking action this week:

Gov. Schwarzenegger signed a controversial bill by Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter, that allows cities and counties to do away with wagering limits in cardroom gambling ordinances.

Supporters, including the state attorney general, say Senate Bill 1198 would eliminate inconsistencies in how gambling limits are set. The bill's opponents believe it will lead to an increase in gambling.

Lawmakers sent to the governor's desk a bill that would increase penalties for illegal street racing, a problem in rural areas of the Valley. Assembly Bill 2190, by Assembly Member John Benoit, R-Palm Desert, allows for felony charges in certain instances.

The Assembly passed Senate Bill 1230, by Florez, that establishes "clean air enterprise zones." Businesses operating in the state's worst air-quality pockets could get incentives for buying emission-reducing equipment, but only if they can prove the equipment will help reduce emissions below current standards.

The Senate still must vote to concur with Assembly amendments.

State's historic deal on warming

Governor, Dems agree to force cuts in California greenhouse gas emissions

By Mark Martin, Chronicle Sacramento bureau
S.F. Chronicle, Thursday, August 31, 2006

Sacramento -- California will become the first state in the country to require industries to lower greenhouse gas emissions under a deal struck Wednesday by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Democrats that could dramatically reshape the state's economy.

After weeks of intense negotiations between the administration and legislative leaders, and just a few hours after Schwarzenegger threatened to veto the bill, Democrats and the governor announced an agreement on legislation that sends the state on a markedly different environmental path from the federal government.

By 2020, when industries would have to lower carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases by 25 percent, solar panels, alternative fuels and electric cars could be commonplace, according to advocates of the legislation.

The deal marks a major political victory for Schwarzenegger, who will use the first-of-its-kind legislation as a centerpiece of his re-election campaign. It was hailed by environmentalists, some business groups and lawmakers as a revolutionary step in the country's nascent efforts to combat global warming. Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez, who is carrying the legislation, called Wednesday the "most important day of my legislative career."

"The fact is that if we do not do something to stop carbon emissions in this world, we are going to see a diminution of the quality of life and, eventually, all life," declared Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata, D-Oakland, at a celebratory press conference.

The legislation will require all businesses, from automakers to cement manufacturers, to reduce emissions beginning as early as 2012 to meet the 2020 cap. The state's 11-member Air Resources Board, which is appointed by the governor, will be charged with developing targets for each industry and for seeing that those targets are met. The board now will embark on a years-long process to fully develop regulations.

The board could impose fees on some industries to pay for new programs that could do everything from requiring truckers to use biodiesel fuels to forcing farmers to handle animal waste differently.

The board is likely to set up a trading system that will allow companies to buy and sell emission credits, which would allow a company that made more emission reductions than required to sell credits to another business that hasn't reached its emission goal.

While some business groups argued that a cap on greenhouse gas emissions would hurt the economy and drive up energy prices, both the governor and Democrats have long agreed on the main principles of the bill. But differences on a few points threatened to kill a deal, and the agreement came Wednesday only after sometimes-tense talks involving the administration, Democrats, environmentalists and businesses of all kinds.

Núñez was seen screaming at a Senate staffer about the bill in a crowded Capitol hallway Monday. The measure went through more than 30 drafts in the past two weeks, as various groups demanded changes. In the end, Schwarzenegger agreed to a deal after Democrats warned him Wednesday that they would not accept any further alterations.

As late as Wednesday morning, the governor and aides were telling some in the Capitol that they would veto the bill, but a few hours later they announced they were happy with it. Democrats believed the governor would not veto the bill in its latest incarnation for fear of looking like a hypocrite -- he had, after all, announced greenhouse gas reduction goals for the state last year in a major speech in San Francisco.

Schwarzenegger had insisted on creating an escape clause that would allow for a delay in the deadlines in case of a natural or economic disaster. He got that.

The governor also demanded that the bill require that a trading system be created to help industries meet the targets. While the final version of the legislation points the way toward a trading system, some argued it was not specifically required and that the governor did not get what he wanted. British Petroleum announced late Wednesday it would not support the bill because it seemed unclear as to whether a trading system would actually develop.

The legislation was approved late Wednesday by the Senate on a party-line, 23-14 vote and moved back to the Assembly, where final approval was expected before the legislative session ends today. The bill has 42 Democratic co-authors in the 80-member Assembly but no support among Republican lawmakers.

Assembly Republican Leader George Plescia of San Diego condemned the agreement shortly after it was announced.

"Adopting costly and unattainable regulations will drive businesses and jobs out of California into other states -- and even into other countries with no commitment to improve air quality," he said in a statement.

The legislation split the business community, with the state Chamber of Commerce leading the opposition.

But some venture capitalists and businesses, including Pacific Gas and Electric Co., support the bill and argue it will be a boon to the economy by creating an entirely new clean-tech sector that could rival the high-tech boom.

"Both the environment and the economy win," said Andrew Michael, vice president of sustainable energy for the Bay Area Council, a business group that includes the 275 largest employers in the Bay Area.

Michael argued that new companies developing environmentally clean technologies will create jobs in California, and companies could save money by becoming more energy efficient.

When he signs the bill next month, Schwarzenegger will take action on an issue that has largely been ignored by President Bush and Congress. Supporters of the legislation noted that California has often led the way in making major environmental changes and they predicted other states would pass their own versions of the new law. Illinois lawmakers spent an hour with one of the bill's authors, Assemblywoman Fran Pavley, D-Agoura Hills (Los Angeles County), last week asking questions about the bill, Pavley said Wednesday.

"This is the tipping point in the country's climate-change debate," predicted Bob Epstein, head of the business group Environmental Entrepreneurs.

What it does

California's groundbreaking global warming legislation would:

- Require a 25 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.
 - Require the state's Air Resources Board to be the lead agency in developing caps and regulations for industries.
 - Require the board to develop rules for a cap and trade system, which would allow companies to buy and sell emission credits in order to reach industrywide caps.
- Allow the governor to delay the deadline for up to one year in the event of natural disasters or other extraordinary circumstances.

Officials Reach California Deal to Cut Emissions

N.Y Times, Thursday, August 31, 2006

SACRAMENTO, Aug. 30 — [California's](#) political leaders announced an agreement on Wednesday that imposes the most sweeping controls on carbon dioxide emissions in the nation, putting the state at the forefront of a broad campaign to curb the man-made causes of [climate change](#) despite resistance in Washington.

The deal between the Democratic-controlled Legislature and the Republican governor, [Arnold Schwarzenegger](#), calls for a 25 percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2020, and could establish controls on the largest industrial sectors, including utilities, oil refineries and cement plants. The state has already placed strict limits on automobile emissions, although that move is being challenged in federal court.

The Bush administration has rejected the idea of similar national controls on carbon dioxide emissions, and efforts to get Congressional approval for such firm caps on emissions have repeatedly been defeated.

Although the deal in California is strongly opposed by [Republicans](#) in the Legislature and many business leaders across the state, it assures that a bill on the restrictions will be passed before the legislative session ends Thursday and will be signed by Mr. Schwarzenegger, the leaders said Wednesday.

The first major controls are scheduled to begin in 2012, with the aim of reducing the emissions to their level in 1990. The legislation allows for incentives to businesses to help reach the goals, but opponents warn that the state may be sacrificing its economic interests for a quixotic goal.

"If our manufacturers leave, whether for North Carolina or China, and they take their greenhouse gases with them, we might not have solved the problem but exacerbated it instead," said Allan Zaremberg, the president of the state's Chamber of Commerce.

Since taking office in 2003, Mr. Schwarzenegger, who is seeking reelection in November, has supported efforts to fight climate change, most recently by signing an agreement with Prime Minister [Tony Blair](#) of Britain to do cooperative research on new clean-energy technologies.

The governor said Wednesday that the deal struck with [Democrats](#) would make "California a world leader in the effort to reduce carbon emissions."

"The success of our system will be an example for other states and nations to follow as the fight against climate change continues," Mr. Schwarzenegger added.

The Assembly speaker, Fabian Núñez, who sponsored the bill along with Assemblywoman Fran Pavley, said at a news conference here, "We feel that California has always been a leader in protecting the environment."

"We now have moved it to the next level," said Mr. Núñez, a Los Angeles Democrat. "We'd all like to see California one day be carbon free."

The state's action, he said, could set off a "bottom-up" movement for curbs of heat-trapping gases in states around the country.

That has been the goal of national environmental groups like Environmental Defense and the Natural Resources Defense Counsel, which helped sponsor the California legislation. It has also been the goal of Ms. Pavley, a Democrat from Agoura Hills and the author, in 2002, of a groundbreaking law reducing tailpipe emissions of heat-trapping gases.

Already, the governors of New York, New Jersey, Delaware and four New England states have signed an agreement to curb power-plant emissions, cutting them by 10 percent by 2019. That would amount to about 24 million tons, said Dale Bryk of the New York office of the Natural Resources Defense Counsel, about one-seventh of the total envisioned in the California legislation, which will be an estimated 174 million tons.

Ms. Bryk added that Massachusetts and New Hampshire had enacted some emissions curbs, but that the number of power plants involved was minuscule compared with the California effort.

A recent poll of Californians by the Public Policy Institute of California showed nearly four of five respondents said urgent action on climate change was needed.

Aside from its long coastline, which could be vulnerable to sea-level rises due to global warming, the state depends on the Sierra Nevada snow pack for much of its water.

A study in 2004 by the National Academy of Science showed that unchecked global warming would cut the size of the snow pack by at least 29 percent by the end of the century. It also predicted a doubling in the number of heat waves, like the record-breaking one in July that killed 139 people statewide.

The deal on Wednesday on the emissions legislation nearly foundered at least three times in the past week as Mr. Schwarzenegger's negotiators reached seeming impasses with the Legislature over important issues: whether the bill would require the creation of market mechanisms like emissions credits to help industries meet the new standards; how broad to make exemptions during emergencies like the state's electricity crisis six years ago, and how to administer and enforce the law.

In the end, after three weeks filled with late-night sessions, according to legislative staffers who were not authorized to speak for attribution, Mr. Núñez met with Mr. Schwarzenegger on Wednesday morning and said that the Assembly and the Senate had agreed on final language and intended to enact the legislation with or without his consent.

That left the governor to decide whether the final language fell so far short of his wishes that he could take the political risk during an election year of vetoing a signature piece of environmental legislation whose aims he had supported.

In the end, the governor and the legislative leaders, including the Senate president, Don Perata, Democrat of Oakland, announced their agreement.

Ralph Cavanagh, the co-director of the energy program of the [Natural Resources Defense Council](#), said in a telephone interview: "This is not an act of altruism. This is an act of enlightened self-interest. By accelerating the effort to reduce global warming pollution, California will benefit its own economy and environment and in so doing will set the best possible example for other states and nations."

Business leaders had been divided on the climate-change measure, with leading venture capitalists from Silicon Valley openly stumping for passage, saying the measure will create new industries and new jobs. The state's Chamber of Commerce led the opposition, saying that the measure would prompt an exodus of industry to other states without emission controls, while California would be hamstrung in trying to attract out-of-state businesses.

The bill gives the California Air Resources Board, which enforces the state's air pollution controls, the lead authority for generally establishing how much industry groups contribute to global warming pollution, for assigning emission targets, and for setting noncompliance penalties. It sets out a two-year time frame, until 2009, to establish how the system will operate and then allows three years, until 2012, for the industries to start their cutbacks.

Peter Darbee, the chairman and chief executive of Pacific Gas and Electric, broke with his industry as PG&E became the first and possibly only major utility in the state to support the legislation, called the Global Warming Solutions Act.

"The issue of climate change is important and needs to be dealt with," Mr. Darbee said. "We need a pragmatic and practical result. Since the bill has a market-based program, it will work efficiently and effectively for businesses."

A safety-valve provision that, in an emergency, could give companies a year's hiatus in complying with their mandates, was also key, he said.

Wednesday's announcement is significant for Mr. Schwarzenegger's re-election campaign, potentially vaulting the governor beyond his Democratic challenger's reach.

Mr. Schwarzenegger, whose popularity plummeted after a group of polarizing ballot initiatives failed at the polls last year, has been steadily pedaling to the left for months, supporting legislation to increase the state's minimum wage, to make some prescription drugs more accessible and to improve the state's environment by adding thousands of subsidized solar roofs over the next decade.

His strategy seems to be to appeal to the sensibilities of voters that have long driven the state's politics and to distance himself openly from President Bush. Recent polls suggest that Mr. Schwarzenegger enjoys a wide lead.

State on Verge of Greenhouse Gas Restrictions

The Senate votes to slash emissions 25%, the first such action in the nation. Business groups are angry, but the governor is on board.

By Marc Lifsher and Gordon Rau, staff writers
L.A. Times, Thursday, August 31, 2006

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and legislative leaders agreed Wednesday on a plan to cut by 25% the amount of greenhouse gases emitted from California electric power plants, refineries and other sources by the year 2020.

Later, the agreement was approved by the Senate 23 to 14 with Democrats supporting it and Republicans opposed. It then went to the Assembly, where final approval was expected. It would make California the first state in the nation to fight global warming by slapping caps on carbon dioxide and other emissions.

Wednesday's compromise followed weeks of intense lobbying by environmentalists, who supported tough standards, and business groups, which labeled the bill a top "job killer" of the legislative session set to end today.

The governor was pleased. "The success of our system will be an example for other states and nations to follow as the fight against climate change continues," he said in a statement released just after top Democratic lawmakers announced the agreement.

The deal was also seen as a rebuke to the Bush administration, which favors voluntary efforts to reduce greenhouse gases.

Assembly Speaker Fabian Nuñez (D-Los Angeles) praised the compromise as "a huge opportunity to champion not just on the national level but the international level a significant piece of environmental legislation."

Business interests, especially oil companies, were irate and said they felt abandoned by the Republican governor, who had pledged to work for a bill they could support. They accused Schwarzenegger and Democrats of cobbling together behind closed doors a haphazard bill that could create unintended economic chaos.

"We remain very concerned about the long-term impact of this legislation on jobs, the economy and our industry's ability to continue meeting increasing demand for gasoline and diesel fuels," said Tupper Hull, a spokesman for the Western States Petroleum Assn.

Environmental activists were satisfied with the compromise, although they had sought more stringent controls. They called the greenhouse gas reduction plan proposed for California more sweeping than a more limited effort by a group of Northeastern states to curb emissions from electric power plants.

"For years, the world has been waiting for the United States to step up to the plate and do something about global warming. This bill is basically the first step," said Bernadette Del Chiaro, an advocate for Environment California.

They also expressed hope that the victory in Sacramento would be a signal to the Bush administration to take more forceful action.

The compromise immediately positioned Schwarzenegger as a national leader in the burgeoning movement to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

It also allows him to burnish his credentials as a political centrist in blue-state California during the final 10 weeks of his reelection campaign against the Democratic state treasurer.

Schwarzenegger pushed himself into the international spotlight last month by signing a cooperative agreement on greenhouse gases with British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

"It takes another issue away from Phil Angelides," said Jack Pitney, a government professor at Claremont McKenna College. "It isn't the top issue, but for Schwarzenegger it raises the comfort level of Democrats and independents. Signing this bill makes the political climate more hospitable to the governor."

The compromise bill, AB 32, was sponsored by Nuñez and Assemblywoman Fran Pavley (D-Agoura Hills). In 2002, Pavley was author of a law limiting carbon emissions from motor vehicles that is being challenged by the auto industry.

The latest bill authorizes the California Air Resources Board to begin a process of measuring the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases coming from every major pollution source, including electric power plants, oil refineries and cement kilns.

Once a tally is taken, regulators would set limits for each facility and industry that would take effect beginning in 2012. Emissions would be reduced gradually, dropping to 1990 levels in eight years.

Most major business groups don't like the caps and contend that placing limits on California industry alone will not curb greenhouse gases globally.

Instead, they said, the caps on emissions will only drive up the cost of California's already expensive electricity and force many large employers to flee to other states with more permissive regulatory climates.

What's more, "the authority given to regulatory agencies is vast," warned Dorothy Rothrock, vice president of the California Manufacturers & Technology Assn.

Other business lobbyists took a more modest stand toward the proposal but said they remained disappointed that the governor did not stick to his guns in insisting that the bill specifically mandate a market-based program for trading emissions credits.

Rather, the bill says that such a trading system "may" be created if the Air Resources Board deems it effective for lowering levels of carbon dioxide in the air.

Many businesses contend that they are unlikely to invest billions of dollars in new equipment if they don't have the flexibility to trade carbon credits.

Other business groups, including venture capitalists who invest in alternative fuels and high-tech pollution-control equipment, contend that putting limits on greenhouse gases will spur the creation of thousands of jobs and new industries.

"By combining market-based mechanisms and enforceable emissions reductions, this bill strikes the right balance between improving the environment and protecting the economy," said a statement from Pacific Gas & Electric Co., the state's largest investor-owned electric utility, which is based in San Francisco.

Until Wednesday, a deal appeared elusive. In fact, Nuñez had scheduled an afternoon news conference with environmentalists to announce that the Legislature would proceed with the bill — without the governor's support.

But just before the news conference, Nuñez told the environmentalists that the governor's chief of staff, Susan Kennedy, had called him to say Schwarzenegger would sign the bill after all.

Administration officials said later that the governor acted after his staff assured him that the final version met his goals.

The symbolism of who was in the driver's seat at the end was made clear at the news conference, where Democratic lawmakers and environmentalists gleefully announced the deal while a lone Schwarzenegger press aide stood outside the room to distribute a written statement by the governor.

The final bill contains concessions from both sides. Schwarzenegger had to give up his desire of having his administration officials set and enforce the rules. Democrats demanded and got the more independent Air Resources Board to enforce the rules instead.

For his part, Schwarzenegger won the ability for the governor to suspend the rules for as much as a year in cases of "extraordinary circumstances, catastrophic events or threat of significant economic harm."

It will be a major new responsibility for the Air Resources Board, which will have to hire about 100 workers and will require an annual budget of about \$20 million. The board can assess fees on the companies it regulates to pay for its operation.

State moves to enact greenhouse gas curbs

Agreement reached on global-warming bill

By Michael Gardner, Copley News Service

Published in the San Diego Union-Tribune, Thursday, August 31, 2006

SACRAMENTO – Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Democratic **leaders struck** an unprecedented agreement aimed at curbing global warming yesterday, potentially accelerating initiatives to put more alternative-energy-powered cars on the road, add solar panels to thousands of homes and provide some industries with a chance to make money by acting now.

But California consumers could pay a steep price through higher energy prices and job losses, critics of the deal say.

With approval by the Legislature assured, California will become the first state in the nation to act to curb greenhouse gas emissions from a wide range of industries. The Senate approved the plan

23-14 on a party-line vote, with Democrats in support. The Assembly is expected to approve the measure before today's end-of-session deadline.

"We can now move forward with developing a market-based system that makes California a world leader in the effort to reduce carbon emissions," Schwarzenegger said in a statement promising to sign Assembly Bill 32.

"The success of our system will be an example for other states and nations to follow as the fight against climate change continues," he said.

Under the agreement, the California Air Resources Board will adopt regulations to gradually roll back carbon dioxide emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, a 25 percent reduction.

It "puts California light years ahead of the rest of the world where we ought to be when it comes to smart stewardship of the environment," said Senate President Pro Tempore Don Perata, D-Oakland.

Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez, D-Los Angeles, said, "If we are the 12th largest emitter of greenhouse gasses in the world, we want to be the first to step up to the plate in a real way and say we are prepared to do our share."

Most Republican lawmakers oppose the bill. In a statement, Assembly Republican leader George Plescia of San Diego said, "We need a national consensus to truly have an impact on this problem, not a state-by-state approach that will harm businesses and make matters even worse."

Efforts to slow global warming have gained momentum this year, with the release of several respected studies confirming that climatic disruptions threaten water, food and power supplies.

Earth is warming, researchers say, because of the escalating use of fossil fuels that are burned for energy production, to keep factories humming and to get commuters to work. Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are blamed for higher temperatures, melting polar ice caps and rising oceans.

An increasingly isolated minority of researchers contend the warming is not man-made, but results from a natural swing in the climate.

"Global warming is the single biggest threat to California's environment and our public health," said Bernadette Del Chiaro of Environment California, a leading negotiator on the bill.

The measure creates a huge rift between the governor and his closest allies, the California Chamber of Commerce and some manufacturers.

The legislation "will drive good companies and good jobs out of California to states or countries that do not have similar restrictions on businesses," chamber President Allan Zaremborg said. "It will trigger significant increases in consumer and business costs for things such as electricity and fuel."

California-only emission controls will do little to combat global warming or make a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions spewed across the world that drift across the globe, critics say.

"It will do next to nothing to affect emissions on a global scale so long as countries such as India and China continue their skyrocketing emissions growth," Zaremborg said.

California has led the way on global warming before. In 2003, California adopted tougher emission controls on cars, prompting 10 states and Canada to implement similar rules.

The agreement includes concessions for business that could serve as a model for other states and countries, supporters say.

Democratic leaders agreed to give the governor a safety valve to suspend the regulations for up to one year under "extraordinary circumstances" that threaten "significant economic harm" to the state.

Schwarzenegger also held out for a provision that would provide credits to businesses that have already invested in technology and other upgrades to save energy and curb carbon dioxide emissions.

This possibly creates opportunities for some companies, depending on how the final regulations are crafted by air-quality regulators.

Businesses that can verify energy-saving investments even before the regulations go into effect could sell credits to other industries for cash in the future. Or, companies knowing that they may not be able to comply with restrictions could decide to finance emission-saving improvements for other businesses now and receive credit later.

Also, the governor expects that companies will be able to buy, trade and sell credits with industries in other states, and perhaps other countries, if the savings can be verified.

Schwarzenegger signed an agreement last month with British Prime Minister Tony Blair to work together to reduce emissions.

That helps answer some critics who say the program is too limited and does little to curb pollution elsewhere, the governor's advisers say.

Kevin Fay, who represents a consortium of corporations such as DuPont and General Electric, said Congress is watching California.

"It's definitely going to have an impact on the debate in Washington," Fay said. "There are certainly a lot of states talking about doing a lot of things on climate."

Fay remains wary. "In the end, it looks like a significant regulatory expansion," he said.

Others have been eagerly waiting for the state to act. California's commitment to far-reaching energy-savings programs will speed investment in technology and spark an array of energy-saving innovations, analysts have said.

For example, gasoline and coal will soon face competition from biodiesel producers, driving down costs at the pump and on home utility bills, said Bob Epstein, a founder of Environmental Entrepreneurs, a coalition of investors in 22 states.

Costs could fall more when utilities and refineries begin saving themselves money by investing in renewable energy, he said.

Epstein also said California farmers could benefit by growing crops that fuel cars instead of going on the dinner table.

"We'll see the start of farmers who farm energy," he said.

Striking the deal with top Democrats is a significant victory for Schwarzenegger, who has made global warming a central piece of his environmental platform heading into this fall's election. It puts him at odds with President Bush on global warming and robs Democratic challenger Phil Angelides of an important issue.

"I don't question the governor's motives," Perata said. "He believes this is a bill that has meaning for California and I welcome that."

Calif. Unveils Anti-Global Warming Plan

By Samantha Young, The Associated Press

Published in the Washington Post, The Bakersfield Californian, Tracy Press and other papers, Thursday, August 31, 2006

SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- California will impose broad caps on its greenhouse-gas emissions under a landmark plan that marks a clear break with the federal government and which backers hope will become a national model.

Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, who helped assemble the plan, called Wednesday's agreement "an example for other states and nations to follow as the fight against climate change continues."

The plan came after weeks of difficult negotiations and was sent to the state Senate, which approved it late Wednesday with a 23-14 vote. If approved by the Democratically-controlled Assembly, which is expected, the bill would then go to the governor's desk.

"My main objective was getting a bill that the environmental community can champion around the country and say, 'California did this, and you should be too.' And we did that," said Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez, a Democrat.

The bill requires the state's major industries _ such as utility plants, oil and gas refineries, and cement kilns _ to reduce their emissions carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases by an estimated 25 percent by 2020.

One of the key mechanisms designed to drive the reductions is a market program that will allow businesses to buy, sell and trade emission credits with other companies.

"Today it feels as if the whole world is watching, and I hope they are," said Ann Notthoff of the Natural Resources Defense Council, one of the environmental groups involved in the negotiations.

The agreement was announced simultaneously by the governor's office and Democratic leaders in the Senate and Assembly. It gives the governor a key environmental victory as he seeks re-election this fall.

The bill states that the California Air Resources Board _ an 11-member panel appointed by the governor _ must identify "market-based compliance mechanisms" that might be used as part of its plan to reach the cap.

The cap was praised by environmentalists as a step toward fighting global climate change. It was criticized by some business leaders, who say it will increase their costs and force them to scale back their California operations.

Republicans blasted the bill, saying the bill would have little effect and make California an expensive place to do business. "This bill is the road to economic ruin for California," said Sen. Dennis Hollingsworth.

The nation's most populous state is the world's 12th largest emitter of greenhouse gases and could suffer dire consequences if global temperatures increase only a few degrees.

In the absence of federal action, much of the effort to combat climate change has been focused in the states. More than 100 climate-related bills have been held up in Congress, including one that calls for a national cap on greenhouse gas emissions.

California has led the country in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through its renewable energy policies and a 2004 law reducing tailpipe emissions from vehicles.

Ten other states are poised to enact California's auto rule, while more than 20 states have required utilities to eventually generate some power from renewable sources such as solar, wind and geothermal.

The bill includes a so-called "safety valve" sought by Schwarzenegger that would allow California's governor to delay the emission-cap mandate if the state is hit with a natural disaster, terrorist attack or some other emergency.

In addition to the emissions cap, California lawmakers voted to approve related global warming legislation. That bill would prohibit the state from entering long-term contracts with any out-of-state utility that fails to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions. The bill passed by a 43-30 vote in the Assembly. It goes to the Senate for final approval.

Emission controls milestone for state

Leaders reach deal on CO2 law

By Felicity Barringer, The New York Times

LA Daily News

Article Last Updated: 8/30/2006 10:38 PM

SACRAMENTO - California's political leaders announced an agreement Wednesday that imposes the most sweeping controls on carbon-dioxide emissions in the nation, putting the state at the forefront of a broad campaign to curb the man-made causes of climate change despite resistance in Washington.

The deal between the Democratic-controlled Legislature and Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger calls for a 25 percent reduction in carbon-dioxide emissions by 2020, and could establish controls on the largest industrial sectors, from utilities to oil refineries to cement plants. The state has already placed strict limits on automobile emissions, although that is being challenged in federal court.

The Bush administration has rejected the idea of similar national controls on carbon-dioxide emissions, and efforts to get congressional approval for such firm caps on emissions have repeatedly been defeated.

Although the deal in California is strongly opposed by Republicans in the Legislature and many business leaders across the state, it assures a bill on the restrictions will be passed before the legislative session ends today and will be signed by Schwarzenegger, the leaders said Wednesday.

The first major controls are scheduled to begin in 2012, with the aim of reducing the emissions to their level in 1990. The legislation allows for incentives to businesses to help reach the goals, but opponents warn that the state could be sacrificing its economic interests for a quixotic goal.

"If our manufacturers leave, whether for North Carolina or China, and they take their greenhouse gases with them, we might not have solved the problem but exacerbated it instead," said Allan Zaremberg, president of the state Chamber of Commerce, which led opposition to the measure.

Since taking office in 2003, Schwarzenegger, who is seeking re-election in November, has championed efforts to fight climate change, most recently by signing an agreement with Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain to do cooperative research on new clean energy technologies.

In his statement Wednesday, the governor said the deal struck with the Democratic leaders will make "California a world leader in the effort to reduce carbon emissions."

He added, "The success of our system will be an example for other states and nations to follow as the fight against climate change continues."

Assembly Speaker Fabian Nuñez, D-Los Angeles, along with Assemblywoman Fran Pavley, D-Woodland Hills, a leading sponsor of the legislation, said at a news conference here, "We feel that California has always been a leader in protecting the environment. We now have moved it to the next level. We'd all like to see California one day be carbon-free."

The state's action, he said, could set off a "bottom-up" movement for greenhouse-gas curbs in states around the country.

That has been the goal of national environmental groups such as Environmental Defense and the Natural Resources Defense Counsel, which helped sponsor the California legislation. It has also been the goal of Pavley, the author in 2002 of a groundbreaking law reducing tailpipe emissions of greenhouse gases.

Already the governors of New York, New Jersey, Delaware and four New England states have signed an agreement to curb power-plant emissions, cutting them by 10 percent by 2019. That would amount to about 24 million tons, said Dale Bryk of the Natural Resources Defense Counsel's New York office - about one-seventh of the total envisioned in the California legislation, which will be an estimated 174 million tons.

Bryk added that Massachusetts and New Hampshire have enacted some emissions curbs, but the number of power plants involved is minuscule, compared with the California effort.

A recent poll of Californians by the Public Policy Institute of California showed nearly four of five respondents said urgent action on climate change is needed. Aside from its long coastline, which could be vulnerable to sea-level rises due to global warming, the state depends on the Sierra Nevada snowpack for much of its water supply.

A study in 2004 by the National Academy of Science showed that unchecked global warming would cut the size of the snowpack by at least 29 percent by the end of the century. It also predicted a doubling in the number of heat waves, such as the record-breaking one in July that killed 139 people statewide.

The deal Wednesday on the emissions legislation nearly foundered at least three times in the past week as Schwarzenegger's negotiators reached seeming impasses with the Legislature over important issues: whether the bill would require the creation of market mechanisms such as emissions credits to help industries meet the new standards; how broad to make exemptions during emergencies such as the state's electricity crisis six years ago, and how to administer and enforce the law.

In the end, after three weeks filled with late-night sessions, according to legislative staffers who were not authorized to speak for attribution, Nuñez met with Schwarzenegger on Wednesday morning and said the Assembly and Senate had agreed on final language and intended to enact the legislation with or without his consent.

That left the governor to decide whether the final language fell so far short of his wishes that he could take the political risk during an election year of vetoing a signature piece of environmental legislation whose aims he had supported.

In the end, the governor and the legislative leaders, including the Senate president, Don Perata, D-Oakland, announced their agreement.

Ralph Cavanagh, co-director of the energy program of the Natural Resources Defense Council, said in a telephone interview: "This is not an act of altruism. This is an act of enlightened self-interest. By accelerating the effort to reduce global warming pollution, California will benefit its own economy and environment and in so doing will set the best possible example for other states and nations."

Business leaders had been divided on the climate-change measure, with leading venture capitalists from Silicon Valley openly stumping for passage, saying the measure will create new industries and new jobs.

The bill gives the California Air Resources Board, which enforces the state's air pollution controls, the lead authority for generally establishing how much industry groups contribute to global warming pollution, for assigning emission targets, and for setting noncompliance penalties. It sets out a two-year time frame, until 2009, to establish how the system will operate and then allows three years, until 2012, for the industries to start their cutbacks.

Peter Darbee, the chairman and chief executive of Pacific Gas & Electric, broke with his industry as PG&E became the first and possibly only major utility in the state to support the legislation, called the Global Warming Solutions Act.

"The issue of climate change is important and needs to be dealt with," Darbee said. "We need a pragmatic and practical result. Since the bill has a market-based program, it will work efficiently and effectively for businesses."

A safety-valve provision in the bill, which could, in an emergency, give companies a year's hiatus in complying with their mandates, was also key, he said.

For Schwarzenegger, Wednesday's legislative victory is significant for his re-election campaign, potentially vaulting him beyond his Democratic challenger's reach.

The governor, whose popularity plummeted after a group of polarizing ballot initiatives failed at the polls last year, has been steadily pedaling to the left for months, supporting legislation to increase the state's minimum wage, to make some prescription drugs more accessible, and to improve the state's environment by adding thousands of subsidized solar roofs over the next decade.

Legislative countdown: California takes lead to cut greenhouse gases Governor, Democrats reach pact

By Judy Lin -- Bee Capitol Bureau
Sacramento Bee Thursday, August 31, 2006

Democratic lawmakers and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Wednesday struck a groundbreaking environmental deal to reduce the state's greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent over the next two decades.

Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez, D-Los Angeles, hailed the long-bargained agreement as the first in the nation to impose limits on all greenhouse gases -- a move environmentalists hope will influence the federal government and other states.

"We feel that California has always been a leader in protecting the environment. We've done so in the area of recycling and clean air and tailpipe emissions standards," Núñez said during a news conference inside the Capitol, flanked by representatives from Environmental Defense and the Natural Resources Defense Council.

"And we have now moved it to the next level," Núñez said.

The Senate approved Assembly Bill 32 with a 23-14 vote late Wednesday. The bill now goes to the Assembly for a vote. Schwarzenegger, who has sought to boost his environmental credentials in his bid for re-election, has pledged to sign the measure.

"We can now move forward with developing a market-based system that makes California a world leader in the effort to reduce carbon emissions," he said in a statement. "The success of our system will be an example for other states and nations to follow as the fight against climate change continues. AB 32 strengthens our economy, cleans our environment and, once again, establishes California as the leader in environmental protection."

The agreement was unveiled less than 36 hours before the Legislature's scheduled adjournment at midnight tonight. Lawmakers are expected to ratify the deal before leaving the Capitol for the year.

But the governor's fellow Republicans in the Legislature said the bill was the wrong approach.

"Adopting costly and unattainable regulations will drive businesses and jobs out of California into other states -- and even into other countries with no commitment to improve air quality," said Assembly Republican leader George Plescia of La Jolla.

Plescia said climate change should be addressed at the national level, not with a state-by-state approach.

Under the bill, California would take the national lead in limiting greenhouse gases by reducing emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020.

Starting in 2012, the state would enforce a statewide cap on industries' emissions. Major industries believed to be the biggest contributors include utility plants, oil and gas refineries, and cement manufacturers.

The bill directs the California Air Resources Board to develop regulations, as well as establish by Jan. 1, 2008, a mandatory reporting system to track emissions.

"California is acting while Washington drags its feet," said Jim Marston, senior attorney with Environmental Defense. "This bill sets the stage for Governor Schwarzenegger to make history and get America's global warming policy on track with the rest of the world."

According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, California is the world's 12th-largest source of carbon emissions, including carbon dioxide -- the chief heat-trapping gas that many scientists blame for global warming.

Advocates argue that by restricting greenhouse gas emissions, the state would motivate more businesses to develop and use more green technology -- creating more jobs and wealth for the state's economy.

Two economic analyses suggested the state could generate 83,000 jobs and \$4 billion in income by 2020.

Advocates estimate the state will eliminate 174 million metric tons of greenhouse gases.

Last month, Schwarzenegger signed a unique accord with British Prime Minister Tony Blair to work on alternative fuels and technologies.

Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata, D-Oakland, said people are custodians of the planet and need to act responsibly.

Reports by state agencies indicate that a 2- to 3-degree temperature rise could be enough to cause the Sierra Nevada snowpack to melt earlier each year, leading to flooding in the Central Valley.

"This is not anecdotal legislation; this is rooted in fact," Perata said. "The facts are if we do not do something to stop carbon emissions in this world, we are going to see a diminution of both the quality of life, and eventually all life."

But reaching the deal during the last week of the legislative session involved a tremendous amount of negotiating between the Governor's Office and the two houses. On several occasions, Núñez said, he was "ready to throw in the towel." Administration officials said the governor teetered back and forth, and didn't commit to signing the bill until Wednesday. He had been most concerned that the bill would drive up the cost of doing business in the state.

At issue was the governor's request for mandatory market trading on carbon emissions, which would help businesses meet their quotas at the lowest cost. Such a mechanism would allow businesses to buy, sell and trade credits with other companies.

Some environmental groups opposed such trading, fearing it would enable businesses to sidestep emission requirements. The bill requires trading, but directs the Air Resources Board to set up a road map for trading.

Administration officials also sought broad oversight, arguing that the Air Resources Board lacked the expertise to regulate so many industries. Lawmakers prevailed, and the board retained oversight under the bill.

Administration officials acknowledged that the board, which is composed of 11 members appointed by the governor, will be asked to undertake a monumental task. However, officials say the board will receive additional staff.

At one point, amendments to the bill had called for a council made up of five members appointed by the governor and four appointed by the Legislature.

Schwarzenegger had expressed concern that the bill lacked an escape clause that would allow the government to lift caps in emergencies. Administration officials cited the state's energy crisis as a prime example of why the state needs to have the power to intervene.

Under the agreement, the governor has the authority to lift the cap for one year under extreme circumstances.

ASSEMBLY BILL 32

- Combats global warming by reducing the state's greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.
- Requires major industries - such as utilities, oil refineries and cement kilns - to meet quotas through a mix of new technologies and credit trading.
- Directs the California Air Resources Board to come up with regulations and track emissions reporting.
- Grants the governor authority to lift caps on emissions for one year under extraordinary circumstances.

Business Briefs: Air District and CSU offer pollution course

Staff Reports

Visalia Times-Delta, Thursday, Aug. 31, 2006

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and the Division of Continuing and Global Education at California State University are offering a joint Certificate Award in Air Quality Management.

The course offers the public, environmental groups and business employees a chance to discover how plans to clean the air are developed, implemented and enforced. A certificate will be awarded upon completion. No college credits are available for the course.

The program will meet every other Friday from 8 a.m. to noon Sept. 22 through Dec. 15 at the Air District's office in Fresno.

Registration is \$395 and includes materials, supplies and a Nov. 17 field trip. Scholarships are available.

Information: Dolores Rodriguez, 278-0418 or visit www.valleyair.org <<http://www.valleyair.org>>.

Supreme Court case challenges Bush stance on global warming

California and 11 other states are suing EPA to force curbs on greenhouse gases

By Carl T. Hall, science writer

S.F. Chronicle, Thursday, August 31, 2006

Opening briefs are due before the U.S. Supreme Court today in a case challenging the Bush administration's reluctance to issue regulations to control global warming.

California and 11 other states have joined with environmental groups in a legal attack they hope will compel the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to take action to curb the release of heat-trapping carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases entering the atmosphere.

The EPA maintains it has no authority under the Clean Air Act to do so, and even if it had the ability, regulations are inappropriate. It favors, instead, national and international "voluntary partnerships" over mandatory rules covering domestic industries.

Critics maintain the White House must be forced to act without delay to reverse or at least slow down the warming trend.

"It's really not that complicated," Tom Dressler, spokesman for the California attorney general, said Wednesday. "We want the federal government to take its head out of the sand, start performing its statutory duty, and start protecting California and the rest of this nation from the potentially devastating effects of global warming."

The Supreme Court case also has important ramifications for state actions on climate change. That's because federal law lets states adopt rules that may exceed EPA standards, but not wander into territory deemed off-limits.

Vehicle tailpipe emission standards are the main point of contention. California has issued its own rules that would force car makers to improve vehicle mileage, and 10 other states have followed suit.

Those rules have been held up by litigation from automakers, and the outcome of that challenge hinges largely on what happens in the Supreme Court case.

The case also is expected to define EPA authority to regulate power plant and other industrial emissions.

David Bookbinder, an attorney for the Sierra Club helping coordinate the legal arguments, said the case is "unequivocally" the most important environmental matter facing the Supreme Court.

"The United States is the largest source of greenhouse gases in the world," he said. "If we want to have any hope of avoiding the more dramatic consequences of global warming, we have got to start acting now."

EPA critics want the case to be decided in line with the standard meaning of terms used in the Clean Air Act, which broadly defines air pollutants subject to federal regulation to include seemingly any substance "which is emitted into or otherwise enters the ambient air," so long as it can be "reasonably anticipated to endanger public health or welfare."

Effects on weather or climate are clearly covered, Bookbinder argued.

If that argument prevails, the Supreme Court could send the matter back to the EPA with orders to take up global warming in a way that either would lead to a set of rules mandating emission cuts or a legally persuasive rationale against doing that.

Bookbinder said if it gets to that point, given the scientific evidence, "I could argue the case with hand puppets and win."

After the petitioners file today, the EPA and its supporters will have about a month to submit their own legal briefs in the case. Oral arguments are expected in December and a decision by June 2007.

EPA press secretary Jennifer Wood said Wednesday the agency is confident it's on solid ground, both legally and from the standpoint of what's best for the environment and the economy.

She said the president's policy "achieves near-term reductions" in greenhouse gases -- equivalent to cutting the annual emissions of 40 million vehicles since 2004 -- "while investing in long-term solutions."

A three-judge appellate court in Washington effectively sided with the EPA last year, although the judges split in their analysis of the case and couldn't agree on a majority opinion.

Representatives of the energy industry maintain the Clean Air Act, which is the principal federal law under which the EPA takes action against air pollution, wasn't intended to address global warming.

Ralph Colleli, a lawyer for the American Petroleum Institute in Washington, said Wednesday the text of the law should be considered along with legislative history suggesting the law "doesn't authorize EPA to impose mandatory regulations for controlling greenhouse gas emissions for climate change purposes."

The case is Massachusetts vs. EPA, 05-1120.

Greenery in California

A chance to see the hills again from the San Joaquin Valley

The Economist (published weekly in the United Kingdom), Aug. 19, 2006

Dateline: LOS ANGELES -- ARE the pressures of industry and a growing population conspiring to spoil the Californian dream? According to the state-sponsored California Climate Change Centre, California's 36m car-addicted residents already breathe America's worst air, with 90% of them living in areas that violate the state's air-quality standards. The rich fields of the San Joaquin Valley sit under a cloud of pollution so thick that the surrounding mountains can barely be seen; the brown layer of air over Los Angeles, which produces spectacular sunsets, also contributes to a statewide count of some 8,800 deaths and \$71 billion in health-care costs a year.

Moreover, worse is supposedly to come. "By mid-century, extreme heat events in urban centres such as Sacramento, Los Angeles and San Bernardino could cause two or three times more heat-related deaths than occur today," says the Centre's latest report. With less snow likely on the Sierra Nevada, there will be less water for both agriculture (a \$30 billion industry employing 1m workers) and cities. By the end of the century, California's already frequent wildfires could increase by anywhere from 30% to 90%. Rising sea levels could erode those magnificent beaches and lead to coastal flooding.

So what is a canny politician to do? Evidently, propose some green-sounding measures and hope they work. This week the state's lawmakers in Sacramento, pressed by an end-of-August deadline, began their final wrangles with Assembly Bill 32, which would make California the first state in the country to impose pollution caps on smog-making industries. Last year California was the world's 12th-biggest producer of greenhouse gases, and the heroic aim of the new bill is to reduce these to their 1990 levels by 2020, which would mean a cut of 25% from projected levels.

All this makes great electoral sense in a state where 80% of the residents say global warming is a "very or somewhat serious threat" to California's quality of life. Arnold Schwarzenegger, who is seeking re-election as governor in November, is particularly keen to burnish his green credentials. Last year, for example, he set the goals that underlie the new bill. Greenhouse gases must be down to their 2000 level by 2010, to 1990 levels by 2020 and, amazingly enough, 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. Last month he signed an agreement with Britain's prime minister, Tony Blair, that could lead to the transatlantic trading of carbon-dioxide pollution credits. Two years ago his administration announced that from 2009 it will impose on carmakers mandatory reductions of greenhouse gases from their vehicles, the first such regulation in the country.

Yet at least some of the political effort could turn out to be a lighter shade of green, for the simple reason that business groups, whose donations fill the campaign coffers, are unhappy. The American Council for Capital Formation says that AB32 is likely to cause "leakage" of industry and jobs to states with no emissions caps; and, because of population growth, it will in practice yield no net reduction in greenhouse gases. The California Chamber of Commerce, normally a loyal supporter of the governor, calls AB32 and his strategy on global warming "a job killer" which will increase costs for California businesses and cramp economic growth.

Mr Schwarzenegger, stung by that charge, is now proposing that the bill should be amended so that its deadlines can, if necessary, be extended. The Democrats are not impressed by this backsliding, but doubtless the voters will hardly notice, or may even be reassured. As for the green lobby, its view is that business is scaremongering. The National Resources Defence Council reckons the proposed curbs on pollution would save the state money that would otherwise be spent on importing oil. It would also put California at the head of a "clean technology" industry which, with global warming, can only grow bigger.

[Tri Valley Herald commentary, Wednesday, August 30, 2006:](#)

MY WORD

Global warming is a Latino issue

Antonio Gonzalez & Michel Gelobter

Dangerous levels of global warming pollution are already hurting California communities at an accelerating rate. But there is good news: We know how to reduce emissions in a way that is good for the economy, creates jobs, and reduces local air pollution.

Global warming is not a problem of the distant future - 2005 was the hottest year in recorded history, and the last two decades have been the hottest in more than 1,000 years. Here in California, we are already seeing record heat waves, increased forest fires, and decreases in the snow pack.

Hurricane Katrina taught us that the disruption of normal climate caused by global warming will always play favorites. About two-thirds of Latinos already live in areas that fail to meet government clean-air standards, and Latinos are 16 percent more likely to die from asthma attacks than whites. Sacramento is actually more vulnerable to flooding than New Orleans - further below the water line and with levees in worse condition. If a flood hits, the people hurt most will be working families, the uninsured, and those with limited resources.

Unchecked global warming will devastate agriculture and slash tourism and the hospitality industry, where many Latinos are employed. More hot, dry days mean more and more serious wildfires.

Tropical diseases are spreading northwards, and those without quality health care are most at risk. For the 20 percent of Latinos who live below the poverty line, and the more than 30 percent who are uninsured, this is a looming economic, social and public health disaster.

For these reasons, Latinos, blacks and other constituencies not usually associated with "environmentalism" are taking action. For example, the first comprehensive national gathering of Latino leadership since 1977 is taking place in Los Angeles on Sept 6-10.

In California, paramount Latino leaders are already taking practical action. A bill sponsored by Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez, Assemblywoman Fran Pavley and others, A.B. 32, would point the state in the right direction, by requiring state agencies to develop and implement a plan to cut global warming pollution. If enacted into law it would make California a national and global leader in combating global warming.

Policies that require polluters to pay for the environmental costs they impose on the rest of us, using the revenue to boost clean energy, energy efficiency, and a host of other smart investments, can reduce pollution, create up to

150,000 new jobs, lower energy bills, and position California at the forefront of new technology markets. These policies save money on expensive imported oil and natural gas.

This bill possibly will be voted on this week. We need this bill, and we need to be firm, both in support and in keeping the language strong. The sordid cast of usual suspects are lining up to try to weaken the environmental standards and add loopholes, foreclose a polluter-pays approach and replace it with handouts to big energy companies paid for by consumers, and to defeat the

bill outright. Many of the state representatives who are wavering represent districts where our numbers are strong. Let's make sure our voices are strong as well.

For more information on the National Latino Congress see <http://www.latinocongreso.org>.

Antonio Gonzalez is president of the William C. Velasquez Institute and Michel Gelobter is executive director of Oakland's Redefining Progress.

[Fresno Bee editorial, Wednesday, August 30, 2006:](#)

Supporting Prop. 84

Valley voters will benefit if bond measure passes in November.

There's plenty to like in Proposition 84 for those of us who live in the Valley. The measure on the November ballot deserves the full support of Valley voters.

Start with \$36 million for the San Joaquin River Parkway. Add \$100 million for river restoration on the San Joaquin. Toss in another \$40 million for water quality improvements along the river.

Now add \$180 million for creating safe drinking water supplies in small communities, including those along the west side of the Valley. And another \$72 million for other parkways, including the budding Kings River Conservancy.

There's also \$54 million for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, and \$500 million for state parks, some of which would be spent addressing the woeful lack of such open space in our region.

Some \$580 million statewide for sustainable and livable communities would break down like this: \$400 million for local and regional parks; \$90 million for urban green space projects; and another \$90 million to plan incentives for water conservation and efforts to improve air quality. Some of that money will wind up in Valley hands.

There have been similar state bond measures in the past, but they've often included funds for Valley needs more as an afterthought than driving purpose. This time, the bond measure would have a significant — and most welcome — impact on our region.

The river parkway is an excellent example of how these bond funds can be put to good use hereabouts. The parkway effort, now just more than two decades old, has been fueled in large part by such bond measures — though rarely in such large amounts. The parkway is envisioned as a 22-mile stretch of trails, wildlife habitat, nature preserves, recreational sites and picnic areas on both sides of the river, from Friant Dam to Highway 99. It's about 60% complete now, with more than 3,700 acres already assembled.

The funds from Proposition 84 would keep that process moving at its deliberate and effective pace. The money would be used both for acquiring land and building facilities such as public access points and trails.

Fresno and the Valley have a terrible shortage of open space, from developed parks to unspoiled natural areas. With the Valley's population expected to grow immensely in the coming decades, the demand for such spaces will only increase, and we can't meet that demand. Proposition 84 will help mightily in that effort.

I

n an increasingly urban environment, pastoral and wild places become even more important as a respite from cities with their crowds and their pressures. Children especially need that. Proposition 84 is a chance to help give them — and ourselves — a break from the clatter and bang of 21st century life. It deserves support.

[Letter to the Modesto Bee, Thursday, August 31, 2006:](#)

Quit whining, Bee; offer solutions

So the San Francisco Chronicle is blaming George Bush for contributing to global warming ("President Bush won't, so California must lead," Aug. 17, Page B-6). What do you think Gov. Schwarzenegger can do? Neither Democrats or Republicans are going to stop developers from building these large homes that use more electricity and natural gas. The power industry burning natural gas and coal to produce electricity creates more carbon dioxide than all the cars, vans, trucks and buses in the U.S. Why isn't size of vehicles controlled?

Come on, Modesto Bee, how about some ideas to control carbon dioxide. How about a dam on every feasible river in California to produce clean electricity? How about nuclear power for clean electricity? This will eventually come. Quit pointing fingers and come up with some ideas.

Charles S. Dohm, Turlock

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses the historic legislative agreement to reduce global warming pollution in California by limiting greenhouse gas emissions. For more information, contact Maricela at 559-230-5849.](#)

Acuerdan reducir emisiones de carbón

Araceli Martínez-Ortega

La Opinión, Thursday, August 31, 2006

SACRAMENTO, California.— Los líderes demócratas Fabián Núñez, Don Perata, la asambleísta demócrata de Agoura Hills, Fran Pavley y el gobernador Arnold Schwarzenegger lograron un histórico acuerdo legislativo para detener el calentamiento global en California mediante la imposición de límites a las emisiones de los gases de invernadero producidos por las plantas de energía, refinerías, cementeras y servicios públicos.

Fue una negociación difícil que llevó semanas y con la que no estuvieron de acuerdo los republicanos ni la Cámara de Comercio de California, quienes señalan que la propuesta de ley AB32 no es la solución a la contaminación provocada por los gases invernadero y que sólo alejará a los negocios del estado.

Hoy en día California ocupa el lugar número 10 en todo el mundo como el más grande emisor de dióxido de carbono, el cual es generado por las plantas eléctricas, las refinerías de gas y petróleo y rellenos sanitarios, los que hasta ahora han operado sin ninguna regulación de los gases invernadero que son los principales causantes del calentamiento global.

La polémica Acta de Soluciones al Calentamiento Global, cuyos autores son la asambleísta demócrata por Agoura Hills y el presidente de la Asamblea, Fabián Núñez, pretende tomar los primeros pasos para crear la tecnología y las regulaciones necesarias para reducir las emisiones de carbono.

La iniciativa 32 contempla reducir en un período de 14 años las emisiones de carbono a los niveles que se tenían en 1990.

Exigiría, además, a la Junta de Recursos del Aire de California adoptar regulaciones que obliguen a las grandes compañías que son fuente de esta contaminación a reportar las emisiones de gases invernadero para enero de 2008.

Contempla también poner en marcha compensaciones financieras para quienes reduzcan sus emisiones de gases de invernadero

La Junta de Recursos del Aire estaría autorizada para emplear una amplia variedad de recursos para hacer cumplir las reglas en torno a la reducción de gases de invernadero.

Núñez sostuvo que ha tomado una generación entender que el calentamiento global es una amenaza real para la gente y nuestra economía y sobre todo para la salud. "Ahora depende de nuestra generación trabajar para resolver esta crisis".

Destacó que para las comunidades latinas en California este acuerdo es una gran noticia porque generalmente es en estos lugares donde se encuentran las industrias que provocan la mayor contaminación de gases invernadero.

El presidente interino del Senado, Don Perata, hizo ver que la AB32 es otro buen paso para hacer de California un líder en la reducción de gases de invernadero.

"Esta iniciativa, junto con la SB1368, hará que las compañías de electricidad y servicios públicos compren energía que reúna estándares estrictos de emisiones, y colocará a California años luz del resto del mundo, donde debemos estar cuando se trata de una administración inteligente del ambiente".

El gobernador Arnold Schwarzenegger, quien con este acuerdo se anotó un punto más en su lucha por la reelección, declaró que el proyecto de ley AB32 hará que California se convierta en un líder mundial en los esfuerzos por reducir las emisiones de carbono.

La AB32 fortalecerá nuestra economía, limpiará el medio ambiente y una vez más colocará a California como un líder en la protección ambiental".

El dirigente de los republicanos en la Asamblea, George Plescia, rechazó el acuerdo alcanzado. "Las emisiones de carbono son un asunto muy serio que debe ser atendido con una acción responsable, pero la iniciativa 32 no es la respuesta".

Precisó que adoptar regulaciones costosas e inaccesibles sólo conducirá a lanzar a los negocios y empleos a otros estados e incluso otros países que no tienen un compromiso para mejorar la calidad del aire.

Jim Wunderman, presidente del Concilio del Área de la Bahía, un importante grupo de empresarios del estado que fue el primero en dar su apoyo a la AB32, afirmó que con el acuerdo alcanzado, el medio ambiente y la economía de California salen ganando.

"Los negocios serán financieramente recompensados por reducir sus emisiones y la industria de tecnología limpia en California renacerá".

El Concilio del Área de la Bahía propuso una inversión coordinada en tecnología para reducir las emisiones y alternativas de combustible para acelerar el sector de la energía limpia.

El acuerdo alcanzado incluye una provisión para permitir que el gobernador retrase por un año la fecha límite para el tope que deben registrar los gases invernadero, en caso de una catástrofe o de otro evento que dañe significativamente la economía.

En 2002, California puso el ejemplo en toda la nación al aprobar la moción AB1493 de Fran Pavley que hizo obligatoria la reducción de las emisiones de gases invernadero de los automóviles y camiones de trabajo.

Algunas de las consecuencias del calentamiento global en California, de acuerdo con la Liga de Votantes por la Conservación de California son: aumento de los niveles del mar con daño a las comunidades costeras, deterioro de la calidad del aire con el consiguiente incremento de enfermedades; aumento de las muertes por el calor, pérdida del almacenamiento de la nieve y una dramática alza en las necesidades de energía del estado.

Se esperaba que anoche el proyecto legislativo para reducir el calentamiento global fuera aprobado por el pleno del Senado.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses the report by the National Parks Conservation Association which states that it would like to protect park resources such as air quality. For more information, contact Maricela at 559-230-5849.](#)

Asociación de Conservación de Parques reporta deterioro por contaminación ambiental

Acusa desniveles ambientales que alteran el hábitat de flora y fauna, y advierte que si se deja de actuar ahora que los niveles de contaminación exceden estándares federales, los parques sufrirán daños irreversibles

Noticiero Latino, Aire Libre, California
Radio Bilingüe, Wednesday, August 30, 2006

La Asociación de Conservación de Parques Nacionales advirtió en un reporte que la contaminación del aire y el sobrecalentamiento terrestre afectan las áreas verdes que debieran preservarse.

"La contaminación del aire está entre los más serios problemas que enfrentan hoy los parques nacionales", destacó el reporte.

El documento también menciona la falta de balances ambientales, lo que altera el hábitat de flora y fauna, y advierte que si se deja de actuar ahora que los niveles de contaminación exceden estándares federales, los parques sufrirán daños irreversibles.