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## **Editorial: CO2 limits are unneeded, unjust**

**California first state to order refiners to reduce carbon output to fight a nonexistent problem.**

The California Air Resources Board, seeking to reshape life in California by dictating to private enterprise, has adopted the nation's first regulations to force fuel manufacturers to reduce their carbon footprints.

This is government by administrative decree from unelected ARB board members, administrators and staff, who concocted a fanciful "solution" to so-called global warming, an increasingly disputed phenomenon that hasn't occurred for at least a decade.

Nevertheless, by a 9-1 vote the ARB deemed it urgent enough to demand a 10-percent reduction in carbon dioxide that fuel producers release into the atmosphere on the theory – also unproven – that CO2 increases temperatures. Reality inconveniently contradicts the theory. CO2 has risen over the past decade, but global temperatures have declined, precisely the opposite of what the theory contends.

A better explanation for the contrived urgency is that bureaucrats need to impose their Draconian rules before people realize they are unneeded.

There's no evidence man-made CO2, even if it increases temperatures, is harmful. Indeed, some argue that warmer climes would benefit mankind by increasing crop productivity and reducing deaths from severe cold. None of that matters when government is intent on forcing change.

"I think we are now finally creating an opportunity for other types of advanced transportation to compete on a level playing field," proclaimed ARB Chairwoman Mary Nichols.

The so-called "level playing field" for "other types" is artificially being created by tilting the playing field against the types of fuels that currently dominate, oil and corn-based ethanol. The irony of government presuming to pick new winners is that one of the losers its edict is creating is corn ethanol, which became feasible as a transportation fuel only because of government's previous decision to favor its production with subsidies.

Not content to limit its meddling to regulating vehicle emissions, the ARB will measure carbon footprints by applying a calculation of "indirect" effects of CO2 on green space, such as how ethanol production can reduce farm land, prompting cultivation of previously raw land that might otherwise capture carbon and keep it out of the atmosphere.

Such domino theories break down at nearly every juncture, as it has now for once-favored corn ethanol, previously thought to be a wonderful "green" alternative to petroleum fuel. No further proof should be needed that government is terrible at picking winners by failing to identify all the factors in play.

Utopian tinkering beyond the influence of voters arrogantly presumes ivory-tower bureaucrats know better. Unfortunately, we may only be in the early stages of administrative governance. The Obama administration and Congress are looking at California's global warming tactics as a model for a national scheme.