

Climate-change bills in Calif. go down to the wire

By Jessica Calefati, San Jose Mercury News

SACRAMENTO – With the deadline for lawmakers to finish their work less than two weeks away, Gov. Jerry Brown and state Senate leader Kevin de León are working feverishly to pass what they call the year's most important legislation – measures that both men believe will enhance their political legacies.

The bills, which would dramatically reduce the state's reliance on oil and help to combat climate change, have been praised by everyone from Pope Francis to President Obama to the world's leading scientists. If enacted, the legislation would set international precedent and cement California's reputation as a leader in the fight against global warming.

But standing in the way is one of Sacramento's most powerful lobbies, the oil and gas industry, which has spent millions of dollars on advertising that paints a dystopian vision of the future: an out-of-control bureaucracy that would have the power to ration gasoline, punish SUV owners and limit the number of miles Californians drive.

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