

ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Air board OKs tough rules on greenhouse emissions

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The plan would add costs at every level at a time of widespread economic woes.

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THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SACRAMENTO • California on Thursday adopted the nation's most sweeping plan to cut greenhouse gas emissions, issuing rules that could transform everything from how factories operate to the appliances people buy and the fuel they use.

The Air Resources Board approved the plan unanimously despite warnings it will add new burdens on businesses at a time when the economy is in crisis.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said he believes the regulations will spur the state's economy and serve as a model for the country.

"When you look at today's depressed economy, green tech is one of the few bright spots out there, which is yet another reason we should move forward on our environmental goals," he said in a statement.

The strategy relies on 31

rules affecting all facets of life, including where homes may be built, and with which materials.

One central piece is a cap-and-trade program, set to begin in 2012, under which power plants, refineries and big factories will be able to buy and sell the right to emit heat-trapping gases. The program could give plant operators a financial incentive to reduce their carbon emissions.

Californians could see more fuel-efficient cars and plug-in hybrids, better public transportation, housing nearer to schools and businesses, and utility rebates to make their homes more energy-efficient.

But there will also be costs: Cars could become more expensive, and Californians can expect higher electric rates as utilities increase their use of renewable energy. Homes built with energy-efficient materials could also prove more costly, as could gasoline reformulated to release less carbon dioxide.

The rules spell out in broad terms how the state intends to carry out a landmark 2006 law that made the state a leader in con-

fronting climate change. The law - conceived in more prosperous times - requires the state to cut greenhouse emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. More detailed rules will be issued over the next few years.

John Kabateck, executive director of the California branch of the National Federation of Independent Business, argued against the new rules, warning, "Now is not the time to make it even harder to do business in California."

But Air Resources Board Chairwoman Mary Nichols said the plan would save money for residents and businesses in the long run.

"Time after time it turns out efficiency measures have not only saved us money but leaped our economy ahead," Nichols said after the 8-0 vote. Two people on the 11-member board were absent. One seat is vacant.

One major piece of the plan is contingent on the federal government giving the go-ahead to force automakers to build cleaner cars and trucks. The Bush administration has blocked that, but officials expect the Obama administration to reverse course.

State adopts global warming rules

Sweeping changes in emissions standards touch all sectors, but cost is an issue.

The California Air Resources Board voted unanimously to adopt the nation's most sweeping global warming plan, outlining for the first time how individuals and businesses would meet a 2006 law that made the state



Schwarzenegger

a leader on restricting greenhouse emissions.

The plan would hold the worst polluters accountable for the heat-trapping

emissions they produce - transforming how people travel, how utilities generate power and how businesses use electricity.

Californians could see more fuel-efficient cars and plug-in hybrids, better public transportation, housing nearer to schools and businesses, and utility rebates for energy-efficient homes.

At the same time, cars, electricity, home improvement materials and gasoline could all be more expensive.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger says the regulations will spur the economy. **NEWS 18**

Key points

- Creation of a carbon-credit market to give major polluters cheaper ways to cut the amount of their emissions. That market and the many other strategies committed to in the plan will be fleshed out and adopted over the next few years.