

Lockyer's clean-energy push could spur green I.E. growth

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By Andrew Silva

Slashing its own energy use would allow the state to nurture a developing industry and fight global warming while saving taxpayers money, state Treasurer Bill Lockyer said this week. That also means the Inland Empire could see growth in emerging high-tech jobs, on top of the expansion in the warehousing and shipping business.

“I want California’s green-tech industry to be the nation’s leader. The genius of Californians’ creativity can make renewable energy more plentiful and affordable, and improve our environment and quality of life,” Lockyer said during comments in Corona to a meeting of the Green Valley Initiative.

The Green Valley Initiative was formed a few months ago by a group of community leaders who want to bring businesses related to renewable energy and green industries to the Inland Empire.

With 2 million new residents expected in San Bernardino and Riverside counties by 2030, there is a chance to build new developments in an environmentally sensitive manner while creating local green industries to serve that growth, said Ali Sahabi, president of SE Corp., which built the mixed-use Dos Lagos project in Corona.

“If we can create jobs for the new economy, environmental sciences and green technology, we can capitalize on the global importance of sustainability,” he said. “We as a region have an opportunity to be leaders.”

He was confident business will begin demanding such technologies, in turn spurring growth of businesses to serve the demand.

The state could help kick-start those industries, Lockyer said.

He has proposed a 45 billion bond measure to make state buildings more energy-efficient.

That would include \$3.5 billion for solar panels that would produce up to 450 megawatts of renewable energy. That’s equal to about half the production of a full-size plant, such as southern California Edison’s Mountainview power plant in Redlands.

Money would also be directed toward retrofitting older buildings to be more energy-efficient and investing in other renewable-energy sources.

The goal by 2030 is to have all state buildings running without any energy from fossil fuels, he said.

Though some modifications can be expensive in the short run, incorporating the latest in energy-saving technology pays for itself down the road, he said.

The state is trying to make its buildings energy-efficient when it can, but Lockyer's proposal would inject new money to speed up the process.

The emphasis now is on getting the most efficient lighting, heating and air-conditioning in state buildings, said Claudia Chandler, spokeswoman for the California Energy Coalition, in a telephone interview.

Existing retrofit programs should lead to an 8 percent to 10 percent cut in energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, Lockyer said.

He also proposed having the state manage a carbon credit trading bank.

That would be if the state decides to go with a market approach, in which industries running cleanly can sell credits for emissions to other businesses.

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