



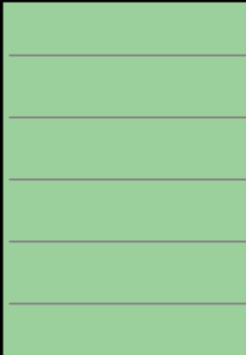
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## Green is the color of choice at hearing

By Deborah Crowe, [dcrowe@VenturaCountyStar.com](mailto:dcrowe@VenturaCountyStar.com)  
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It was no surprise that Assemblywoman Hannah-Beth Jackson went slightly outside her 35th District to hold a hearing on how California can better support environmentally conscious economic development.

Jackson, whose district stretches to Ventura, said the California State University, Channel Islands, campus is a model for how an institution can save money by employing so-called "green" business practices.

"I think we (in California) are an incubator for innovation," said Jackson, D-Santa Barbara, who is gathering support for legislation that provides incentives for businesses to adopt green practices and to attract environmental-friendly businesses to California.

"The business community has some misconceptions about using environmentally sound and sustainable technologies," she said after the hearing at CSUCI on Wednesday. "From what we've heard today, there are opportunities here to both make money and be good environmental stewards."

The Camarillo campus employs an electric vehicle fleet and is home to a gas-fired co-generation plant. There are ambitious plans for a cutting-edge water reclamation facility and building heating and cooling systems.

Many of the projects not only will pay for themselves over time, said University President Richard Rush, but also will generate income for the campus.

CSUCI has been organized to promote pedestrian traffic, and new buildings are being designed and located to improve natural ventilation. "That means we can open the windows," Rush said with a chuckle.

The hearing was co-sponsored by the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources, which Jackson chairs, and the Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development and the Economy, chaired by Assemblyman Mark Ridley-Thomas, D-Los Angeles.

"The debate often gets framed as either-or -- the economy or environment," said Ridley-Thomas, who pushed for construction of Los Angeles' first green municipal building as a city councilman. "I'm not persuaded the question had to be posed in that manner."

States and nations that have been most successful provide tax incentives and give priority to contractors who use green

practices, Jon Naimon, president of Seattle-based capital firm Light Green Advisors, said at the hearing.

Naimon said his firm's environmentally conscious investments tend to perform better than comparable benchmarks. Its Eco\*Index includes several firms with headquarters or significant operations in Ventura County, including Vitesse Semiconductor, Baxter International, Raytheon, Rockwell Collins, Reliant Resources, Wells Fargo and Washington Mutual.

Companies targeted by Light Green have discovered direct cost savings and lower labor costs when efficient green practices are given time to work, Naimon said.

In many cases, these businesses produce less polluting products with relatively high profit margins.

"Environmentally conscious business practices really can be seen not as a job killer, but as a productivity thriller," said Andrew Michael, vice president of the Bay Area Council, comprised of the San Francisco Bay Area's 275 largest employers. The council's environmental initiatives are considered a model for successful business collaboration on the issue.

Area companies that participated in the hearing were Ventura clothing manufacturer Patagonia Inc., Camarillo photovoltaic cell developer Shell Solar Industries and Oxnard-based HaveBlue LCC, which has developed hydrogen fuel cell technology to power marine vessels.

Patagonia is known for its substantial charitable contributions to environmental causes and its green manufacturing practices, including the use of polyester made from recycled soda bottles for its Synchella outerwear garment line.

Spokeswoman Eve Bould admitted profit margins took a hit when the company switched to organic cotton, but the investment eventually paid off in closer relationships with its suppliers and stronger marketing advantage among customers.

"In the last three years, the company's profitability has been the strongest in its history," said Bould, noting the company considers its charitable work an "earth tax" to mitigate the impact of the nonrenewable materials it consumes.

Gary Barsley, manager of commercial products for Shell Solar, said his company is an example of how state policies promoting solar technology have brought business to the state rather than driven it away.

"We're here because California is a hotbed of innovation," Barsley said.

