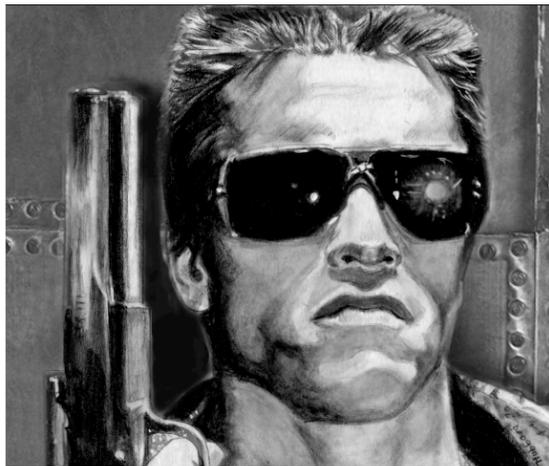


Schwarzenegger to Sue Big Oil for



‘First Degree Murder’

Arnold Schwarzenegger’s next mission: taking oil companies to court

“for knowingly killing people all over the world.”

The former California governor announced that he’s in talks with several private law firms and preparing a public push around the effort.

“This is no different from the smoking issue. The tobacco industry knew for years and years and years and decades, that smoking would kill people, would harm people and create cancer, and were hiding that fact from the people and denied it. Then eventually they were taken to court and had to pay hundreds of millions of dollars because of that. The oil companies knew from 1959 on, they did their own study that there would be global warming happening because of fossil fuels, and on top of it that it would be risky for people’s lives, that it would kill.” Schwarzenegger said.

Schwarzenegger said he’s still working on a timeline for filing, but the news comes as he prepares to help host a major environmental conference in May in Vienna.

“We’re going to go after them, and we’re going to be in there like an Alabama tick. Because to me it’s absolutely irresponsible to know that your product is killing people and not have a warning label on it, like tobacco,” he said. *“Every gas station, every car should have a warning label on it, every product that has fossil fuels should have a warning label on it.”*

He argues that at the very least, this would raise awareness about fossil fuels and encourage people to look to alternative fuels and clean cars. He added, *“I don’t think there’s any difference: If you walk into a room and you know you’re going to kill someone, it’s first degree murder; I think it’s the same thing with the oil companies.”*

Schwarzenegger was at SXSW in Austin, Texas for an extensive discussion of lessons he learned in his seven years as governor, and how he’d apply them to the current political situation in Washington and beyond.

On the list: Maximize the bully pulpit; use the carrot but have the stick ready; and no one gets a perfect “10,” because there’s always room for improvement. Those, he said, were part of his art of the deal, and explained how he’d been able to institute major laws from worker’s compensation reform to environmental standards to a state election overhaul to implement independent redistricting and a “jungle primary” system, in which the top two advance.

Schwarzenegger also addressed, for the first time since the national reawakening around the #MeToo moment, the charges of groping and inappropriate behavior that surfaced from multiple women against him at the end of his first campaign for governor in 2003. He acknowledged that the change in the moment made a huge difference.

“It is about time. I think it’s fantastic. I think that women have been used and abused and treated horribly for too long, and now all of the elements came together to create this movement, and now finally puts the spotlight on this issue, and I hope people learn from that,” he said. “You’ve got to take those things seriously. You’ve got to look at it

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and say, ‘I made mistakes. And I have to apologize.’”

He stressed the importance of sexual harassment training, like the one he made his staff do once he was elected— including himself.

“We make mistakes, and we don’t take it seriously. And then when you really think about it, you say, ‘Maybe I went too far,’” Schwarzenegger said. “You’ve got to be very sensitive about it, and you’ve got to think about the way that women feel—and if they feel uncomfortable, then you did not do the right thing.”

The past few months, he said “made me think totally differently,” adding, “I said to myself, ‘Finally.’”

Schwarzenegger took a number of shots at Donald Trump, dismissing the president’s latest attack on him, delivered at a rally in Pennsylvania on Saturday night, for having “failed when he did the show,” a reference to the former governor’s rocky one-season stint as the host of “The Apprentice” on NBC last year.

“I never know really why the Russians make him say certain things,” Schwarzenegger said. “It’s beyond me. Why do you think he says those things? He’s supposed to be very busy.”

Later in the interview, he returned to the attack on Trump, teasing that the script of the new “Terminator” movie, which Schwarzenegger is set to start filming in June and is expected to be released next year, had to be rewritten to include Trump. “The T-800 model that I play, he’s traveling back in time to 2019 to get Trump out of prison,” Schwarzenegger joked.

He wouldn’t reveal any actual details about the script other than that he is still the T-800 model. This isn’t his only upcoming foray into old film franchises: He’s due to shoot “King Conan” and “Triplets,” an update on the 1988 film “Twins,” with Eddie Murphy as the third brother. (“There’s something funny there with the mixing of the sperm,” he said.)

Schwarzenegger said he’d like to see Ohio Gov. John Kasich run for president but urged him to run in the Republican primary rather than as an independent.

“He’s a great Republican,” Schwarzenegger said. But he said don’t expect him to be a major campaign presence in 2020. He’ll be focusing on pushing gerrymandering reform, and has gotten involved again with California Republicans, with whom he’ll be meeting in the coming days back home.

“The Republicans that are the new thinking Republicans in California want to get things done,” Schwarzenegger said, adding that he wants elected officials to remember, “ultimately, you are a public servant, not a party servant.”

He urged the GOP to pay attention to what happened in California, where Democrats have become completely dominant. Republicans there, he said, “are stuck with an ideology that doesn’t really fit anymore with what people want.”

He cited the environmental work of Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush as examples.

“Today, those are all things that are absolutely a no-no in the Republican Party. I didn’t change; it’s the Republican Party that’s changed,” he said. “Now we have to work very hard to get the party back to where it was.”

Back at the end of his presidency, Bill Clinton wrote Schwarzenegger a long letter that ended with Clinton urging Schwarzenegger to become a Democrat. Schwarzenegger said he wasn’t interested then, and isn’t interested now, for all his problems with Trump and the current GOP.

“That’s a fun letter, and I like supporting him on some issues,” Schwarzenegger said. “But the bottom line is that I’m a Republican, and I’m a true Republican, and I will always be a Republican. It’s a fantastic party, but they’ve veered off into the right into some strange lanes.”

-Edward Isaac Dovere
politico.com

New Jersey votes to ban offshore oil and gas drilling

Last month Legislators in New Jersey unanimously passed a bill banning offshore oil and gas development in state waters. The bill also bans infrastructure in state waters that would support drilling in federal waters off the state’s coast.

The bill now goes to New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy’s (D) desk for his signature. Murphy, who has been an outspoken critic of the Trump administration’s plans to open the North Atlantic to oil and gas development, is expected to sign the bill into law.

While states can’t prohibit the federal government from opening up federal waters to oil and gas development, it can control the kind of industry and infrastructure allowed in state waters. State waters run several miles out from the coast (anywhere from three to nine nautical miles, depending), and federal waters extend roughly 200 nautical miles from the end of state waters.

Prohibiting infrastructure needed for drilling in federal waters means that companies couldn’t build things like pipelines or docking facilities in state waters, which would complicate efforts to extract oil and gas from federal waters offshore. Without being able to rely on infrastructure in state waters, oil and gas companies would have to utilize massive floating storage stations and transfer the oil directly onto ships for market — equipment and steps that are expensive, especially at a time when the price of oil is relatively low.

“Not only would it prohibit drilling in state waters but also stop them from bringing in oil drilled in federal waters into our state,” New Jersey Sierra Club Director Jeff Tittel told The Press of Atlantic City. “It will also help fight pipelines from cutting through the state by preventing oil from landing on our coasts.”

Beyond prohibiting oil and gas drilling and infrastructure in state waters, the bill would also require the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to review any plans for development off the Atlantic coast, even if that development were to take place in federal waters.

If the department found that the development could impact New Jersey state waters, it would be compelled to conduct a consistency review. Under the Coastal Zonal Management Act, states can review offshore oil and gas exploration to make sure that it’s consistent with state objectives. If a state finds a particular activity inconsistent with its policies, it can serve as a major blockade for the federal government opening up offshore waters to private oil and gas development.

New Jersey is hardly the only state to begin putting its opposition towards the Trump administration’s offshore oil and gas plan into action. California — which already bans offshore drilling in state waters — has pledged to make use of consistency reviews if the Trump administration tries to push through offshore drilling in the state. The state legislature is also considering a bill that would ban supporting infrastructure in state waters.

The Trump administration’s proposed five-year offshore lease plan — which would open up 90 percent of the nation’s offshore areas to oil and gas leasing — has run into staunch opposition nearly everywhere, from both Democrats and Republicans. Only one governor whose state would see its waters open to oil and gas extraction under the plan — Maine’s Gov. Paul LePage (R) — has not voiced opposition to the plan.

The public comment period for the proposed plan closed in mid-March. The Department of Interior is now reviewing comments, and will submit a final plan describing proposed areas for offshore oil and gas leasing sometime in early 2019.

-Natasha Geiling
thinkprogress.org