

Freeze global warming regulations

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Coming from Hollywood may explain Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's disconnect with reality. In the real world, saying so doesn't make it so. In Copenhagen this week, he made the astonishing claim that the Golden State is evidence we need not choose between a clean environment and economic growth because: "We've proved that over and over again in California."

Environmental well-being and economic vitality need not conflict. But California is far from proof. The state under Mr. Schwarzenegger is an economic mess, largely thanks to taxes and government regulations. The governor's pet environmental projects are chief culprits.

We were encouraged when Meg Whitman, who wants Mr. Schwarzenegger's job, said if elected she would suspend the regulatory and tax burdens of Assembly Bill 32, the preposterously named Global Warming Solutions Act.

To see how right she is and how wrong he is, check the numbers. AB32, a Kyoto-type regulatory scheme to force California off fossil-based fuels, is estimated by the Small Business Roundtable to cost consumers \$149.2 billion when it is fully implemented, small businesses \$182.6 billion and to kill about 1.1 million jobs in total. This is on top of today's 12 percent unemployment rate, and tax and regulatory burdens ranking California among the most unfriendly states for business. In 2008 alone, 47,000 more businesses died than were started in California.

Recently, State Assembly member Dan Logue, R-Chico, joined the chorus, citing AB32's own provision for it to be suspended if the state faces economic hardship. As Mr. Logue correctly noted, "[T]hat time has come." The Pacific Research Institute's Thomas Tanton pointed out the anticipation of the bulk of AB32's regulations going into effect in coming years already adversely has affected long-term business planning, triggering layoffs and downsizing.

When Mr. Schwarzenegger signed AB32 in 2006, unemployment was 4.8 percent. Considering it won't reduce global greenhouse emissions or global temperatures a whit, we can live without it altogether.

We'll settle today for at least suspending its deadly economic effects.