

Environmentalists dismayed by governor's corporate turn

By Michael J. Mishak, Los Angeles Times

SACRAMENTO – Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's efforts to give a boost to corporate California are colliding with his image as an environmental crusader in his final days in office.

Administration officials say their moves are needed to protect jobs in a fragile economy. But environmentalists are dismayed by what they see as a feverish push to limit restrictions on toxic chemicals in retail goods, ease key air pollution rules and permit the use of a known carcinogen to treat soil in strawberry fields.

The Sierra Club grumbles that the governor's plan for implementing the state's landmark global warming law is a giveaway to industry.



Arnold
Schwarzenegger

The administration's maneuvering highlights a tension present at the outset of Schwarzenegger's tenure: the environmental activist versus the business executive.

Schwarzenegger spokesman Aaron McLear said the governor's environmental record is indisputable, citing big strides he has made in curbing greenhouse gas emissions under the

landmark global warming law, AB 32, signed by Schwarzenegger in 2006.

“This governor has implemented the most historic aggressive environmental regulations in the country and sometimes the world,” McLear said. “It’s just not credible to argue otherwise.”

But activists say they are sorely disappointed by some of the governor’s recent moves.

“I think they’d rather take heat from some environmental groups and some scientists than they would from Dow, DuPont and Exxon Mobil,” said Bill Allayaud, director of government affairs for Environmental Working Group, an advocacy organization focused on toxic chemicals.

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