

This Week in Washington

Congressman Richard W. Pombo
 11th District, California
 2411 Rayburn HOB
 Washington, DC 20515
 (202) 225-1947
www.house.gov/pombo

Pombo supports killing the Death Tax

Congressman Richard Pombo today voted, as he has done repeatedly in the past, to send the death tax to the grave. H.R. 8, the Death Tax Elimination of Act of 2001, would eliminate all federal estate taxes over the next ten years. The measure, of which Pombo was an original co-sponsor, was approved by the House of Representatives by a vote of 274-154.

The death tax, which can range from 37-55% of an estate, is particularly burdensome on family farms, small businesses and family-owned newspapers. Family members often have to sell the business just to pay the taxes on the deceased's estate.

"As a rancher, I've seen the damage the death tax causes," Pombo stated. "This is not just an economic issue, it is a moral issue - the government should not force families to visit the IRS and the undertaker on the same day. And, after approving death tax repeal in the past, it is good to know that President Bush is ready to sign this important measure into law.

Rep. Barton will introduce power relief bill

House Energy and Clean Air Subcommittee Chairman Joe Barton, R-Texas said Wednesday he will introduce a California electricity-relief bill the week Congress returns from recess and quickly move to vote the bill out of his subcommittee.

"We've got to do something now to help them with this summer," Barton said.

The outlined "Western electricity emergency plan" envisions U.S. funding to expand California's congested "Path 15" transmission lines, and federal regulatory action freeing small power producers from contracts with financially strapped utilities, which would allow the power producers to sell to third parties.

The blueprint also included directing the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency to prepare emergency plans for blackouts this summer; establishing interconnection standards for "distributed generation"; and directing the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to open up a proceeding that could lead to power sellers being required to refund "unjust and unreasonable" profits from power sales in the region.

Other measures would be invoked if requested by Western state governors, such as running backup generators at federal facilities and military installations, connecting U.S. Navy nuclear ship generators to the grid, and maximizing the Bonneville Power Administration's hydropower generation.

The list further includes a proposal to extend daylight savings time as a means of lowering electricity demand.

Barton also proposed controversial measures, such as EPA actions to ease or waive limits on smog-forming pollutants from power plants, and allowing the restart of mothballed nuclear power plants.

Reprinted from the Dow Jones Newswires

Media: Bush would have won election

MIAMI (AP) - A newspaper review of Florida's "undervote" ballots concludes that President Bush would almost certainly still have won the state had the U.S. Supreme Court allowed a hand recount to be completed.

The Miami Herald and USA Today reported in Wednesday's editions that Bush would have expanded his 537-vote victory to a 1,665 margin if the recount ordered by the Florida Supreme Court had gone ahead under the most inclusive standards, where even partial punches and dimples are counted as votes.

The study cost more than \$500,000 and employed 27 accountants, in addition to reporters from several newspapers.

Today in History

1621 - The Mayflower sailed from Plymouth, MA, on a return trip to England.

1792 - U.S. President George Washington cast the first presidential veto.

1937 - Colin Powell's birthday

1955 - Winston Churchill resigned as British prime minister.

1983 - The Beach Boys were banned from the Fourth of July concert at the White House. Ronald Reagan overturned the ban two days later.

From The History of Today

Wordsmith

pre·var·i·cate

Pronunciation: pri-
 'var-&-"kAt

Function: *intransitive verb*

Inflected Form(s): -cat·ed; -
 cat·ing

Etymology: Latin *praevaricatus*, past participle of *praevaricari* to act in collusion, literally, to straddle, from *prae-* + *varicare* to straddle, from *varus* bowlegged

Date: circa 1631

: to deviate from the truth :

EQUIVOCATE

synonym see LIE

Reprinted from the Merriam-Webster Online

Weekly Quote

"There will be no rate increases"

- Governor Gray Davis
 January 14, 2001

California's Energy Crisis

How California got into this mess

The California State Legislature and former Governor Wilson created the present energy crisis by passing laws to supposedly deregulate the power industry in California. They were pushed by the big power users who knew that there was going to be a power shortage with certainty. The big users supplied our politicians with millions of dollars of political campaign contributions for their 1998 election. The present legislature and Governor Davis continued this absurdity until the predicted crisis hit us all in the pocketbook. So-called environmental groups collected millions of dollars as attorney's fees for stopping all building of power plants everywhere in California. So-called consumer groups who hated the utilities did nothing to stop this.

The big users wanted to lock up the available power in long term contracts, and they did. But that left no reserve power for the consumers and the utilities such as PG&E and Edison. As a direct result, the utilities have been forced to pay ten times more for reserve power during peak demand. But their hands were tied behind their backs. They were not allowed to buy power on long term contracts and they could not raise rates to pay for the expensive power they must deliver to consumers. This is what the big private users wanted so that the utilities could not buy the limited power available. The politicians in Sacramento gave the big users (and big campaign contributors) what they wanted - and abandoned the consumers and voters of California. The legislature bankrupted the utilities that deliver power to homeowners as surely as if they had stolen the money out of their bank accounts -- while these same politicians were taking millions of dollars in political contributions from those who are now profiting immensely from the energy crisis in California.

The so-called consumer groups are equally irresponsible. They were paid large sums of money out of our rates to attack the utilities that supplied us with power at reasonable rates for 100 years. They now insist that energy should be supplied to consumers for less than what it costs, even though this means bankruptcy for the utilities. Then who will supply power to us? Who will run our utilities? The Sacramento bureaucrats who caused the problem? The so-called consumer groups who want a socialized system that pays them to meddle with it forever?.

So, who is going to solve this problem while all California consumers pay the horrible price of political manipulation and stupidity in Sacramento? As usual, California consumers and voters will have to tell the Sacramento politicians what to do -- or it won't be done.

By Dr. Bill Wattenburg

Reprinted from www.kgoam810.com

Dems becoming skeptic over Davis' plan to buy transmission lines

A deal that Gov. Gray Davis had touted as a potential solution to the state's energy crisis is faltering, as talks with the utilities have yet to produce concrete results and lawmakers grow increasingly skeptical.

For weeks, the administration has claimed progress in its negotiations with Pacific Gas and Electric Co. and Southern California Edison to purchase about 32,000 miles of the transmission grid in exchange for helping the utilities pay off billions of dollars in debt.

Democratic support began to dwindle two weeks ago, when the state was hit by two days of unexpected rolling power blackouts.

Many legislators expected the Democratic governor to work out a deal with the small generators before the blackouts hit, and they blame him for letting the situation get out of hand.

Now, many are taking critical looks at the governor's bid to purchase the transmission lines and believe the plan contains too many pitfalls.

For example, a state purchase of transmission lines would need federal approval because they are part of an interstate system.

Then there's the cost. Senate President Pro Tem John Burton, D-San Francisco, long an advocate of the deal, said the administration - which has reportedly offered as much as \$7 billion for the utilities' shares of the grid - would be paying "too much."

Despite growing pessimism among legislators, Davis continues to insist that the transmission deal will prevail.

Davis also indicated he has made plans should the federal government reject a future deal. If that happens, he said, the state will attempt to acquire the utilities' hydroelectric plants.

"Plan B would be to take hydro assets in lieu of the transmission lines," Davis said. "They are not worth as much in book value, but they generate revenue every year, which the transmission lines don't do, so they are very valuable."

Reprinted from the Sacramento Bee

Comments from the District

- “There is never a shortage where the free market is allowed to function properly” - **Robert Lallier** - 3/25/01
- “We will be best served by letting the free market sort this out. Certainly, we should remember the job our present legislators and governor have done come 2002” - **Donald Linn** - 3/25/01
- “The consumer is to the point where we cannot Afford gas or electricity” - **Frosty Austin** - 3/25/01
- “A re-call election is necessary for the financial stability of California” - **Timothy Mello** - 3/25/01
- “State should audit PG&E and So-Cal Edison's books to find out how much money was sent to the parent companies and deduct that amount from what the State will pay to bail them out” - **Jeanne Mello** - 3/25/01
- “Governor Davis should not be allowed to continue to make secret deals with suppliers” - **Alison Lull** - 3/25/01
- “Gray is too busy campaigning for president to be bothered with our state problems” - **Marie Miller** - 3/25/01
- “Enviros have gone overboard” - **Grace Brett** - 3/25/01
- “Deregulation was flawed from inception” - **Warren and Judith Holmes** - 3/25/01
- “Gov. Davis would be a better public servant if he got his head out of the campaign contribution trough” - **Milford Mullins** - 3/24/01
- “If Gov. Davis has his way, the taxes will drive us out of the State” - **Jodene Blankenship** - 3/24/01
- “Power production as important as national defense” - **Sylvan Stenge** - 3/24/01
- “Elected officials have made such fools of themselves and Ca.” - **Carroll Souza** - 3/24/01
- “Voters shut down Rancho Seco” - **Michael White** - 3/24/01
- “State Legislature has created enough red tape and stupid laws to halt construction” - **Gary Driggs** - 3/24/01
- “Energy crisis is a product of corporate greed and government incompetence” - **Bill Duncan** - 3/23/01
- “Problem caused by legislature caving in to environmentalist movement” - **Jim Brausch** - 3/23/01
- “Oil Reserves in Alaska would last for 200 years” - **John and Helen Prunchak** - 3/23/01
- “Gov. Davis needs to explain to CA citizens the truth” - **Judy O'Dowd** - 3/23/01
- “I'm ready to move out of California” - **Melanie Rogers** - 3/23/01
- “Why do California taxpayers have to pay off political debts?” - **Janis Sheen** - 3/23/01
- “Time for ultra environmentalists to take a hike” - **Richard Clark** - 3/23/01
- “Adequate power and water or fairy shrimp” - **Jon Murphy** - 3/23/01
- “Biggest rip off in recorded history” - **Alex Seifert** - 3/23/01
- “PG&E was not allowed to build” - **David Allan** - 3/23/01
- “Power companies should pay their own bills” - **Anthony Trebuna** - 3/23/01
- “Conservation is not a one-way street” - **Ted Hardy** - 3/23/01
- “Nuclear power is safe” - **Harvey Christensen** - 3/22/01
- “Follow Lodi's lead” - **Steve Dampier** - 3/22/01
- “California has grown in population and stupidity” - **Charlene Weinger** - 3/22/01
- “We need a change in the people governing this state ASAP” - **James W. Taylor** - 3/21/01
- “Why allow new construction?” - **John L. Young** - 3/21/01
- “Declare an emergency and freeze all environmental laws” - **Carl Vogt** - 3/21/01
- “Gov. Davis should use his emergency power to bring more plants online” - **Ruth Valencia** - 3/21/01