

Matt Struthers

I am very concerned with the direction this state is headed for many reasons, but I'll comment now on the proposed changes to the "Cap and Invest" and greenhouse gas programs. California already suffers from the most strict regulations and policies in the country, if not in the world. Despite that, the good people of California have held on and helped the economy barely survive, but I do not believe the economy or the citizens of California can tolerate much more. The cost of production including fuel, oil, and all industries and products that rely on them are suffering and will suffer more with these proposed changes. There is a reason many industries and companies have left California over the past decade. Staying the current course, or worse- adding more regulations, and the economy will be further crippled, and many more families will choose to leave the state. Many will likely be forced to leave as their jobs are lost and their industry (oil, fuel refinement, manufacturing, lumber, etc) shuts down and leaves because the cost is too high or the restrictions too tight to continue on in the state. Job losses, and economic decline will be accelerated. Michael Wirth, the CEO of Chevron recently and publicly warned of these and more problems if we continue on this path and guaranteed devastation if the state pushes for these new amendments.

We certainly need to be sensible and good stewards of the environment. We all want clean air and water, but we also need to recognize that there are clean ways to operate that don't penalize industry or everyday citizens. Most other states have found a way to do this! Gas prices for example are already the highest in the nation, and rather than refining and manufacturing our own fuel (to meet the strict CARB standards) with our own people and our own standards and care for the environment in the process, we import it from other nations that care far less about the environment to process it, let alone the cost and emissions to transport it here. It is far more expensive to import something that we have readily available here within our state! While solar is part of the solution, it cannot be the only solution. Even with solar, electricity is far too expensive and unreliable due to years of mismanagement and poor planning leading to blackouts, brownouts, aging infrastructure, etc. All this is going on meanwhile we have not built new truly green sources of power such as hydroelectric in decades or nuclear in decades (and want to decommission the Diablo Plant), and on and on. There are other solutions besides large solar generating sites or crippling other sources of power with regulations. We need to use all of our resources to ensure California can continue to thrive, grow, and be an affordable place for all.

Lastly, I am worried that the "cap and invest" program is seen as a way to boost the state budget. Are we concerned about the environment or about finding more funding? It sure seems to be merely another tax disguised as helping the environment. We have a spending problem, not a revenue problem. Vehicles and industries are continually becoming more efficient and polluting less. We need more innovation and free market policies to allow good ideas and ways to become more efficient and less polluting, not choking standards and policies that crush innovation and economic prosperity. Let's incentivize and reward these ideas and solutions! The people and innovators are the solution- not the government and more commissions, committees and departments. PLEASE reverse course, use common sense and fair policies, and let's use our intellectual, economic, natural and human resources that we have before it's too late.

-A concerned Citizen from Fresno/Madera