

Schwarzenegger may order a change in green energy rules

An order expected this week would require a third of energy to come from renewable resources -- possibly with no limit on importing such power from other states. He may seek to include nuclear power.

By Marc Lifsher, staff writer

L.A. Times, Monday, Sept. 14, 2009

Reporting from Sacramento - After vowing to veto this year's biggest environmental bill, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is expected to issue an executive order by midweek that would require all electric utilities to generate a third of their power from renewable resources, such as wind and solar power, by 2020.

The order presumably would set no limit on how much of the green power could be imported from other states.

Environmentalists who have been told about the governor's still-evolving plans said Schwarzenegger also was considering directing the California Air Resources Board to look at broadening the state's definition of renewable energy sources to include large hydroelectric dams and nuclear energy plants.

Critics questioned whether Schwarzenegger's order would be binding once he leaves office at the end of 2010. The validity of the order would be subject to a variety of potential legal challenges, they predicted.

"I don't think it will have nearly the effect that the bill would have, and I'm not quite sure it is legal," said Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento).

A spokesman for the governor confirmed that he would sign the executive order sometime this week but declined to provide details.

On Saturday, hours after the end of the 2009 legislative session, Matt David, the governor's communications director, said the governor would veto a pair of bills passed by the Legislature that would order electric utilities to get at least 33% of their power from renewable sources by 2020 -- and with limits on how much could be imported from outside the state.

State law currently calls for generating 20% by 2010, a deadline that the utilities are unlikely to hit before 2013.

"The poorly drafted, overly complex bills passed by the Legislature are protectionist schemes that will kill the solar industry in California and drive prices up like the failed energy deregulation of the late 1990s," David said.

The bills, SB 14 by Sen. Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto) and AB 64 by Assemblyman Paul Krekorian (D-Burbank), were introduced this year to respond to a call from Schwarzenegger for legislative action to increase production of renewable energy in California.

The legislation was supported by environmental groups, consumer advocates, labor unions and some major utilities, including Pacific Gas & Electric Co., Sempra Energy and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. Raising the renewable energy requirement, they argued, would send a strong message to industry that California is serious about combating global warming, improving air quality and reducing reliance on foreign fossil fuels.

Unions and consumer groups also backed a provision in the bills that would require at least two-thirds of renewable energy be generated in-state to ensure that high-paying green jobs are created for California workers.

Among the opponents were the California Manufacturers & Technology Assn., the Independent Energy Producers Assn., the California Farm Bureau Federation and other business and trade organizations.

They feared that limiting California utilities' use of energy credits in buying renewable energy from out-of-state generators would restrict electricity supplies and drive up prices.

Schwarzenegger, in a letter to lawmakers in May, said he opposed any limitations on imports of green power.

The governor's order, which could be buttressed by a future bill, has sufficient legal teeth to get the Air Resources Board to write tough renewable standards under the authority of AB 32, California's landmark law to curb global warming, said Jan Smutny-Jones, executive director of the Independent Energy Producers Assn.

"My sense is that a future governor most likely will support moving forward with this," he said.

Schwarzenegger to issue renewable energy order

The Associated Press

In the Merced Sun-Star and Sacramento Bee, Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2009

SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- Administration officials say Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is moving ahead with plans to sign an executive order establishing the most aggressive renewable energy standard in the nation.

The governor plans to sign the order Tuesday. It would require utilities to generate one-third of their electricity from renewable sources such as wind, solar or geothermal plants by 2020.

His office says the governor will veto a similar bill passed by lawmakers last week.

Mary Nichols, chairwoman of the state Air Resources Board, says that bill actually could hurt California's efforts to increase the use of green energy because it limits how much renewable power could be imported from other states.

Sen. Joe Simitian, who authored the Democratic bill, says the governor's order will lack the force and effect of his bill had it been signed into law.

Pesticide sought by Calif. growers

Foes want to stop known carcinogen

By Robert Rodriguez, The Fresno Bee

In the Merced Sun-Star, Tuesday, September 15, 2009

A highly potent chemical capable of clearing farmland of pests, disease and weeds is attracting fierce opposition from environmental groups and some scientists in California -- even as growers look to it as a crucial replacement for a banned fumigant.

The makers of methyl iodide have asked the California Department of Pesticide Regulation for permission to use the powerful chemical in the lucrative California market.

The state is a leading producer of fresh fruits and vegetables, and growers here use a lot of fumigant. Access to the state's market could be a boon to Tokyo-based Arysta LifeScience Corp., producers of methyl iodide.

But standing firmly in their way are environmentalists and scientists who say the fumigant -- a known carcinogen -- is highly toxic and poses a serious health threat.

"This is worth going to the mat over," said Susan Kegley, a scientist with the Pesticide Action Network North America in San Francisco. "This is so toxic, and exposure to it is almost guaranteed."

For growers and farm industry groups, the stakes are high. They see methyl iodide as a drop-in replacement for methyl bromide, which was phased out by the federal government in 2005 because it damaged Earth's protective ozone layer. Like methyl iodide, methyl bromide is injected into the soil and covered with a tarp to prevent gas from escaping.

Although methyl bromide is still used, growers need special permission. And growers say alternatives, such as telone and metam sodium, are not as effective at killing pests, diseases and weeds.

Without good pest control, crop yields and product quality will suffer, farmers say.

"The bottom line is that growers need soil fumigants to be sustainable and produce the necessary amount of food at prices that consumers demand," said Barry Bedwell, president of the Fresno-based California Grape & Tree Fruit League. "So if not this material, then what?"

But California pesticide regulators aren't ready to give the fumigant a free pass.

The state's preliminary review of toxicology studies found exposure to methyl iodide in animals can cause fetal death, delayed fetus development and disturbed thyroid function. The state has called for a review of the risks by a scientific panel whose first meeting will be Sept. 24-25 in Sacramento. Both sides plan to weigh in during the public testimony portion of the meeting.

California department of pesticide officials expect to rule on Arysta's request by the end of the year.

Officials with Arysta LifeScience Corp. hope they can secure California's approval, noting that 47 other states have accepted the chemical.

The U.S. EPA registered the fumigant in 2007 with restrictions on its use, including the use of trained applicators, buffer zones around treated fields and bans within a quarter-mile of sensitive areas such as schools, hospitals and nursing homes.

As a result of the EPA's ruling, many states have allowed its use. But California, at the urging of environmentalists, is asking for a further scientific review of the risks.

"It is not surprising that we are getting this kind of reaction," said Michael Allan, global business development manager for Arysta. "There still needs to be a lot of general education about the value of this tool. But people don't understand that we have minimized risks to protect the environment."

Allan said the company is working to minimize the risks by requiring fumigant applicators to undergo special training. And it takes only about half as much methyl iodide to have the same effect as methyl bromide, he said.

Dave Cox, CEO of L.E. Cooke Co., a nursery in Visalia, used methyl iodide on a trial basis and says it closely matches methyl bromide's effectiveness.

As a nursery owner, Cox must ensure that his stock of fruit trees is free of worm-like pests known as nematodes, which gnaw at the roots.

"The risk of not having something effective is huge," Cox said. "The state sets a zero-tolerance for nematodes on new trees. I can't have even one."

Opponents say that while they understand the need for farmers to remain productive, the risk of using methyl iodide is too great.

"We know that even in small amounts it can be very toxic," said Robert Bergman, a chemist at the University of California at Berkeley and member of the National Academy of Sciences. "And in agriculture, you are talking about hundreds of pounds being put into the ground and covered with a tarp."

Bergman was among 50 scientists who wrote a letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency opposing the use of methyl iodide in the U.S. until the agency's risk assessment was reviewed by an independent panel.

The scientists were concerned that because of the broad use in agriculture, the possibility of substantial releases in the air and water could result in exposure to many people, including the potential for more cancer.

Volkswagen to unveil new electric car at IAA

By George Frey - AP Business Writer

In the Merced Sun-Star, Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2009

FRANKFURT -- German carmaker Volkswagen AG said it would unveil several new models at this week's Frankfurt Auto Show, including an electric car called the E-Up.

At a reception before the start of the show Monday evening, the company said the E-Up compact would likely only go into production in 2013 and approach production levels of that of its other popular compact cars only by 2020.

The company said the front wheel drive car's lithium ion battery will have 18 kilowatt hours energy capacity enabling a driving distance of around 130 kilometers, or about 80 miles, depending on driving style.

"One of the basic milestones on this timeline is the mass produced electric car," Chief Executive Martin Winterkorn said in a statement.

He said only in high volumes and on all continents could one truly speak of the beginning of the electric age in automobiles and a perceptible reduction of their environmental impact.

"The concept car now being presented in Frankfurt very realistically shows how we envision such a Volkswagen with pure electric drive - technically, visually and with regard to a practical size," Winterkorn said.

The company will also unveil other models that include more of its Blue Motion technology as well as new hybrid technology.

In his speech later in the evening, Winterkorn said the company overall would remain focused on efficiency across the company, and that VW would take the electric car out of the niche market that it's currently in, and bring it to the world at much larger production levels.

"The future will belong to lower emissions and more efficient transportation," he said. "We're releasing one environmentally friendly car after another."

"The VW group is in top form. Today, VW is the most successful multi-brand car group in the world; we have convincing solutions for the entire market."

He said that the company was also confident about the future as it was seeing more positive signals for the economy.

"There are increasing signals that we've seen the bottom; we're looking at this optimistically."

Schwarzenegger to craft his own renewable energy plan

By Susan Ferriss, staff writer

Sacramento Bee, Monday, Sept. 14, 2009

Aides to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger say he will veto a package of bills on state renewable energy requirements and issue his own executive order on the subject Tuesday afternoon.

His order would effectively replace the bills the Legislature approved over the weekend in the final hours of its session.

Spokesman Aaron McLearn said Schwarzenegger may announce the order at a Sacramento utility center.

The Sacramento Municipal Utility District opposed the two bills, which laid out a course for public and private utilities to comply with an existing state target that by 2020 they use at least 33 percent renewable energy to generate electrical power.

In an attempt to boost renewable investment and job creation in California, the bills contained provisions requiring that utilities purchase no more than 25 to 30 percent of renewable energy credits from sources outside California. The credits are applied to meet utilities' renewable goals.

Some of the state's biggest utilities, environmental and labor unions supported that provision, but some renewable energy producers and smaller utilities didn't.

Schwarzenegger views the provision as protectionist because it would limit competition and could drive up prices.

"We wanted to work with the Legislature, and they failed to deliver," McLearn said, explaining why the governor didn't use his executive authority earlier if he felt he had that option.

In a conference call with reporters today, California Air Resources Control Board Chairwoman Mary Nichols said the board is responsible for carrying out Schwarzenegger's executive order. She said the board will be able to come up with specific rules for "how to make that happen and regulate it" by this summer.

Contrary to some speculation, the governor will not seek to include nuclear power or large-scale hydroelectric generators as renewable energy sources, said Dan Pellissier, California EPA deputy cabinet secretary for energy policy.

Sen. Joseph Simitian, D-Palo Alto, the author of one of the bills, said today he hopes to avert a veto by persuading the governor to work with him on crafting additional legislation to address some of his complaints.

He said an executive order can be changed by a future governor, and that the governor and regulatory agencies might be legally limited from placing rules on some power companies without legislative approval.

"There is no limit on renewable energy from outside the state. That's been widely misinterpreted," Simitian added. He said the limits are on renewable credits.

Air quality back to normal in L.A. Basin

Three weeks after the Station fire began, most hazardous smoke has dissipated, regulators say.

By Ari B. Bloomekatz, staff writer
L.A. Times, Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2009

Air quality has improved to "good" and "moderate" levels in Los Angeles County after clouds of smoke from the nearly three-week Station fire prompted health officials to caution residents and warn against strenuous outdoor activities.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District has not issued a smoke advisory since Thursday and has since reported that most unhealthy air in the Los Angeles Basin is not attributed to the fire, said spokesman Sam Atwood.

"There is a small possibility where there could be some unhealthy air quality in areas that are directly impacted by smoke, but we just haven't seen that occurring in the San Gabriel or San Fernando valleys the last couple of days," Atwood said.

He said that air quality levels, particularly in some of the foothill areas, had reached hazardous levels at the outset of the blaze.

"I think we're essentially back to the normal air quality situation for this time of year," he said.

An AQMD map forecasting today's air quality in Los Angeles and surrounding counties shows mostly green and yellow, correlating to "good" and "moderate" levels.

Nonetheless, Los Angeles County's top public health official warned that air quality in the immediate vicinity of the Station fire could still be dangerous.

"In any area of visible smoke or where there is an odor of smoke, all individuals are urged to be cautious and to avoid unnecessary outdoor activities," said Jonathan E. Fielding of the Department of Public Health.

The Station fire, which began late last month, has burned more than 160,500 acres and is 87% contained, fire officials said. Crews are mostly working on its eastern edge in the San Gabriel Wilderness, and full containment is expected Saturday.

Station Fire more than 90 percent contained

Daily News Wire Services

In the Contra Costa Times & Tri-Valley Herald, Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2009

The Station Fire, which has consumed more than 200 structures since it was set by at least one arsonist almost a month ago, was 91 percent contained on Tuesday, authorities said.

Most of the "uncontrolled fire edge" that comprises the fire's uncontained 9 percent is in the mountain steeps north of Sierra Madre and Monrovia, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

The Station Fire has scorched 160,557 acres in the Angeles National Forest -- slightly more than 250 square miles -- since it broke out Aug. 26. Containment is expected by 6 p.m. Saturday, according to the Forest Service, which reported that 984 firefighters continue to fight the blaze.

The fire has destroyed 89 residences, 26 commercial properties and 94 outbuildings. The estimated cost of the firefighting effort stands at around \$92.6 million.

On Monday afternoon, the South Coast Air Quality Management District reported air quality had "returned to acceptable levels, except in the immediate vicinity of the Station Fire in the San Gabriel Mountains."

"In any area of visible smoke or where there is an odor of smoke, all individuals are urged to be cautious, and to avoid unnecessary outdoor activities," said Dr. Jonathan Fielding, the county's director of public health.

The fire claimed the lives of two firefighters whose truck plunged off a mountain road. Capt. Tedmund "Ted" Hall, 47, of San Bernardino County, and firefighter Specialist Arnaldo "Arnie" Quinones, 35, of Palmdale were remembered Saturday in a ceremony at Dodgers Stadium.

EPA to propose ways to cut car emissions

By Traci Watson, staff writer

USA Today, Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2009

McLEAN, Va. — The chief of the Environmental Protection Agency said Monday that the Obama administration is studying how to curb global-warming gases from big industrial polluters such as power plants and factories.

In an appearance before the USA TODAY editorial board, Lisa Jackson also said the agency will soon propose rules to cut greenhouse emissions from cars.

"We will continue to move stepwise down the path toward regulation of greenhouse gases," Jackson said, assuming that the EPA adopts a preliminary finding that greenhouse gases are a danger to public health.

In May, President Obama said his administration would raise fuel-efficiency standards for cars and light trucks by roughly 40% to cut fuel consumption and reduce greenhouse gas pollution.

There has been no public announcement yet about how the administration plans to curb greenhouse gases from industrial facilities. Power plants and other industrial plants produce just over half of the nation's greenhouse gases, the EPA says.

Though she is willing to use current law to cut greenhouse gases, Jackson said it would be better if Congress passed climate legislation. A new law would forestall lawsuits, she said. The House of Representatives passed a climate-change bill in June. The Senate has not yet acted.

A law is also preferable because it could fund clean-energy efforts and other programs that would help fight climate change, said Lou Leonard of the World Wildlife Fund, an environmental group. However, he said, "if the Congress can't move fast enough, then the EPA should act."

Industry groups don't want the EPA to tackle climate in the absence of new legislation, said William Kovacs of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The existing law that would be used as the basis of regulations, he said, would require companies to apply for onerous permits if they want to open new facilities.

Regulating industrial sources with current law would be "a job killer and a project killer right at the outset," Kovacs said.

Other issues Jackson addressed:

- The EPA needs to ramp up its work on air pollution, Jackson said. She noted that federal courts have invalidated EPA rules — written during the Bush administration — to control smog and other air pollutants. New rules are a priority, she said.

- Environmental attitudes are changing, she said. Jackson said her sons, ages 13 and 14, were incredulous when they saw a friend's "huge, gas-guzzling" vehicle. "They are going to be very different citizens when it comes to green than my generation," she said.
- Her colleague in the administration, Energy Secretary Steven Chu, said Monday on National Public Radio that he'd rather live next to a nuclear plant than a coal-burning plant. She declined to specify which kind of plant she'd rather live next to. "I don't know why he did that," she said, laughing.

[Letter to the Fresno Bee, Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2009:](#)

Why we have forest fires

California Congresswoman Linda Sanchez blames global warming for our state's wildfires, echoing the Gore doctrine that almost all natural disasters, including hurricanes, are "contributed to" by global warming.

I know of no scientific evidence that even suggests such a conclusion. Computer modeling used to predict future weather does not count as "science."

These wildfires are not natural. They are the result of more than 40 years of government policy of suppressing fires that have historically cleared out the underbrush fuel and overcrowding that flames those fires.

While Washington was figuring that out, the environmental lobby was killing logging, using the spotted owl as a "straw man" to stop the only economical and practical way of clearing the forest underbrush and preventing overcrowding. It might not help the Los Angeles suburbs, but would surely help the fuel-ridden mess that is the Sierra Nevada if we stop this idiocy of forest management by urban activists.

Gerald C. Weaver, Bass Lake

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses Schwarzenegger is ready to veto the strictest bill there is against pollution. Legislation approved a bill on Friday that would obligate California's consumption of energy to come from 33% of solar and wind sources. For more information on this or other Spanish clips, contact Claudia Encinas at \(559\) 230-5851.](#)

Schwarzenegger se dispone a rechazar la ley más estricta hasta ahora contra la contaminación

Manuel Ocaño
Noticiero Latino
Radio Bilingue, Tuesday, September 15, 2009

Según un vocero del gobernador de California, Arnold Schwarzenegger se dispone a rechazar esta semana la ley más estricta contra la contaminación que haya aprobado hasta ahora la legislatura californiana.

Los legisladores aprobaron el viernes una ley que obligaría a California a consumir hasta un 33 por ciento de su electricidad proveniente de fuentes solar y de vientos. Hasta ahora las legislaciones más avanzadas contemplan un 20 por ciento de su consumo de energía renovable para ese año.

Sin embargo, según Matt David, un vocero del gobernador, Schwarzenegger opina que "esa ley es un esquema perfeccionista que acabará con la industria de energía solar" en el estado.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses AIE wants incentives for developing countries to use technologies of major efficiency in the electric sector, which will generate less CO2](#)

[emissions, including the capture and attainment of carbon and nuclear energy.](#)

La AIE quiere incentivos para la captura de carbono y la energía nuclear

El Periodico de Mexico, Tuesday, September 15, 2009

París, (EFE).- La Agencia Internacional de la Energía (AIE) quiere incentivos para que en los países en desarrollo se utilicen tecnologías de mayor eficiencia en el sector eléctrico y que supongan una generación con bajas emisiones de CO₂, incluida la captura y almacenamiento de carbono y la energía nuclear.

El director ejecutivo de la AIE, Nobuo Tanaka, se pronunció en favor de modificar las reglas actuales, que no incluyen la captura de carbono y la energía atómica entre los proyectos que pueden desarrollarse en el marco del mercado de intercambio de derechos de emisión de dióxido de carbono (CO₂).

Tanaka, que hizo estas declaraciones con motivo de la presentación hoy de dos informes sobre los retos en la industria y en el sector eléctrico para hacer frente al cambio climático, recordó que ambos sectores representan casi dos tercios de las emisiones de CO₂, principales responsables del calentamiento del planeta.

"Des-carbonizar el sector eléctrico y reducir la intensidad de CO₂ en sectores clave como la siderurgia, el cemento, el papel, la química y la petroquímica, así como el aluminio serán cruciales" para cumplir el objetivo internacional de reducir a la mitad las emisiones de este gas de efecto invernadero en el horizonte de 2050, subrayó.

Advirtió de que en el caso de la industria, el uso de las mejores tecnologías disponibles actualmente permitiría reducir el uso de energía en un 20-30%, pero eso no sería suficiente para alcanzar el citado objetivo, teniendo en cuenta que la demanda mundial de energía se espera que se doble con creces de aquí a 2050.

Por eso será necesario no sólo la adopción de tecnologías como la captura y almacenamiento de carbono, sino también implicar a los países en desarrollo y su industria, ya que es allí donde se espera el mayor incremento de emisiones.

La AIE insistió igualmente en que disminuir el peso del CO₂ en la producción eléctrica es fundamental para conseguir luchar contra el cambio climático, sobre todo teniendo en cuenta que este sector origina el 41% de las emisiones.

Aquí de nuevo, la acción en el mundo en desarrollo es esencial, puesto que desde 1990 las emisiones de dióxido de carbono allí han crecido un 90% y van en la línea de doblarse de aquí a 2030.

La agencia señaló que hay que trabajar en dos líneas, la primera dar una "fuerte señal a los inversores" en la energía eléctrica para promover tecnologías menos intensivas en carbono, y la segunda políticas más ambiciosas para una mayor eficiencia en el uso de la electricidad.