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## Prop. 23 is Harmful to People of Color and Low-Income Communities

Two Texas oil companies are spending millions to push Prop. 23 – The Dirty Energy Proposition - that would kill California clean energy and air pollution reduction standards. Four years ago, California passed a clean air law (AB 32) that holds polluters accountable and requires them to reduce air pollution that threatens human health and contributes to global climate change. This law has launched California to the forefront of the clean technology industry, sparking innovation and clean energy businesses that are creating hundreds of thousands of new California jobs.

The tragic oil spill in the Gulf reinforces the urgent need to reduce our dependence on costly, dangerous oil. Prop. 23 would allow polluters to avoid our state's clean energy standards, kill competition and jobs from California's clean technology companies, and keep us addicted to dirty oil. Prop. 23 is particularly harmful to communities of color and low-income Californians, who are hurt first, and worst by pollution and the impacts of climate change.

### ***Prop. 23 - The Dirty Energy Proposition - is deceptive.***

- The primary funders of Prop. 23 are the Valero and Tesoro Texas oil companies. They are among the nation's biggest polluters, and their California oil refineries are among the top ten polluters in our state.
- Valero and Tesoro claim Prop. 23 would only "suspend" AB 32's air pollution and clean energy standards until California's economy gets better. In fact, **Prop. 23 would repeal our clean energy law.**
  - The fine print reveals their plan is to kill these standards by prohibiting them from being enforced unless unemployment drops to a fixed level that has rarely ever been achieved.

### ***Prop. 23 would create more air pollution in California, threaten public health and worsen the climate gap.***

- Low-income communities are facing epidemics of asthma and lung disease due to air pollution. Each year, California's air pollution crisis contributes to thousands of premature deaths, hundreds of thousands of asthma attacks, and thousands of trips to the hospital for California families.<sup>i</sup>
- According to the American Lung Association in their 2010 "State of the Air" report, 92 percent of people living in poverty in California live in counties that received a failing grade for air quality.
- Ample evidence points to the "Climate Gap" – the disproportionate harm climate change has on low-income communities and people of color. Prop. 23 would widen that gap:
  - In California, five of the smoggiest cities also have the highest densities of people of color and low-income residents.<sup>ii</sup>
  - Low-income families are more likely to live near major sources of pollution. On average, seventy percent of people of color are exposed to dangerous particulate matter linked to greenhouse gas pollution; this disparity is particularly sharp for African Americans.<sup>iii</sup>
  - Children in poverty disproportionately live near facilities emitting such toxic air pollution.<sup>iii</sup>
- Prop. 23 would let the Texas oil companies and other polluters off the hook – drastically increasing air pollution and public health risks.

**(more)**

### ***Prop. 23 would increase dependence on oil and cost low-income families more.***

- The tragic spill in the Gulf has reinforced that we must move to cleaner sources of energy to reduce our dependence on costly, dirty oil. But Prop. 23 would result in greater use of oil in California and increase the risk of accidents like that in the Gulf Coast.
- By killing AB 32 and keeping us dependent on fossil fuels, this initiative would increase household **electricity costs in California by 33%.**<sup>iv</sup>
  - Low-income families already pay more. Households in the lowest income bracket must spend more than twice the share of their total income on electricity than households in the highest income bracket.<sup>ii</sup>

### ***Prop. 23 would kill clean energy jobs, innovation and billions of dollars of investment in California.***

- The Texas oil companies want to continue California's addiction to oil. Prop. 23 would kill competition from California's newly emerging clean energy businesses – wind, solar and other clean energy sources that would reduce energy costs and our dependence on fossil fuels.
- **If we suspend AB 32, California would lose hundreds of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in investments.** California would change instantly from clean energy “leader” to “laggard.” Other states would win the countless jobs and investments that California now attracts.
- Clean energy businesses are one of the few bright spots in our recovering economy. These businesses are creating many jobs that can provide pathways out of poverty for struggling families. Many of these jobs – in solar companies, energy efficiency firms, and green manufacturing – are “middle-skill” jobs. They pay well and require training and skill, but they are available to people without 4-year university degrees.
  - According to a new report from the California Employment Development Department, **500,000 employees work in clean technology or green jobs in California.**<sup>v</sup>
  - Since 2005, **California green jobs have grown 10 times faster than the statewide average.**<sup>vi</sup>
  - The number of California **green businesses has increased 45% and green jobs expanded by 36% from 1995 to 2008** while total jobs in California expanded only 13%. From 2007 to 2008, when state employment fell 1%, green jobs continued to grow 5%.<sup>vi</sup>

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<sup>i</sup>California Air Resources Board(CARB), December 2008, *AB 32 Scoping Plan*

<sup>ii</sup>*The Climate Gap*, <http://college.usc.edu/pere/publications/>

<sup>iii</sup>*Minding the Climate Gap: What's at Stake if California's Climate Law isn't Done Right and Right Away*, Manuel Pastor, Ph.D. | Rachel Morello-Frosch, Ph.D., MPH | James Sadd, Ph.D. | Justin Scoggins, M.S., April 2010

<sup>iv</sup>David Roland-Holst, UC Berkeley, *Energy Prices and California's Economic Security*, Next 10, Oct. 2009.

<sup>v</sup>Employment Development Department – Labor Market Information Division, *California's Green Economy*, April, 2010.

<sup>vi</sup>*Many Shades of Green*, Collaborative Economics and Next 10, Dec. 2009.