

Statement

What makes this proposal vile is not merely the price tag, though that alone is insult enough. It is the moral arithmetic beneath it. The state asks working Californians to bear the pain now: lower wages, shakier employment, dearer commutes, fatter household bills. And for what? By its own account, petroleum demand will endure for years. By its own account, crush in-state supply hard enough and the barrels simply arrive from somewhere else.

So the miracle on offer is no miracle at all. Consumption remains. Supply remains. Only the jurisdiction changes, and the burden lands where it always does: on those with the least room to absorb it.

Even the numbers are impolite enough to tell the truth. Cap-and-trade raises gasoline prices. Tighter caps raise them further. Low-income households take the blow first because necessity is a poor man's luxury. He cannot theorize his way out of the drive to work, the school run, or the grocery bill. Thus a technical regulation becomes what courtiers always prefer: a tax with a mask on.

That is the indecency of it. Workers are told to swallow transition losses. Families are told to pay more for essentials. Meanwhile the same supply is still furnished somewhere else, under another flag, on another ledger, with everyone invited to pretend this counts as virtue.

This is climate policy in the theatrical sense: much costume, little discipline. Not decarbonization, but displacement. Not sacrifice shared by all, but punishment concentrated on the useful. Emissions are reshuffled. Californians are impoverished. The authors call it progress and expect applause.