

# Current and former state leaders envision winning a fight against the 'dark shadow' of fossil fuels

**Debra Kahn, Environment & Energy Publishing, 9-9-14**

SACRAMENTO -- Darkness and light were both on offer yesterday in visions of the future of international climate policy as articulated by two California governors.

A three-hour climate conference organized by former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) functioned as a pep rally for state and international policymakers -- and a response to industry opponents of the Golden State's climate efforts.

Gov. Jerry Brown (D) called climate change a consequence of the unprecedented rise in material prosperity that has marked the industrial era. "Fossil fuels have been at the heart of the incredible rise in modern prosperity, but we now see a dark shadow," he said. "The dark shadow of the prosperity of the carbon economy is climate change."

"This is the dark shadow that we have to understand, and now we have to find a way to continue and deepen the prosperity even as we correct for the negative impacts of carbon pollution," he said.

Schwarzenegger, in his first trip back to Sacramento since leaving office in 2010, presented a rosier outlook, at least for regional leaders with public support for environmental policies.

"While the politicians in Washington can't get anything done because of being stuck in those ideological foxholes, we here in California have two different governors from two different parties in the same room fighting for the same green energy future," he said. "As leaders from all over the world prepare for the U.N. climate change conference in Lima and Paris, we are here to lead by example as California has always done."

"In California, we don't have to choose between the environment and the economy," Schwarzenegger said, citing past industry opposition to tailpipe emissions standards and to A.B. 32 itself, the law mandating a return to 1990 emissions levels by 2020. "Every step of the way, people have fought us, but we always fight back."

International climate deal brokers lent their support as well to California's vision of contagious exceptionalism, praising the state's plan to link greenhouse gas cap-and-trade markets with Quebec.

## **High-level support**

"As we work towards a meaningful universal new global climate agreement at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris in 2015, cities, countries and regions need to learn from the many successful initiatives pioneered in California and elsewhere," said U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in a statement.

Other high-profile executives and scientists also sought to break the perceived link between environmental protection and economic hardship, which state lawmakers have been raising lately as the state's cap-and-trade program nears a planned expansion in January. A state bill proposed this summer would have delayed the addition of transportation fuels to the market on the grounds that it could raise gasoline prices.

Former U.S. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, now vice president of environmental initiatives at Apple, echoed a common theme.

"You don't have to choose between the economy and the environment; you never do," she said. "If you find yourself doing that, you're asking the wrong questions."

Speakers also focused heavily on the effects of climate change on the world's poorest inhabitants. Pollutants like sulfur dioxide and tiny particulate matter, which often accompany emissions of carbon dioxide, cause asthma, particularly near industrial areas like ports.

"It's like a serpent that chokes the life, the oxygen, out of young children's lungs," said incoming California Senate President Pro Tem Kevin De Leon (D), who sponsored a bill in 2012 to reserve at least a quarter of the cap-and-trade proceeds to benefit low-income residents. Government's job is to spur the private development of new emissions-reducing techniques, he said.

### **Seeking signals from a pioneer**

"The market is waiting for certain signals from us as policymakers," he said. "California is the place where everyone's watching right now, China, India and elsewhere, to see what we do with our cap-and-trade dollars and how to price out carbon emissions."

"We have to highlight where this story has a transition into a series of positive, job-creating, environmental justice-promoting steps to invest in those areas where we know we can make a difference," said Dan Kammen, an energy and public policy professor at the University of California, Berkeley.

The task of reducing emissions to stave off the worst effects of climate change is daunting, said Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Chairman Rajendra Pachauri. Keeping temperatures from rising more than 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels will require the world to shift to a "zero or negative emissions mode" by the middle of the century, he said.

"If California sets this blazing trail, I think the rest of the world has something to follow," Pachauri said. Recognizing the public health benefits of combating climate change will help sway public opinion, he said.

"Once people realize the co-benefits from these actions ... you're dealing with negative costs," he said.

Environmentalists attending the event said it served as a salvo against efforts to weaken the state's climate regulations. "You don't do that just for your friends," said Sierra Club California Director Kathryn Phillips of the conference. "You do that to send a signal to people who aren't your friends."

"I think there is a clear message that California knows how to deliver clean energy solutions that are successful and popular, and that we'll keep doing it," said Derek Walker, associate vice president of the Environmental Defense Fund's U.S. climate and energy program. "This serves to inspire our international partners while also reminding opponents that we are resolute and that there's a groundswell of support for what California is doing."