

# THE ORANGE COUNTY BETA REGISTER

## Reader Rebuttal: Global warming law

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As we seek solutions to recharge our economy, create jobs and meet the climate challenges we face, California must move forward with win-win solutions in the same spirit of innovation and ingenuity that brought the world movies, the Internet as we know it, biotech and aerospace, among other industries.

Our challenges are not small. After the collapse of the global economy and a grossly overvalued housing market, many Californians are buried in debt and stuck in the worst job market since the Great Depression. Unleashing investments in clean energy technologies that will create jobs and help California regain its economic footing should be the priority of our leaders.

Nearly four years ago the California Legislature passed the historic Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32), the nation's only statewide comprehensive effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The goals of AB 32 – job creation, innovation and investments in clean tech, new opportunities for large and small businesses – are as important today as they were when the law passed. Proposals to suspend AB32 implementation will create market uncertainty and put these goals on hold, resulting in a moratorium on progress.

Anyone who has owned a fuel-efficient car or installed energy-saving light bulbs or appliances knows that energy efficiency saves money. Under AB32, annual increases in energy efficiency savings will create nearly 400,000 jobs spread across the economy by 2020, and many of the first beneficiaries of this growth are expected to be workers who are currently unemployed.

Businesses – small and large – will also gain from the law's implementation. California's clean energy economy has attracted nearly \$6.5 billion in capital investment in the last three years. In 2009 alone, California-based companies received about 60 percent of all clean-tech investments in North America, with a total of \$2.1 billion spread across 116 separate investments.

Small businesses will not be unduly burdened by AB32. An economic study of AB32 commissioned by The Brattle Group showed that AB32 policies will increase the percent of small business revenue spent on energy in California by only one-third of a percentage point – from 1.4 to 1.7 percent – in 2020.

Delaying implementation of AB32 will chill billions of dollars of future investments and create an uncertain environment for companies that have played by the rules. The time to act is now, and Californians agree. A poll from the Public Policy Institute of California shows strong bipartisan support for AB32. Even in a recession, 66 percent of Californians approve of the law.

It's foolish to say we can't afford to implement AB32 ["Job chiller," Mark Landsbaum column, Feb. 28] during a recession, or that we must wait until the federal government weighs new environmental laws. The truth is that we can't afford not to.