

ADVOCATES OPPOSE WESTERN CLIMATE INITIATIVE'S (WCI) PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A REGIONAL CARBON TRADING SCHEME

Pollution trading will NOT work to address Climate Change

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SAN DIEGO, CA (July 29, 2008) – Social and environmental justice advocates and labor union representatives will gather outside the final public stakeholder meeting of the Western Climate Initiative (WCI) being held at the Marriott hotel in San Diego, California on Tuesday, July 29th. They will voice their opposition to a regional carbon trading system with informational materials and large illustrative props.

“By establishing a regional carbon trading system with seven U.S. states, 73% of Canada's economy, and various regions of Mexico, the promise of green jobs, sustainable economic opportunities for our communities, and the public health co-benefits from greenhouse reductions will be exported from California,” stated Jane Williams of California Communities Against Toxics. “Californian consumers will be paying higher energy prices, but robbed out of the benefits of job creation and cleaner air in this carbon trading scheme.” “Carbon trading means job flight for union members”, said Jesse Marquez, former union member.

Studies of existing carbon trading schemes indicate that up to 2/3 of the projects under the Kyoto Protocol would have happened anyway and don't represent real emissions reductions. "By offering multiple cheap compliance options, we're not making the needed investments to fundamentally change how we make and use energy—the only way we are going to truly tackle climate change,” stated Angela Johnson Meszaros of California Environmental Rights Alliance (CERA). “With a carbon fee in California (or tax in other states and regions), we could set a price for carbon that creates the needed incentives to get wind and solar projects jumpstarted in California. Instead we're proposing to set up a system that has failed miserably in the EU.”

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The European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) resulted in no net reductions of greenhouse gases, higher energy costs, and windfall profits to the world's worst polluters. "While auctioning pollution allowances may address the perverse result of windfall profits, there's still the irreconcilable problems of over-allocation, price volatility, gaming, and stifled innovation inherent within pollution trading schemes," argued Martha Arguello of Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles. "New England's carbon trading program has already been over-allocated, the RECLAIM program in Los Angeles is a disaster fraught with fraud, and the Acid Rain program that pollution traders often herald is not comparable to carbon trading for numerous reasons."

Two EPA pollution control lawyers sent letters to every congressional office speaking out publicly against a cap-and-trade system two weeks ago. Al Gore gave a speech calling for a carbon tax a week ago, and other high-profile climate change experts prefer transparent carbon pricing to a cap and trade scheme. Leo Miras, a public policy attorney with Environmental Health Coalition in San Diego concluded, "The evidence is in. If you're going to make the public pay for higher energy costs, there needs to be real and significant emissions reductions in greenhouse gases. Cap-and-trade has failed to deliver those reductions."

"But the same exact people and agencies who pushed deregulation and publicly stated that Enron could be trusted are pushing these state, regional, and federal carbon trading schemes," said Naomi Kim also of CERA. Tom Frantz of Association of Irrigated Residents emphasized, "Markets aren't magic. The choices we make today helping businesses and utilities meet aggressive renewable targets or continuing business-as-usual and allowing millions to be diverted to cover pig manure piles in Mexico, will shape every generation to come." Cynthia Babich of Del Amo Action Committee stated definitively, "If you're not outraged about carbon trading, you're not paying attention."

The environmental justice movement supports energy efficiency policies, promotes zero-carbon cars, and calls on the CA Legislature to adopt and the Governor to sign, an aggressive Renewable Portfolio Standard bill. The groups also support the use of consistent carbon pricing mechanisms, such as a carbon fee, to achieve actual reductions and a genuine transition to a clean energy economy.

To obtain a full press packet about the gathering at the WCI meeting, and for the groups' other informational materials about the failures of pollution trading, offset use, and need for carbon fees, visit the Environmental Justice coalition's website at <http://www.ejmatters.org>.

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