

2019 BizFed Central Valley Leadership Roundtable Series Dean Florez

BizFed Central Valley members met with Air Resources Board Member Dean Florez and enjoyed a lively hour and a half conversation.

TOP TAKEAWAY:

ARB Chair Mary Nichols is OUT in when her term expires Dec. 31 2020.
And Dean Florez WANTS HER JOB.

Florez also said **Newsom is looking for Central Valley Business people to fill appointments** and this would be a big one.



Also, Newsom is looking for CV Business names for a potential make over of the PUC and CEC. Florez said Newsom isn't getting names from the Central Valley **so lets get to work on that!**

Florez remains on the board, despite a term reshuffle last year in which he was voted out by fellow board members. Senate President Pro Tem, Toni Atkins wrote a letter to the board saying she didn't have a replacement yet so Florez could stay on — for now.

AB 617

The community air monitoring program, was a major area of concern for BizFed CV members and Florez agreed it's rolling out in a fairly messy manner but that's not unexpected.

He explained the history that led up to AB 617.



There's long been a split in the air regulation community between those who believe regulations should go after climate change, and by virtue of improvements there, pollution will be reduced as well. Others believe the opposite, that we should go after pollution and, as improvements are made, it will reduce climate altering gases.

Out of that philosophical split the "environmental justice" movement was born. The EJ community is firmly in the "pollution first" camp.

They demanded 617 as payment for not opposing cap and trade extension and feel the 617 process is "theirs."

He agreed the EJ groups are heading down some impractical and jurisdictionally questionable roads (such as demanding pesticides be included in emissions reduction plans). But he believes a lot of that will fall away as EJ groups see what truly is possible and what isn't.

The object, though, is to bring in as many voices as possible and to that end, 617 is working as expected.

Get involved:

In answer to a question about how industry can productively engage with EJ communities, Florez said we may have a lot in common, such as trying to make sure the valley gets its fair share of funding to clean up pollution and other issues.

That led to an insightful conversation about Sacramento politics where associations and perception mean more than actual merit.

Politics:

Such as, Assemblymember Rudy Salas had a bill to audit the ARB's handling of cap and trade funding to see if the valley was getting shortchanged as a recent LAO report suggested.

"It was a good bill but he got creamed," Florez said.

Not because Salas is from a pipsqueak district in the valley and who cares about the valley. It was because Salas has backed some oil bills so he's forever tainted as "big oil" so other legislators don't want to be seen as associating with "big oil."

Politics will be very important for new Sen. Melissa Hurtado. She could be part of the liberal "blue wave" or she could be a shill for "big oil" and "agribusiness," Florez said. Other legislators are waiting for her votes to suss that out.

Her recent bill asking for \$400 million for a fix to the Friant-Kern Canal, which she joined republican Devon Mathis to introduce, has likely already tagged her in some legislators' minds.

The real test, though, will be on how she votes on the upcoming oil severance tax.

