

# SAN MATEO DAILY JOURNAL

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## Assemblyman's environmental laws now in effect

DAILY JOURNAL WIRE REPORT

California's environment is enjoying more protection because of a three-bill package that went into effect Thursday.

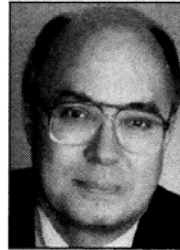
Authored by Assemblyman Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, the legislation covers a wide range of environmental issues, from forest protection and cleaner oceans to public participation in the environmental review process.

AB 47, Timber Harvest Plans, requires loggers to provide maps that have detailed information about

past, present and future timber cuts — information Simitian says is essential if environmental planners and the public are to understand the impact such cuts are having on the ecosystem and watersheds.

"The new law simply requires logging interests to show us where they are, where they've been and where they're headed," Simitian said. "In this way, we can better understand and manage the cumulative adverse impacts of logging."

Lack of such documentation can significantly impact rural water quality and wildlife habitat,



Joe Simitian

national marine sanctuaries along the state's coast. The first state to impose such a ban, the legislation calls for \$25,000 fines to be meted out to violators of the law.

Simitian said.

AB 121, Cruise Ship Dumping, prohibits cruise ships from discharging sewage sludge and oily bilge into California waters and

"These are floating cities that can generate more than 200,000 gallons of sewage, 35,000 gallons of oil-contaminated water and 2,500 gallons of sludge in a one-week cruise," Simitian said.

When the legislature reconvenes later this month, Simitian will move companion bill AB 471, which would improve air quality by restricting emissions from cruise ships, he said.

The third and final piece of the now effective package is AB 1545, E-Comments, which allows concerned individuals and advocacy

groups to e-mail their comments on environmental documents, rather than requiring a conventional "hard copy" letter of comment.

Simitian said the legislation was partly spurred by a constituent telling him that the State Department of Forestry refused to accept his e-mailed comments about an environmental impact report.

"This was particularly ironic (because) the EIR in question concerned a logging plan," Simitian said. "Presumably, there would be less need for logging if we all submitted our comments via email."