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Pollution foes assail lawmakers

Say Legislature stalls on water, pesticides

By LAURIE ROBERTS
Arizona Republic Staff

Environmentalists marched at the Arizona Capitol on Wednesday, complaining that the state Legislature has failed to act on bills to clean up the state's water supply or beef up regulation of pesticides.

Rep. John Kromko, D-Tucson, who joined the protest, said the Legislature has shelved bills to regulate ground-water pollution because it is "a wholly owned subsidiary of the (Arizona) Chamber of Commerce."

"Most of their campaign contributions come from industry, agribusiness and mining," said picket Pam Swift of the Toxic Waste Investigative Group. "Of course, they turn around and favor and protect industry, agribusiness and mining. We're constantly coming in here and fighting the Arizona Chamber of Commerce on every decent bill. The Arizona Chamber of Commerce is always on the other side."

Pickets carried signs saying, "Our water is being poisoned for profit," "Babbitt is a phony," and "Barr — handmaiden for industry."

House Majority Leader Burton Barr, R-Phoenix, to whom the sign referred, laughed after seeing it and said his biggest pollution problem was that a toilet had backed up at his home Wednesday morning.

Although efforts to strengthen the state's ground-water regulations appear dead this session, lawmakers still are debating how to improve regulation of pesticide spraying.

An attempt to revamp the controversial state Board of Pesticide Control, making it an advisory panel to the state Agriculture and Horticulture Board, has been scrapped, according to Rep. Mark Killian, a Mesa Republican.

Killian said he still intends to push for legislation that would authorize stronger rules on pesticide spraying and add a farm worker to the agricultural-dominated pesticide board.

— Pollution, B6

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