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Protesters Slam Jerry Brown, Claim Climate Change Pact Is Undermined By Pro-Fracking Stance



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California Governor Jerry Brown's signing of a climate deal with Oregon, Washington and British Columbia in San Francisco on Monday drew dozens of protesters, claiming that his support of fracking undermines the climate agreement's potential for progress.

The climate deal calls for the region to align its efforts in the fight against climate change. Proposed agreements include expanding use of zero-emission vehicles, harmonizing greenhouse gas reduction targets, supporting research on combatting ocean acidification, deploying high-speed rails, accounting for costs of carbon pollution and adopting low-carbon fuel standards.

But activists say the signing is meaningless as long as Brown supports some level of fracking, the process of injecting water and chemicals underground to break up rocks and free oil and natural gas.

"It's kind of the elephant in the room that Governor Brown is supposedly a climate change champion and trying to avert it, yet he's also a champion of fracking," Anna Ghosh of Food and Water Watch told The Huffington Post at the protest. "It's clear that fracking contributes to fossil fuel consumption, which contributes to climate change."

While Brown signed California's first fracking regulations last month, many environmentalists insisted the bill did not go far

enough and that he should ban fracking, a practice they say pollutes the water supply and produces excessive global warming pollution.

“It is starkly hypocritical for Governor Brown to be inking climate agreements while green-lighting massively expanded fracking in California, which we know is a massive threat to our climate,” Zack Malitz of CREDO told HuffPost.

The fracking regulations allow oil companies to obtain fracking permits but requires them to alert neighbors, test groundwater, publicly disclose the chemicals used and study the fracking’s environmental impact. Brown favors some fracking of the state’s Monterey Shale deposit, where an estimated 15 billion barrels of oil are recoverable.

Protestors argued that this goes against many environmental organizations’ warnings.

“The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the International Energy Agency have repeatedly said you need to keep about two-thirds of fossil fuel reserves underground if we want to stand a chance of averting the worst impacts of climate change,” Rose Braz of the Center for Biological Diversity told HuffPost. “If he wants his legacy to really be one of a leader on climate change, then fracking California for all this dirty oil is precisely the wrong way to go.”

Brown said the bill required some clarifying amendments and that he will work with its author to implement them.