

2009

LEGISLATIVE RESULTS



The 2009 legislative session was dominated by California's budget crisis more than any other year in recent memory. This crisis drove our bill prioritization: early in the process, CLCV supported bills that would have minimal fiscal impact on the state, yet deliver a huge bang for the buck for the environment and for public health. While the legislature saw the value in our approach and delivered crucial votes, the governor took a big step back from his environmental pledges and turned in the worst performance of his tenure.

The gubernatorial race in 2010 is our big chance to get a committed environmental leader as our next governor. It's up to all of us to push the candidates to prioritize the environment in this race. Voice your opinion and help shape the debate at GreenGov2010.org.

For 37 years, the California League of Conservation Voters (CLCV) has tracked and influenced California environmental politics. For a full review of the 2009 session, see our Scorecard at www.ecovote.org/scorecard starting in December.

SIGNED INTO LAW: In true grassroots style, CLCV members helped pass laws through their participation in our Membership Action Campaigns. In 2009, we generated hundreds of real-time phone calls to legislators and the governor and knocked on thousands of doors to generate letters, giving CLCV members a connection to Sacramento when it was most needed.



Global Warming/
Energy

AB 758 (Skinner): Reduces California's greenhouse gas emissions by improving energy efficiency in existing buildings.

AB 920 (Huffman): Allows payments to users of renewable energy who put power back into the grid.



Water

AB 890 (J. Pérez): Mandates the cleanup of the water supply to the Southern California city of Maywood. Maywood's water has extremely high levels of manganese, a mineral that can severely disrupt the nervous system.



Toxics

SB 757 (Pavley): Bans the sale and installation of lead wheel weights—the largest source of new lead releases into the environment—in California.



Natural Resources

AB 94 (Evans): Re-establishes the successful Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit program to reduce the state's cost of buying recreation and habitat lands and use federal tax credits to compensate land sellers.

SB 670 (Wiggins): Prohibits the destructive practice of suction dredging stream beds in search of gold.



BAD BILLS PASSED: Few anti-environmental bills make it through the legislature each year. We are fortunate that we are able to spend the vast majority of our time in the legislature advocating for the passage of good bills. However, this year's SB 827 and AB 81 x3 were notable exceptions to that trend—both represent significant rollbacks of bedrock environmental laws.



Air Quality

SB 827 (Wright): Allows new power plants to be built in southern California without offsetting their additional air pollution, violating an existing court order.



Land Use

AB 81 x3 (Hall): Exempts from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)—the state's fundamental environmental protection—any activity or approval, necessary or incidental to, the development, construction, or operation, of a stadium complex in the City of Industry, setting a dangerous precedent.

FAILED IN THE LEGISLATURE: Considering the dire budgetary climate in Sacramento, this year's legislature performed remarkably well. Three-quarters of our more than 40 priority bills reached the governor's desk. Despite those successes, several of the year's most important bills fell by the wayside.



Land Use/
Water

AB 1408 (Krekorian): Would have encouraged California communities to grow within our water limitations by providing incentives for water-efficient new developments. **FAILED IN ASSEMBLY.**



Energy/
Green Jobs

SB 675 (Steinberg): Would have provided funding for green jobs training in fields such as clean technology and energy efficiency. **HELD IN COMMITTEE (Assembly Appropriations).**



Public Health

SB 797 (Pavley/Liu): Would have banned bisphenol A (BPA), a harmful chemical, from baby products. **FAILED IN ASSEMBLY.**

VETOED BY THE GOVERNOR: These bills made it through the legislature to Governor Schwarzenegger's desk before he vetoed them—contradicting some of his own commitments and environmental goals. In 2009, the governor lowered the bar again—setting new records for number of vetoes, he had his worst performance on the environment yet.



Natural
Resources

SB 372 (Kehoe) & SB 679 (Wolk): Would have put safeguards in place to protect state parks from inappropriate, non-park use developments.



Global
Warming/
Energy

AB 64 (Krekorian/Bass/Blakeslee) & SB 14 (Simitian): Would have increased California's renewable electricity use to 33% by 2020.

AB 1404 (De León/M. Pérez/Carter): Would have limited out-of-state exemptions to global warming emissions reductions.



Water

AB 1242 (Ruskin): Would have established the right of every Californian to have access to clean water for basic human needs.