



06/11/2008 GAAS:324:08 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Gov. Schwarzenegger Joins with Legislators to Strengthen and Streamline the State's Oil Spill Prevention and Response**

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger today met with a bipartisan group of legislators, including Senator Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto), Senator Abel Maldonado (R-Santa Maria), Assemblymember Pedro Nava (D-Santa Barbara), Assemblymember Lois Wolk (D-Davis), Assemblymember Sam Blakeslee (R-San Luis Obispo) and Assemblymember Cameron Smyth (R-Santa Clarita) to highlight legislative and administrative solutions to strengthen and streamline California's oil spill prevention and response.

"We must do everything we can to protect and preserve California's natural resources for future generations," Governor Schwarzenegger said. "There is so much at stake-our waterways and our wildlife, our ecosystem and our economy-and today's actions will successfully enhance our oil spill prevention and response efforts. Last November, I said we would take action, and these bipartisan solutions are the tools we need to prevent another devastating oil spill of the magnitude we saw last fall."

Following the November 2007 spill of 58,000 gallons of fuel oil into San Francisco Bay, the Governor took immediate action on response and clean-up. He also committed to taking steps to prevent that kind of spill from happening again. Today, with a bipartisan group of legislators, the Governor is making good on his commitment by coming out in support of three pieces of legislation and a series of administrative changes that will improve marine oil spill prevention and response, enhance the state's oiled wildlife search and rescue collection efforts, step up enforcement and fines for polluters and for the first time focus on inland oil spill prevention and response similar to what already takes place in our coastal waters.

The Governor's Administration has taken the following steps to improve oil spill response times and environmental protections:

- The Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) is speeding up the response times to oil spills in high-traffic ports. Oil spill response organizations will have to comply with regulatory changes to speed up response in the San Francisco Bay and the Los Angeles/Long Beach ports and be able to demonstrate their ability to meet the new standard. These changes are expected to be in place within the next six months.
- The Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) is improving accuracy of information and more quickly notifying local governments and neighboring counties. OES has changed its protocols for notifying local governments that are potentially impacted by an oil spill, and OSPR is working with OES to ensure the State Warning Center always has the most up-to-date and accurate information.
- The Administration is developing new guidelines to enhance recovery and rehabilitation of wildlife affected by an oil spill. Through a coordinated effort with the Oiled Wildlife Care Network, OSPR has developed recovery and training classes for volunteers, as well as established two new positions focused on wildlife recovery and rehabilitation.
- The Governor's Budget proposal includes funding for a 24-hour monitoring program in the San Francisco Bay. The Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System in the Bay is a 24 hour-a-day program

that measures the currents, depth, salinity and wind in San Francisco and Suisun Bays every six minutes.

In addition to these Administrative actions, the three pieces of legislation the Governor is supporting are Assemblymember Nava's [AB 1960](#), Assemblymember Wolk's [AB 2911](#) and Senator Simitian's [SB 1739](#).

Assemblymember Nava's [AB 1960](#) will be amended to enact a comprehensive Inland Oil Spill Prevention Program by requiring effective maintenance standards and oversight of inland oil-producing facilities. It ensures that the Department of Conservation's Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources effectively oversees the inspection, testing, maintenance and operations of oil production facilities. The bill will be amended to enhance the state's oversight of inland oil production facilities, including the ability to shut down high frequency oil spillers, in order to better prevent expensive and environmentally damaging oil spills.

Assemblymember Wolk's [AB 2911](#) will be amended to statutorily enact a comprehensive Inland Oil Spill Response and Clean-up program within OSPR, similar to what currently exists in law for marine oil spills, and strengthen enforcement penalties for inland and marine oil spills. The bill will also enhance the state's efforts to conduct search, rescue and treatment of oiled wildlife following an oil spill.

Senator Simitian's [SB 1739](#) will ensure first-responders are adequately trained and prepared to take action on marine oil spills by ensuring that routine, thorough emergency drills and practices are taking place. The bill also makes it mandatory that oil spill response organizations actually demonstrate, through inspections and announced or unannounced drills, that they can deploy the response resources outlined in their contingency plans.

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# San Francisco Chronicle

June 12, 2008

## Governor backs 3 bills on oil spill response

[John Wildermuth, Chronicle Staff Writer](#)

Government response to oil spills like the one that polluted San Francisco Bay last fall would get a boost under a group of measures backed Wednesday by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

He met with lawmakers to endorse bills to improve emergency response guidelines as a result of the Cosco Busan spill in November and to unveil the action his administration is taking on the subject.

"We must do everything we can to protect and preserve California's natural resources for future generations," he said at the Sacramento meeting. "There is so much at stake ... and today's actions will successfully enhance our oil spill prevention and response efforts."

The meeting came as a welcome surprise to state Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, whose bill to require more training and drills for the groups that respond to oil spills is now before the Assembly.

"It's nice to get a signal early on, since the governor typically holds off (support) until a bill is on his desk," Simitian said. "There was a lot of frustration after the Cosco Busan spill. We

had a good law on the books that was adequately funded, but when the emergency happened, it failed."

The South Korea-bound container ship banged into one of the towers of the Bay Bridge during a heavy fog, spilling an estimated 53,000 gallons of fuel oil into the bay. Cleanup efforts were slow to start, allowing the oil to spread across the bay and up and down the coast. More than 2,500 birds died as a result of the spill, with cleanup costs swelling to \$100 million or more.

"This bipartisan package of legislation deals with the governor's promise to deal with the oil spill problems and crack down on those responsible," said Lisa Page, a spokeswoman for Schwarzenegger.

But Assemblywoman Loni Hancock, D-Berkeley, isn't convinced that Schwarzenegger is going far enough to improve the state's response to future oil spills.

"This is a start, but unfortunately it's only window dressing," she said. "We need to do much more to actually solve the problems we're facing."

Schwarzenegger did not voice support for bills by Hancock and a number of other Bay Area legislators that would take more direct - and more costly - action to prepare for spills.

A measure by Assemblyman Mark Leno, D-San Francisco, would tighten oil-spill-response standards and establish a \$5 million annual technology development grant. Two Hancock bills would require a new program for training local volunteers, grants to local governments for cleanup equipment and \$19 million a year more for the state Oil Spill Prevention and Administrative Fund, the money coming from increased fees on crude oil and petroleum products that pass through the state's ports, terminals and pipelines.

Besides Simitian's bill, the governor endorsed legislation by Assemblyman Pedro Nava, D-Santa Barbara, that will require tougher oversight of inland oil-producing facilities, and another by Assemblywoman Lois Wolk, D-Davis, that will add to penalties for inland and marine oil spills.

Sen. Abel Maldonado, R-Santa Maria (Santa Barbara County), Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee, R-San Luis Obispo, and Assemblyman Cameron Smyth, R-Santa Clarita (Los Angeles County), also joined the governor at the event.

It's important to look at the Cosco Busan spill to see what didn't work and prepare the state and its emergency responders for the inevitable next time, Simitian said.

"We can't afford to use an emergency as the next opportunity to practice," he said. "We need to ensure that when the next one happens, we're ready."

*E-mail John Wildermuth at [jwildermuth@sfnchronicle.com](mailto:jwildermuth@sfnchronicle.com).*

*<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/06/12/BA5M117KGF.DTL>*

*This article appeared on page B - 2 of the San Francisco Chronicle*