

Calif. bill would block out-of-state power deals

By Cathy Bussewitz - Associated Press Writer

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SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- The California Assembly advanced a bill Monday that would prohibit public utilities from contracting with out-of-state power plants that do not meet California's air pollution standards.

The bill by Assemblyman V. Manuel Perez, D-Coachella, is intended to deter the construction of power plants in Mexico that could pollute California's air.

Perez said some power plants in Mexico are in the same air basin as California, but follow pollution guidelines that are not as strict as California's.

That pollution drifts across the border into neighborhoods in his district, Perez said.

"The Imperial Valley has one of the worst particulate matter pollution problems in California, as well as historically high rates of asthma hospitalizations among children," Perez said. "This issue is compounded by a recent trend of power plants being sited in Mexico adjacent to the state and federal borders."

Republicans opposed the plan, saying it would hurt the state's economy.

"We need to get serious to do everything we can to help Californians throughout this economic crisis," said Assemblyman Dan Logue, R-Chico. "It's going to cause energy rates to skyrocket and more businesses to leave the state of California."

The U.S. already imports energy from some power plants in Mexico. The bill would prevent contracts with new power plants, not existing ones.

The bill, AB 2037, passed 41-22 on a party-line vote, and now moves to the Senate.

The measure advanced as Republicans are pushing to suspend AB32, the state's landmark global warming law that was signed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2006, until the economy recovers. The law requires the state to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent over the next decade.

A proposed ballot measure would delay air pollution regulations until the state's current double-digit unemployment rate reaches 5.5 percent and stays there for a year.

Both GOP candidates for governor also support delaying the emissions restrictions.

[Tracy Press Guest Commentary, Monday, May 10, 2010:](#)

Her Voice: Let's all get into the conservation conversation

Deborah Littleton

Kermit the Frog said it best: "It's not easy being green."

Green has been my favorite color for quite a while. Even my house is green — mainly on the outside, but a little on the inside, too. I don't think being green has to be an all-or-nothing-thing.

I have also been a Christian ever since I could remember. So I have conservative values, but that doesn't blind me to the fact that we all leave our "carbon footprint" on the planet. There's cause and effect to everything.

The world is not always fair and balanced. The media is often slanted to the left or liberal side of the fulcrum, but unlike many, Tracy Press prints a lot of the right-sided discussion.

So when Al Gore started talking about global warming, I said to myself that God is the one that causes the warming and cooling trends, earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, etc., though our air quality and two-plus-car families very well could be responsible for the ozone layer's disappearance. In our house, when it's colder, like this past month of still wearing sweatshirts when we're normally in shorts and tank tops, we say: "That's global warming for ya."

Still, though, there has to be a breaking point where we all get to the realization that the buck has to stop somewhere. Grocery stores were selling canvas bags back in the early 1990s, and I had about seven of them back then. But baby came along, and I got lazy again. They ended up stuffed in a closet.

One of my favorite jobs in the early 1990s was at the Santa Clara Valley Water District, leading elementary school children on tours of the percolation ponds, discussing the water cycle, aquifers and water conservation, as well as recycling.

I learned to be conscientious of how much water and elements went into the processing of creating a single aluminum can, or a single cheeseburger. And in extrapolating that thought, how many trees went into the packaging of products and how much goes into the creation of all that we consume, and especially toss into our landfills.

After having lived in a single-family home, being used to San Jose's new recycling program, we had moved into a four-plex. I was curious about recycling again, so I called to ask if they were planning on expanding their recycling program.

The lady who answered my call at the waste management company said I just happened to be calling right as they were wrapping up signups for their multiple-dwelling-unit pilot program. If I could get 50 people interested in our area, they would supply totes. My eco-minded neighbors downstairs were into it, as well, so I made up some fliers, and we delivered 50 of them, having posted some in a large apartment complex, as well.

I called the waste management company to follow up, and they said, Whoa! Our phones have been ringing off the hook because of you. Not only had 50 people called, but there were 500 people interested in our area. If one idea can have that much response, it's not a black-and-white issue. It's just a different way of thinking.

Forty years of celebrating Earth Day has made us more conscious as a society of reducing, reusing and recycling.

Not only should we think before we purchase: Do we really need it? We should be thinking: Can I reuse it for something else? Can it or the packaging be recycled? Can packing peanuts be reused by a shipping store?

So, this past year, finding out that the global warming information was over-exaggerated was not a big surprise. And when President George W. Bush was in office, there was an e-mail in circulation. Two homes were being discussed for their green qualities and how much energy was consumed. It was a fairly big surprise to find out that Bush's home was much more green and energy-efficient than Gore's home.

But in rebutting Tim Michael Case's opinion ("The fraud of global warming," April 28 Tracy Press), I don't think that Christina Frankel's Living Green column is part of Tracy Press' "green agenda." I know she's really happy just to get people into the conservation conversation.

If we all think a little differently about our consumption habits, and about recycling versus just throwing everything in the garbage and adding to our already overloaded landfills, then our carbon footprint may look a little less like a clown shoe and more like our own feet.

I'm back to using my cloth bags, having to remember to set them by the front door to take them back to the car. And when I forget them before I'm halfway to the store, I turn back and run to grab them.

My clown shoes are getting smaller.

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