

May 6, 2008

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor
State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Don Perata, President Pro Tem
California State Senate
State Capitol, Rm. 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Fabian Nuñez, Speaker
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Rm. 219
Sacramento, CA 95815

Governor Schwarzenegger, President Pro Tem Perata, and Speaker Nuñez:

Our organizations collectively represent hundreds of thousands of Californians on environmental and health policy and fiscal issues in the State Capitol. We are writing to urge you to reject several proposals recently issued by Senate Republicans (*see "Senate Republican Proposal," April 29*) to roll back critical state environmental and public health protection laws. The proposals, which are being couched as part of an "economic stimulation" plan, are misguided and would do nothing to stimulate California's economic recovery efforts. In fact, they threaten to do just the opposite. They reflect a lack of understanding of the new economic opportunities of a clean energy economy and indicate that Senate Republicans are increasingly out of touch with the public and innovative business leaders on the importance of green jobs, green business and the need for strong environmental and public health protection measures.

The Republican plan includes proposals to extend deadlines for the retrofit of diesel engines and the implementation of AB 32. These proposals are not just a bad deal for the environment and public health, but also for the economy.

Delaying Diesel Engine Retrofit Rules

For the seventh year in a row, Californians have identified air pollution as the state's most pressing environmental problem. In fact, nearly seventy percent of state residents support strengthening air pollution laws even if it is more costly for businesses to comply (*see 2007 PPIC Survey "Californians & the Environment*). Despite this overwhelming support, the Senate Republicans are pushing for a delay in the implementation of diesel engine retrofit rules, which are critically needed to clean up California's air and help the state comply with approaching federal air quality requirements.

Each year Californians spend billions of dollars on health care costs, school absences, and missed work days as a result of poor air quality. These are costs that could be eliminated or substantially reduced with the imposition of stricter air quality rules. Yet,

the Republican proposal would leave millions of Californians overexposed to significant health risks and do nothing to address the increasing costs associated with breathing dirty air. It simply makes no sense from an economic or public health perspective.

Delaying AB 32 Implementation

Senate Republicans are also calling for the extension of deadlines for greenhouse gas regulations. Not only does this proposal run counter to the opinions of more than three-quarters of Californians (*see PPIC Survey*), it also completely ignores the fact that taking immediate action to cut greenhouse gases will ultimately save California billions of dollars and help spur a new cleantech revolution that will be a key economic driver in the state, producing thousands of new jobs (*see Climate Action Team Report, 2006 and CleanTech Venture Capital: How Public Policy has Stimulated Private Investment, 2007*). Our state has emerged as a global leader on climate change; unfortunately, the proposal put forth by Senate Republicans would perpetuate an increasingly unsustainable status quo and relegate California to the sidelines in the fight against global warming.

Protecting public health and the environment goes hand in hand with maintaining a strong economy. We urge you to soundly reject these and any other attacks on the environment and public health put forth under the guise of “economic stimulation.”

Sincerely,

Jason Barbose,
Environmental California

Janis R. Hirohama
League of Women Voters of CA

Bonnie Holmes – Gen
American Lung Association of CA

Pamela King
Environmental Enforcement Now

Rico Mastrodonato
Trust for Public Land

Ann Notthoff
Natural Resources Defense Council

Kathryn Phillips
Environmental Defense Fund

Tracy Saville
EndOil

Cc:

Members, California State Legislature