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Edmund G. Brown Jr.



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Governor Brown to World's Mayors: It's Up To Us to Make it Happen

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VATICAN CITY - Speaking on the first day of the Vatican's symposium on climate change and modern slavery hosted by the Pontifical Academies of Sciences and Social Sciences, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. today urged the world's mayors to "light a fire" and join California in the fight against climate

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change.

"We have fierce opposition and blind inertia. And that opposition is well-financed, hundreds of millions of dollars going into propaganda, into falsifying the scientific record, bamboozling people of every country. We have to fight that propaganda and overcome the inertia and the tremendous opposition," said Governor Brown. "Mayors, you are at the bottom of this power chain and you have got to light a fire. We have to join together. We have to make a change. It's up to us to make it

happen."

Governor Brown's remarks came during the first day of the Vatican's symposium, which aims to drive awareness, dialogue and action at the local level on climate change and modern slavery - two pressing, interconnected issues highlighted in the pope's recent encyclical.

Pope Francis will address the [symposium](#) later today and Governor Brown will address the symposium again during tomorrow's [program](#). A livestream of the events is available [here](#).

Governor Brown's Remarks

The full text of the Governor's remarks is below:

Thank you. I think I'll take as my text - if I may - some words of Saint Paul to the Galatians, "God is not mocked for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." And what Saint Paul said in reference to God we can also say about God's creation. We have heard what we're doing to that creation, what a trillion tons of CO2 and other greenhouse gases will do. And that text that God is not mocked is not susceptible to compromise, to regrets. It's inexorable, it's absolutes. We have to respond and if we don't, the world will suffer. We will all suffer. In fact, many people - millions are suffering already.

Now, to change the world from a fossil fuel based culture is not easy, but there are plenty of examples where it's happening. So, I can bring you the example of California, which for many years has been taking on serious environmental challenges. California is now deriving 25 percent of its electricity from renewable sources and in that source we don't count nuclear or hydro. Secondly, we have the most efficient buildings, because of our building regulations, in the entire country. As a result, California citizens have saved tens of billions of dollars in energy bills. The same is true for our appliance standards, the most efficient in the country. As far as automobile pollution, we have very strict tailpipe emissions standards. And as a result and because of some changes in Washington, those standards are now adopted as the national standard of America. And that source of pollution is going down, not fast enough but steadily. We also have 40 percent of the electric cars in the United States.

But we're not stopping there. We also have a commitment. And my commitment is to increase the



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renewable portfolio to 50 percent of the electricity consumed, 50 percent. And, at the same time, reduce petroleum in cars and trucks by 50 percent in the next 15 years. That's quite a challenge, but it can be done. The California economy has steadily reduced its greenhouse gas emissions, particularly on a per capita basis, but its economy is growing over the last decade faster than the economy of the United States as a whole. So, there are ways that we can not mock creation or the laws of nature, but live within them. We have to get on the side of nature and not abuse it or go against it.

Pope Francis spoke about the abuse of goods. And what our modern world has seen and has enjoyed is the good of petroleum. We are a petroleum culture. We got here by means of petroleum, on airplanes and cars. Our clothes, the food deliveries, it's all based on petroleum. So, it's not a bad, it's a good. But it becomes a bad when used at the point that seven billion people now have over a billion cars with the coal plants, the oil and the gas. So, we have to make a transition because goods become bads when they are abused and go beyond a certain threshold.

We know the problem. Yes, there are uncertainties, but we don't even know how far we've gone or if we've gone over the edge. There are tipping points, feedback loops. This is not some linear set of problems that we can predict. We have to take measures against an uncertain future, which may well be something no one ever wants. We are talking about extinction. We're talking about climate regimes that have not been seen for tens of millions of years. We're not there yet, but we're on our way. And there's an element of irreversibility that requires that we imagine down the road in the future and then react.

But right in the middle of this problem we have fierce opposition and blind inertia. And that opposition is well-financed, hundreds of millions of dollars going into propaganda, into falsifying the scientific record, bamboozling people of every country. Television stations, political parties, think tanks, PhDs, university personnel, they form a group of people that is attempting to put a cloud of doubt and uncertainty over the clear science that you heard earlier this morning. So, we have to fight that propaganda and overcome the inertia and the tremendous opposition.

Now, how are we going to do that? First of all, we are going to have to set a clear goal. And that goal is almost unimaginable. One-third of the oil that we know exists as reserves can never be taken out of the ground. Fifty percent of the gas can never be used and over 90 percent of the coal. Now, that is a revolution. That is going to take a call to arms.

And if you look at our national leaders, we're not going to get there. Mayors, you are at the bottom of this power chain and you've got to light a fire if I may use that metaphor - in terms of climate change, it's probably the wrong one. But we have to join together. It's not going to happen. We're not on the road to avoiding the catastrophes that climate change entails, so we have to make a change. This is a real conversion. Using the word transformation - that's a big word, I don't like to use it. It's very hard to transform. I once entered the Jesuit seminary and our goal was to become perfect, a life of perfection. I can tell you, it's very hard. You don't get perfect and at the end of the day you don't feel very transformed. But in this case, we may not transform our being, but we are going to have to transform our use of the goods in the world, namely petroleum. And we can do it.

I ask you to join with California and 19 other states and provinces to make a commitment to live within the no more than two degrees, to get us down to two tons per person. We can do that. By the way, the United States is over 20 tons per person. California, we're at 12, so we're a little better. But that's

because we have a lot of sun and we have a very benign climate. But we are suffering in the Southwest from drought and the ravages of climate change already. But keeping it under two is the goal. In Vietnam they only use one and a half tons per person. India is maybe two. So the developed world has put in most of the carbon and we're going to have to take most of it out. It's a big challenge. It's not politics as usual. It's not going to happen unless major changes happen.

And for the Holy Father to issue that encyclical that's a change. The role of nature, the interconnectedness of all beings, these are ideas that while implicit, have never been so clear as they have been made in this encyclical. So, let's take some inspiration from the Holy Father. Let's take inspiration from ourselves, but don't be in any way confident or complacent. We have a big mountain to climb. We have very powerful opposition that, in at least my country, spends billions on trying to keep from office people such as yourselves and elect troglodytes and other deniers of the obvious science.

So, that's all I have to say. When I look at it - I could quote an Italian, by the way, who said - I shouldn't quote him because he's the founder of the Italian communist party. But he said, "Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will." And if we really sense our collective power we can exercise the political will to reverse the trends we're on and to turn a new chapter in human history and live in compatible ways with other beings, with ourselves, and protect the most vulnerable. And do the right thing.

By the way, the church is not trying to become scientists. The pope isn't a scientist, but he's got scientists. And the Pontifical Academies have laid it out pretty clear, so it's up to us to make it happen, the mayors and the governors. But I'm not counting on the presidents and I'm not counting on any Republican Congress in Washington. So, it's up to you guys and you ladies. Thank you very much.

California's Response to Climate Change

As the clock ticks for national governments to reach a deal to reduce harmful emissions ahead of the conference in Paris, Governor Brown continues to focus on building and broadening collaboration amongst states and provinces, at the "subnational level." To that end, the Governor traveled to the [Climate Summit of the Americas](#) in Toronto, Canada earlier this month to call on states and provinces to join California in the fight. At the summit, Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard signed the "Under 2 MOU," a [first-of-its-kind agreement](#) amongst states and provinces around the world to limit the increase in global average temperature to below 2 degrees Celsius - the warming threshold at which scientists say there will likely be catastrophic climate disruptions.

Since the agreement was first signed at a Sacramento ceremony in May, other states and provinces joined in [June](#) and [July](#) and with the addition of Quebec, a total of 18 signatories in nine countries and four continents have committed to action, collectively representing more than \$5.3 trillion in GDP and 130 million people.

Earlier this year, Governor Brown issued an [executive order](#) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in California 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 - the most ambitious target in North America and consistent with California's existing commitment to reduce emissions 80 percent under 1990 levels by 2050. The Under 2 MOU builds on other international climate change pacts with leaders from [Mexico](#), [China](#), [North America](#), [Japan](#), [Israel](#) and [Peru](#). Governor Brown also helped convene hundreds of world-renowned researchers and scientists to issue a [groundbreaking call to action](#) - called the consensus statement - which translates key scientific climate findings from disparate fields into one

unified document.

In his [inaugural address](#) this year, Governor Brown announced that within the next 15 years, California will increase from one-third to 50 percent the electricity derived from renewable sources; reduce today's petroleum use in cars and trucks by up to 50 percent; double the efficiency savings from existing buildings and make heating fuels cleaner; reduce the release of methane, black carbon and other potent pollutants across industries; and manage farm and rangelands, forests and wetlands so they can store carbon. The impacts of climate change are already being felt in California and will disproportionately impact the state's most vulnerable populations.

Photos

- 1) Governor Brown delivers remarks at Vatican climate change symposium
- 2) Governor Brown addresses world's mayors on California's efforts to reduce greenhouse gases

Photo Credit: Pontifical Academy of Sciences

For high resolution copies of these photos, please contact Andrew Santana, Office of the Governor at Andrew.Santana@gov.ca.gov.

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