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# California's Global Warming Law Is Here to Stay

On Tuesday November 2 the voters of California will not capitulate to big Texas Oil interest. Instead polls strongly suggest they will vote "no" to Proposition 23 and support Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's legacy: The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006.

Schwarzenegger deserves kudos for his forward-thinking actions to combat rising greenhouse gases. California is leading North America with an aggressive law to reduce greenhouse gases by 25 percent below the 1990 levels by 2020, and an 80 percent reduction by

2050.

Earlier this year the U.S. Senate failed to pass a bill for national greenhouse gas reductions, which now makes Schwarzenegger's California Global Warming law all the more important. California is providing leadership on the single most important issue facing humankind in the 21st century: global warming.

Make no mistake the Earth's temperature is irrefutable rising as greenhouse gasses rise, and the weather is becoming wilder. In addition, according to Dr. Jane Lubchenco, chief scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) "Whatever is going to happen to our planet occurs first and to the greatest extent in the Arctic."

Last week an assessment of the Arctic, The Arctic Report Card, was released by NOAA. Not only is the surface ice cover on the Arctic melting at an extraordinary rate but the volume or thickness of the remaining ice cover is also diminishing. The snow cover in the Arctic in 2009-2010 lasted the least time since the inception of continuous record keeping in 1966.

Canada's far north was over 7 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than normal this past summer and in biological terms that temperature increase is stratospheric especially on life adapted to cold conditions. Some senior scientists have speculated that it's increasingly unlikely that we will return to previous Arctic conditions.

One immediate consequence of rising Arctic temperatures and missing sea ice was last winter's massive snowstorms that buried the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states. Usually the cold air is bottled-up in the Arctic. However, last December and February, winds that normally blow west to east across the Arctic were instead dropping immense blobs of frigid air south into the Mid-Atlantic region.

And there's more disturbing news. As the temperature in the permafrost (permanently frozen soils) rises, the soils are thawing in Alaska, northwest Canada, Siberia and Northern Europe; they are releasing approximately 1.5 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> from the soil as well as methane (another greenhouse gas 20 times stronger at trapping heat than CO<sub>2</sub>) into the stratosphere. To put a billion and a half tons of CO<sub>2</sub> into perspective: All the cars and light trucks in America release about 300 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually.

The other immediately shocking biological event -- bleaching of coral reefs -- has occurred recently in the Indian Ocean and into the Coral Triangle, which extends from Seychelles in the west of Sulawesi and the Philippines in the east including the exquisite reefs in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, sites in western and eastern Indonesia, and in the Western Caribbean along Panama and Costa Rica are due to extremely high ocean and sea temperatures.

In 2005 Earth experienced an enormous coral die-off due to high ocean temperatures. Scientists dubbed this a one-in-one-hundred-year event. Now five years later we are experiencing another event at least as great as 2005. Let me remind you that coral reefs feed hundreds of millions of people, daily and contain the strongest pain and cancer medicines ever found on Earth.

Despite the fear campaign launched by Texas oil giants Valero Energy and Tesero

Corporation, and Koch Industries promoting Proposition 23; their claims are false that the Global Warming law will cost jobs. Innovations in green energies in California and throughout our nation are in fact creating jobs and they've only just begun.

For instance, two solar farms that were just recently approved by the feds; one in Victorville and the other in the Imperial Valley will provide power for 213,000 homes in Southern California and create 1,000 jobs to build them, starting January 2011.

Another enormous solar farm announced yesterday (Oct. 25) will be located near Blythe in the Mojave Desert. The Blythe Solar Power Project will generate power for over 300,000 homes, creating 1,066 construction jobs commencing in January 2011, and when completed in 2013 it will provide 295 permanent jobs.

Aptera Motors of North County San Diego is making zero-emissions transportation with its Aptera 2e, two-passenger, all-electric vehicles. Along with other American companies like Borg Warner, Pratt & Miller Engineering, A123 Batteries and General Electric they are all working on producing a well-engineered, ultra-efficient vehicles debuting in 2011. Aptera will be adding 2,500 jobs to their existing 500-employee workforce.

Solar Reserve of Santa Monica has multiple projects planned across California and is spending millions of dollars in state to develop and deploy green energy. One third of all electric power has been mandated to come from renewable sources within a decade by California's Air Resources Board. This is creating even more opportunities for renewable energy companies like EnXco Inc., a San Diego-based company with two major wind projects nearing final permits in Solano and the Tehachapi region, representing around \$600 million in total expenditures.

There's one other reason why California's Global Warming law must remain: Drought. Last week, the National Center for Atmospheric Research published a drought prediction for the 2030s based on 22 separate scientific computer models. The models all forecast intense droughts across the globe, the likes of which modern humankind has never witnessed.

Global warming is here; it's real and we each have a crucial role to play.

*Dr. Reese Halter is a conservation biologist at California Lutheran University, public speaker and author of The Incomparable Honeybee.*

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