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Californians battle for far-reaching climate legislation

By Juan Lopez

In the face of fierce opposition from Big Oil companies and Republican legislators, the California state Assembly will decide on an array of pace-setting legislative bills to combat climate change within the next three weeks, thrusting the Golden State into the forefront of this consequential global struggle.

The state Senate already approved the package of climate bills in June that California Gov. Jerry Brown, a Democrat, has agreed to sign into law once passed by the Assembly. Both state legislative houses are controlled by Democrats.

Senate President Pro Tempore Kevin de Leon stated, "These bills represent an effort to fight climate change and put California on a path to sustainable economic growth and protecting the health of communities."

The state legislative battle heated up when Presente.org in partnership with California Environmental Justice Alliance, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Communities for a Better Environment, and the Greenlining Institute blasted the oil industry.

In an online message, the groups accuse the oil industry of "buying influence with legislators, spending millions on dishonest advertisements, and intimidating critics" while "peddling the false claim that a clean economy will hurt low-income



communities."

Presente.org and its partners released results of a survey conducted by Latino Decisions showing that the state's Latino voters overwhelmingly support stronger state measures to fight pollution particularly in communities of color, decrease dependency on petroleum and expand the green economy.

The poll further revealed that 82% of Latino respondents would be more favorable toward a

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legislator who supported a bill to add new penalties and fines to companies that pollute.

The poll is sending a strong message to wavering legislators from California Latinos, who now make up the single largest ethnic group, larger than whites, at 38% of the overall population,

These bills will grow the economy and protect the health of communities.

as well as a large slice of the eligible voters in the state.

As the loosely knit coalition - including environmental groups, consumer advocates, labor representatives and renewable energy entrepreneurs - ratchet up their activities in favor of the climate bills, the environmental organization 350.org is appealing directly to the public to join the fray.

Oil companies are particularly riled by that portion of Senate Bill (SB) 350 that proposes a 50% reduction in petroleum use in cars and trucks by 2030. In addition, SB 350 sets a 15-year target for cutting greenhouse gas emissions by requiring:

That 50% of energy supply come from solar, wind and other renewable sources. Doubling the energy efficiency of existing buildings.

The Senate approved SB 350 on a 24-14 vote, with all Republicans voting no. Out of the 12 bills making up the legislative package, two more bills are key:

SB 32 commits California to slash greenhouse gas emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by

2050. SB 185 requires California's sizeable public employees' and teachers' pension funds to divest from coal.

The Senate also approved a cap and trade funds towards public transportation infrastructure and establish a committee to advise the Legislature on climate policies that would create jobs.

The California legislative package if approved by the state Assembly in its present form will represent a formidable boost to climate initiatives of President Barack Obama and mandates of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and a major slap at Republicans in Congress out to undermine the president's agenda.

As the fight on the California climate bills heads for a final showdown in the Assembly, widely popular Pope Francis is scheduled to visit the U.S. and expected to appeal for urgent and far-reaching action on climate change and the eradication of poverty in the world before the United Nations and most likely also the U.S. Congress.



Juan Lopez chairs Northern California CPUSA.

Demonstrators to Connecticut's Sen. Blumenthal: Peace yes! War, no!

By Henry Lowendorf

Connecticut residents unfurled a long stream of petitions calling on one of their two Democratic senators, Richard Blumenthal, to support the peace agreement with Iran.

Gathered in front of the senator's Hartford office, over 80 demonstrators chanted "Hey Hey, Ho Ho, Peace, yes! war, no!" and "All we are saying is give peace a chance," along with other slogans.

The Greater New Haven Peace Council and MoveOn hosted the rally. The agreement requires Iran to refrain from seeking nuclear weapons, calls for strict inspections of its nuclear facilities, and allows Iran, under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to develop nuclear power for peaceful purposes. In return, economic and political sanctions on Iran will be lifted.

"Those who oppose this agreement, like Dick Cheney and Joe Lieberman," said Tom Swan, executive director of Connecticut Citizens Action Group, "are the same actors that led the U.S. into

attacking Iraq 12 years ago. The U.S. initiated that war over the false claim that Iraq had nuclear weapons."

Marta Daniels, a long time peace activist and writer, reminded demonstrators of the success of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign that 30 years ago took on President Ronald Reagan. "We changed the conversation then and we're changing the conversation now."

The United States, four other major nuclear weapons states [Russia, China, United Kingdom, and France] and Germany negotiated for over two years with Iran to reach the agreement.

Republicans and some Democrats trying to torpedo the agreement are reacting to pressure applied by pro-war interests who have amassed multimillion dollar war chests and unleashed armies of lobbyists. If Congress is able to pass legislation killing the agreement, President Obama has vowed to veto it. Then, for the agreement to take effect, 34 Democrats in the Senate need to vote to sustain the veto.

Residents in Connecticut want their Senators to support the agreement with Iran.

Decolonize the land: Native people welcome Mt. Denali name change

By Andrea Perkins

Ahead of his visit to Alaska for a summit on climate change, President Obama announced that his administration would change the name of the country's tallest mountain from Mt. McKinley to its original Indigenous name, Denali (or Deenahee, Denaze, Dghelayka'a), a word that means "High One" in Athabascan. Alaskan Natives and non-natives have been pushing for this change since 1975. In the 1980s, a compromise was made to name the national park around the great mountain Denali National Park.

While there has been an odd response from the leaders in Pres. McKinley's home state of Ohio, insisting that this was a move by the president to be more "politically correct," Indigenous people are celebrating.

In the last few years, there has been a push in Indian country to decolonize the land. The movement focuses on bringing back Indigenous plants and land teaching, but also the Indigenous names to the land. Part of colonization and genocide is not only to remove the people from the land, it's also removing any attachments the people have to the land.

In 2013, a movement to change Canada's Mt. Douglas back to its Indigenous name, Pkols, was started by more than 700 people, including the chiefs of the Sannich and Lekwnungen nations,



who gathered in Greater Victoria, British Columbia, where the old treaties were signed with Governor James Douglas in 1852. The Indigenous nationhood movement and the movement to decolonize land names have even gotten the attention and support from non-natives and environmental organizations. Jordan Engel is an urban farmer and architect that grew up around the Seneca Nation of New York.

The decolonization of the land movements are inspiring Native youth to get involved with projects like decolonial atlas; getting our youth involved with tribal language camps and indigenous science programs. Not only does giving places back their original name help out the Native community it also reminds non-Natives that things weren't always named after white colonizers; that indigenous people have a name for the mountains, rivers, and plants; that there are still indigenous people connected to that land, and that we are still speaking and teaching our languages.

Other mountains are on their way for their name to be changed too. I hope that the names of the mountains in Washington are changed. These are the names my grandmother used in her stories, and her mother and father before her. And it's the names I will be teaching my daughter.

Alaskan Natives and non-natives have been pushing for this change since 1975.

Spreading peace in Japan and worldwide

By Cathy Deppe

What is needed for the peaceful people of the world to build a lasting structure of peace -- a firm bulwark against the nationalist wars of governments everywhere? I gained new insights from recent participation in the annual peace conferences commemorating the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Japanese peace movement is in a life and death struggle to maintain one critical structure of peace - one that has rooted Japan in a war-free environment since 1945. Imposed by the United States after Japan's surrender, Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution is a renunciation of war that has kept Japan free of involvement in war for decades. No Japanese citizen has been sent to fight, kill, or die in any of the U.S. backed wars since then: Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Afghanistan, or Iraq.

From my experiences, I think that every nation should have an Article 9. We can spread the peace! The international adoption of constitutional amendments which renounce war is both necessary and possible.

In May, over 1,000 Japanese delegates traveled to New York for the United Nations Review Conference of the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty, now signed by over 189 parties. The Japanese peace movement delivered more than six million signatures from all over Japan, calling for an international convention for the abolishment of all nuclear weapons.

The petition asks all governments to enter negotiations without delay for a convention banning nuclear weapons. The cries of the world's people demand peace: No nukes! No war! No hate!

¿Qué significa un estado de excepción?

TeleSur

El presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, declaró este viernes el estado de excepción por 60 días en cinco municipios del estado Táchira, fronterizo con la vecina Colombia.

La decisión del mandatario responde a los hechos de violencia contra efectivos de la Fuerza Armada Nacional Bolivariana, el constante trasiego de productos de primera necesidad y el contrabando de billetes venezolanos de alta denominación.

1- El estado de excepción se aplica en circunstancias extraordinarias que afectan gravemente la seguridad de las personas, de la Nación o de las instituciones.

2- En un estado de excepción pueden ser restringidas temporalmente las garantías constitucionales, salvo las referidas a los derechos a la vida, prohibición de incomunicación o tortura, el derecho al debido proceso, el derecho a la información y demás derechos humanos intangibles.

3- Se decreta cuando una situación determinada no puede ser afrontada mediante las facultades ordinarias de los órganos del Poder Público Nacional.

En la Constitución Bolivariana de 1999, votada en referendo por la mayoría del pueblo venezolano, el Estado de Excepción está contenido en los artículos 337 y 339, que expresan lo siguiente :

Artículo 337

“El Presidente/ta de la República, en Consejo de Ministros, podrá decretar los estados de excepción. Se clasifican expresamente como tales

las circunstancias de orden social, económico, político, natural o ecológico, que afecten gravemente la seguridad de la Nación, de las instituciones y de los ciudadanos y ciudadanas, a cuyo respecto resultan insuficientes las facultades de las cuales se disponen para hacer frente a tales hechos. En tal caso, podrán ser restringidas temporalmente las garantías consagradas en esta Constitución, salvo las referidas a los derechos a la vida, prohibición de incomunicación o tortura, el derecho al debido proceso, el derecho a la información y los demás derechos humanos intangibles”.

Artículo 339

“El decreto que declare el estado de excepción, en el cual se regulará el ejercicio del derecho cuya garantía se restringe, será presentado, dentro de los ocho días siguientes de haberse dictado, a la Asamblea Nacional o a la Comisión Delegada, para su consideración y aprobación, y a la Sala Constitucional del Tribunal Supremo de Justicia, para que se pronuncie sobre su constitucionalidad. El decreto cumplirá con las exigencias, principios y garantías establecidos en el Pacto Internacional de Derechos Civiles y Políticos y en la Convención Americana sobre Derechos Humanos. El Presidente o Presidenta de la República podrá solicitar su prórroga por un plazo igual, y será revocado por el Ejecutivo Nacional o por la Asamblea Nacional o por su Comisión Delegada, antes del término señalado, al cesar las causas que lo motivaron. La declaración del estado de excepción no interrumpe el funcionamiento de los órganos del Poder Público”.

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