

Opinion: Don't let businesses shift costs to public

By Janis R. Hirohama

Proposition 26 is another attempt by the oil, alcohol and tobacco industries to shift onto taxpayers the burden of paying for the pollution and public health impacts of their businesses. It is so broad and so poorly written that it will negatively affect virtually every area of state and local government operations. Conservatives and liberals alike have good reason to oppose Prop. 26.

The business interests behind Prop. 26 want to change the state Constitution so that legitimate fees to mitigate environmental problems, protect public safety or respond to public nuisances would be labeled as "taxes." Defining fees so narrowly that most such fees would become "taxes" means they will require a two-thirds vote of the Legislature or a two-thirds vote in local elections. It would become virtually impossible to make businesses pay for the costs they impose on taxpayers.

Read the whole story

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