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September 14, 2006

**Today's Top Story — Chamber Opposes Proposition 90**

The California Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors has voted to **oppose** Proposition 90, the November ballot measure that will increase costs for government regulations through restrictions on eminent domain.

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**Public Affairs/Politics:**

- **Behind-the-Scenes Shell Game Marked Punitive-Damages Plan**

Others, however, such as the California Chamber of Commerce, are flatly opposed. They have a different perspective: They contend that jurors could easily learn of the split-recovery statute. That, in turn, could boost the level of punitive damages — either to give more to the plaintiff, or to give more to the state, which has well-known budget problems. "There is a concern that the bill would hurt efforts at punitive-damage reform by making the state dependent on them as a revenue source," said Chamber spokesman Vince Sollitto. It would "interfere with the integrity of court proceedings by encouraging juries to award punitive damages as a means of financing government." *Capitol Weekly*

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**Human Resources/Health & Safety:**

- **Health Benefits Measure Vetoed**

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed a bill Wednesday aimed at mega-retailer Wal-Mart that would have required employers with more than 10,000 workers to spend at least 8 percent of total wages on health benefits. Business groups opposed the measure — SB1414 by state Sen. Carole Migden, D-San Francisco — as an unfair tax on the state's 69 largest employers who would either pay out the 8 percent or pay an equivalent amount to the state. Schwarzenegger called the bill a "job killer." *San Francisco Chronicle*

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### The Economy:

- **Federal Debt Up \$64.6B in August**

The federal government ran a \$64.6 billion deficit in August, the Treasury Department reported Wednesday, pushing the federal deficit to \$304.3 billion for the first 11 months of the fiscal year. The August figure was slightly below the forecast of the Congressional Budget Office, which projected a gap of \$67 billion. *MarketWatch in the Monterey County Herald*

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### Environmental/Agriculture:

- **Environmentalists Deciding to Sit Out Trans-Bond Fight**

Environmental groups, lured by the prospect of more than \$4 billion for public-transit projects, are backing away from opposing the massive transportation bond on the November ballot. The environmentalists also are daunted by the nearly \$7 million in campaign funds amassed by the bond's supporters. *Capitol Weekly*

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### International:

- **World Needs Clearer Rules to Avert Trade Rows: UN**

The world needs clearer rules to judge when trade curbs on environmental or health grounds are justified or are simply protectionist, a U.N. study said on Thursday. Transatlantic trade tensions could worsen without a common understanding of a "precautionary principle" in environmental law that is often invoked to allow trade barriers such as the European Union ban on U.S. genetically modified food, it said. *Reuters in the Washington Post*

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### Infrastructure/Education:

- **Airport Wins Fuel Farm Grant**

The Federal Aviation Administration has approved a \$4.3 million grant to build a fuel farm at San Bernardino International Airport. Larger fuel-storage facilities are essential for the airport if it is going to serve regularly scheduled air carriers. The planned fuel farm would initially hold 150,000 gallons of jet fuel on a two-acre site. It could later be expanded to 500,000 gallons. *San Bernardino County Sun*

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### Opinion/Editorial:

- **Power Play**

New air-quality rules that treat power plants as essential public services recognize Southern California's need to boost energy supplies. Starving the region of electricity in the cause of clean

air furthers no rational public policy goal. *Riverside Press-Enterprise*

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If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact [Christine Haddon](#) at (916) 444-6670 ext. 289.

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