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Vote yes on Proposition 7

Californians will decide the fate of two energy-related initiatives next month.

Proposition 10 asks for a \$5 billion bond, most of which would give rebates to drivers when they buy more fuel-efficient vehicles, and the rest of which would go to companies to research clean energy sources. As stated in Tuesday's Register, in our view this initiative is not needed to spur the alternative energy market and irresponsibly puts a burden on taxpayers already supporting our deficit-laden state government.

The other energy measure, Proposition 7, imposes no direct burden on taxpayers. Instead, the measure pushes utilities to generate a higher percentage of their energy from renewable sources such as solar, wind and geothermal technologies. In our view, this is a step forward in addressing our long-term energy needs.

Proposition 7 sets a benchmark that utilities generate 20 percent of their

energy from renewable sources by 2010, 40 percent by 2020 and 50 percent by 2025.

Most utilities in California already are required to meet the 2010 standard, but Proposition 7 would make public utilities such as those in Sacramento and Los Angeles meet the benchmark, as well.

The longer-term benchmarks are new for all California energy providers.

Currently, energy providers get anywhere between 2 percent and 13 percent of their energy from sustainable sources.

These benchmarks set aggressive yet reasonable timelines for the utilities to plan for and invest in the necessary technologies. They also help the state to move toward a goal recognized as important by people of all political stripes: Reducing our dependence on fossil fuels and foreign sources of energy.

The measure contains other provisions, including one that would shift some oversight of the utilities from the Public Utilities Commission to the state energy department. As a result, the state Legislative Analyst's Office says the measure would cost an additional \$3.4 million a year to administer.

As for energy costs to consumers, the legislative analyst projects that they might go up in the short term because utilities will have to invest in the new technologies, and because current energy sources such as coal remain

Yes on Prop. 7 release; Tam Hunt LA Times Editorial, 9.24.08, page 3

cheaper than cutting-edge sources. Yet the office also projects that consumer costs might come down in the long run.

In any case, investing to wean ourselves from polluting sources of energy and imported supplies is a worthwhile move to make.

Proposition 7 uses the guiding arm of regulation to steer us where we want to be: Relying on sustainable sources of energy as soon as we reasonably can.

Vote yes on Proposition 7.

For additional information about the Solar and Clean Energy Act, please visit:
<http://www.yeson7.net/>

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