

Capital Alert Hearing

Sacramento Bee, Wed., July 28, 2010

The Senate Select Committee on Air Quality is holding an oversight hearing to look at the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District move to exempt some farmers from a ban on burning vines and trees as a means of disposal. The practice was deemed illegal in 2003 as part of a series of pollution control laws and Chairman Dean Florez said in a release he believes most farms should still have to comply with the ban. The hearing is at 9 a.m. in the Capitol's room 113.

Survey reveals interest in high-speed rail

The Business Journal, Tues., July 27, 2010

The California High-Speed Rail Authority came out with new research today presenting positive support for the state's effort to build 800 miles of steel track linking Sacramento and San Diego.

A survey of 800 registered voters, conducted by Public Opinion Strategies in May, found that 34% of those polled were in favor of the project and wanted to see it completed as quickly as possible. Forty-two percent were supportive with some concerns over cost and timing while only 13% were flatly opposed to the rail system.

Lori Weigel, a partner with Public Opinion Strategies, said higher awareness of the project resulted in even more support. Research showed that 26% of respondents had heard a great deal about the rail while 47% of those wanted it to move forward.

The survey gauged the interest of eleven different benefits stemming from the project, including 83% of participants finding job creation important, 79% believing \$3 billion in annual revenue important, 77% liking the idea of traffic and air pollution reduction and 75% rallying around the rail's ability to meet California's future transportation needs. Seventy-five percent were drawn to cheaper travel.

Sixty percent stated that the project was worth the \$40 billion-plus investment despite the cost, environmental impacts and concerns of low ridership while 33% had misgivings because of those reasons.

When complete California's future high-speed rail train will run at more than 220 mph along 800 miles of steel track linking the San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento and the Central Valley with Los Angeles, Inland Empire, Orange County and San Diego.

In January, California was awarded \$2.25 billion in federal funding for its high-speed rail project. The High-Speed Rail Authority's new Chief Executive Officer Roelof Van Ark, along with Board Chairman Curt Pringle, are currently in Washington D.C. to leverage more support for the project.

Prop. 23 backers file challenge over wording

By Rick Daysog

Sacramento Bee, Wed., July 28, 2010

Backers of a voter initiative to suspend California's landmark climate change law have filed a legal challenge to the wording of the rollback measure.

In legal papers filed Tuesday, the Yes on Proposition 23 committee alleged that the state attorney general's office used misleading and unfair descriptions in voter materials.

Proponents of the climate change law, or AB 32, said the court filing is another smoke screen from a group backed by out-of-state oil interests who will profit from a rollback.

AB 32 aims to reduce carbon emissions by 15 percent from today's levels by 2010.

The rollback initiative calls for a suspension of the law until the statewide unemployment rate drops to 5.5 percent for four consecutive quarters.

The committee's court filings alleged that voter material assembled by the attorney general's office falsely implies that Proposition 23 suspends all or many of the state's air pollution control laws and would require "abandonment" of greenhouse gas reduction programs.