

Brown Rallies Mayors to Lead Climate Change Fight

California Attorney General
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I started sending out comment letters, maybe some people here have got some of them, saying you've got to count your greenhouse gases, you've got to look for feasible measures, then you've got to adopt them. Well that got everybody all excited, and to say I was interfering with the process. Well the seriousness of the problem, the growing problem of both oil dependency and its connected consequence of global warming, it's here now and it's getting worse and we can't wait five years before the rules take effect.

But we don't have to wait, we can actually, we being each one of us here in local government, we that live in communities, we can do something. We have to do something. I think the creativity of individual city councils will devise responses and ideas that will really take us along way. So that by the time the rules come out – and by the way – when the rules come out it doesn't mean anything happens, you've heard of the Pavley Bill and the emissions on automobiles? Well that bill passed four years ago, the rules were done two years ago, and they are not in effect because we are being sued. We are being sued by the seven automobile companies. They're suing us not only in California, they're suing Vermont because they copied us and adopted the rule. They are suing Rhode Island, and so that could take a couple more years. Not only are the automobile companies trying to kill our California auto emissions standards, that are aiming at reducing green house gases, but the Environmental Protection Agency which has to grant a waiver before the California law goes into effect, they sat on their hands for a couple of years. Who know weather they are going to give us a waiver, if they ever give us a waiver? So we are going to have to sue them too. If I can sue San Bernardino I can certainly sue the Environmental Protection Agency. And this time I got Governor Schwarzenegger on my side (laughter).

So this is where you come in, this is where I really want to rally local officials to take whatever creative initiatives you can devise in your own communities. Already, the League of Cities has supported, with CSAC, the Institute for Local Government. You have this in your materials, there are a lot of good ideas here. If these ideas are followed, and we have the support of local officials, and you and I join with the grass roots efforts of non-profits and environmental groups and citizen groups, we will build a very powerful movement that will really get California positioned to be able to support the implementation of AB 32 when the storied year of 2012 comes around.

My point is this: that we are looking at serious consequences, more forest fires, quicker melting of snow, salt water intrusion, breaking of levies, increased smog because of the raising temperature and that has health impacts, particularly in the elderly, those with respiratory diseases, more heart attacks. So the threat is real. The measures to deal with the threat are clear, at least in the beginning. Now is the time to take what action you can and I do believe that the League of Cities, when you take the collective strength of all your diverse membership, you can make the difference. And so I want to join with you in helping you do that. Of course if you don't I may sue you (laughter). So let's make this easy for both of us, just do what I'm telling you to do, and you'll become more popular, and I'll become less unpopular, (laughter) and everything will work just fine.

So to summarize this is a no-brainer, (applause) let's get working, and let's reduce oil dependency, and fight global climate change. Thank you very much (applause).