

Economic initiative makes the ballot

Larry Mitchell, Bay Area News Group, 6-24-10

SACRAMENTO — Assemblyman Dan Logue, R-Linda, was elated this week to learn his initiative to suspend the state's anti-global warming law made the November ballot.

In a phone interview, Logue said he found out Tuesday the initiative had enough valid signatures.

He said the initiative needed 440,000 signatures and it got 800,000. The names were collected by volunteers and paid "signature gatherers," he said.

AB32 became law in 2006. It provides that between 2012 and 2020, greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced to the levels they were in 1990.

Logue's initiative would postpone the implementation of AB32 until the state's unemployment rate stands at 5.5 percent for a year. Now the jobless rate is around 12 percent.

Suspending AB32 only makes sense, Logue said. "We can't afford it. We'll lose another million jobs. It will drive business out of the state."

Robin Huffman, advocacy director for the Chico-based Butte Environmental Council, expressed the opposite view.

Suspending AB32 is not necessary, she said. The law "is the very encouragement and incentive that is needed to create the jobs that we need for the new green economy."

She called AB32 "a very, very reasonable law" and "a step in the right direction."

"I'm sad that it's gotten on the ballot," she said of Logue's initiative.

Logue said he's long been disturbed by what he called a regulatory climate in the state that discourages business.

"Economic recovery begins by suspending AB32," he said. After being elected to the Assembly, he said the first bill he introduced was identical to the ballot initiative he later proposed.

That bill was voted down in committee. So, in November, he wrote the initiative that now will be on the ballot. Logue said he's optimistic it will pass, but he's also well aware there will be a strong fight against it.

Huffman said she looks for the initiative's defeat. "I think the people of California realize we need to change the way we live," she said. "It looks like we have some campaigning to do."

The initiative campaign has already raised \$3 million, Logue said. "Now that we've qualified, we'll be rockin' and rollin' even more," he said. "We have tremendous support throughout the state — from labor unions, small businesses, large businesses, counties."

Logue's initiative campaign has been criticized because out-of-state oil companies have donated a lot of money

to it.

The assemblyman defended the companies, saying they do business in California and employ thousands of people here.

He speculated that record amounts of money could be spent by both sides in the battle over this initiative.