

Environmentalists expected more success stories with lawmakers

By Evan Halper, Marc Lifsher and Patrick McGreevy, Los Angeles Times

SACRAMENTO -- Environmentalists were counting on big gains in Sacramento this summer, with a governor eager to burnish his green credentials in his final months in office. But by the time the legislative session ended at midnight Tuesday, those hopes had fizzled.

Activists had worked for passage of such pioneering measures as a ban on plastic grocery bags and expanded use of the sun, wind and other renewable resources to power California homes and businesses. But the bold proposals they saw as a springboard to nationwide environmental efforts collapsed in the face of aggressive industry opposition that included intensive lobbying, television advertising and even mail to voters.

"We're in shock," said Mark Gold, president of the nonprofit Heal the Bay, which had helped lead a large coalition of activists, retailers and unions crusading for the bag ban.

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