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Yes, Sen. Pavley: The sky is falling, and so is California's prosperity

By John Kabateck

When you can't disprove the message, attack the messenger. That tried-and-true political ploy has been around forever.

But it's disgraceful when it's used against citizens and organizations that are genuinely – and with good reason – concerned about irresponsible policy-making that could cost billions and kill thousands of jobs with little or no public benefit to show for it.

It's disappointing that Senator Fran Pavley and others dismiss law-abiding taxpayers, small businesses, and manufacturers as “polluters and their misguided allies” simply because they question the feasibility and effectiveness of AB 32, the state's “global warming solutions” law.

Despite the rosy scenario painted by Senator Pavley, more facts become available every day that illustrate just how harmful a track the California Air Resources Board (CARB) is currently on will be for working men and women on Main Street and all Californians.

CARB's own Economic Allocation and Advisory Committee (EAAC) has determined that the proposed cap and trade program alone would lead to significant job losses and higher fuel and utility bills, hitting low-income families and small businesses hard. To mitigate these costs, the EAAC advocates a new auction tax that could cost up to \$143 billion between 2012 and 2020 alone!

This tax would be on top of an estimated 60 percent increase in electric bills, up to \$3.7 billion in higher gasoline and diesel costs and as much as \$50,000 added to the cost of a new home.

With state unemployment consistently above 12 percent and over 600,000 manufacturing jobs lost in this decade alone, it's not surprising that promises of increased employment through even more regulation ring hollow.

It's instructive that Senator Pavley, in an attempt to discredit concerns over job losses, opens that new AB 32 emission reductions regulations don't even begin until 2012 and as such can't be blamed for existing job losses to date. Then in a complete about-face, she claims that AB 32 has already “stimulated innovation, efficiency and economic benefits.”

CARB officials have publicly acknowledged that unless the rest of the nation and the world follow California's lead, our state's efforts will have virtually no impact on greenhouse gas levels. Considering that California's efforts are exponentially more dramatic than those of any other state or country, it shouldn't be difficult for even the most ardent AB 32 advocate to connect the dots.

Small business owners aren't just the backbone of our economy, they're the central nervous system that comprise 99.7 percent of all employer firms, account for more than half of all employment, create two-thirds of all net new jobs, and are the first to pull a struggling state and nation out of a recession.

California's go-it-alone strategy through AB 32 won't just kick these small employers while they're down, it will further damage our state's already-struggling economy, kill jobs and drive businesses away. Ironically, the greatest “climate” benefit will most likely be the business “climates” of other states that are already able to produce energy, goods and services more competitively than California. AB 32 just gives those states a sharper edge – and small businesses and residents here one more good reason to say “farewell”.