



telephone companies. *Choosing a Long Distance Carrier Under Equal Access* suggests several points to consider when making this choice and includes a worksheet to help consumers make comparisons.

LEGISLATION:

SB 2064 (*Garamendi*) expands the availability and use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) programs, including arbitration, mediation, and conciliation.

SB 2064 also establishes a Dispute Resolution Advisory Council within the Department of Consumer Affairs. The council will develop guidelines for the establishment, operation, and evaluation of ADR programs. It is hoped that these guidelines will encourage uniformity among programs throughout the state. Supported by DCA, this bill became effective January 1.

ASSEMBLY OFFICE OF RESEARCH

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Established in 1966, the Assembly Office of Research (AOR) brings together legislators, scholars, research experts and interested parties from within and outside the legislature to conduct extensive studies regarding problems facing the state.

Under the direction of the Assembly's bipartisan Committee on Policy Research, AOR investigates current state issues and publishes reports which include long-term policy recommendations. Such investigative projects often result in legislative action, usually in the form of bills.

AOR also processes research requests from Assemblymembers. Results of these short-term research projects are confidential unless the requesting legislators authorize their release.

MAJOR PROJECTS:

California 2000: Paradise in Peril (January 1987) continues an AOR series focusing on state resources. (See CRLR Vol. 7, No. 1 (Winter 1987) pp. 30-31.) The January report concentrates on "three related natural resource issues that most clearly illustrate the human impact on natural resources as we enter the 21st century." Some of the report's highlights include the following:

- The debate over water in California has shifted from developing more water to protecting the quality of existing

water supply. Three major water quality issues focus on (1) the threat to the integrity of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, created by an ever-growing danger of levee failure; (2) the degradation of water pumped south from the Delta, caused by pesticides, industrial effluent, and salts; and (3) the serious damage to freshwater fisheries, resulting from both declining water quality and the mechanical operation of California's water delivery system.

- California has a "dismal, toxic-contaminated future," created by an inability to clean up the increasing number of toxic sites being discovered; declining toxic disposal capacity; inadequate alternative treatment capacity.

- Ocean waters, containing many nonrenewable resources, "continue to receive every form of human waste." Government response to coastal problems has been piecemeal at both state and federal levels, and management objectives are confused.

The AOR report enumerates a large number of recommendations, including the following:

- The Department of Water Resources and the state Water Resources Control Board must jointly prepare a new state master water plan, placing primary emphasis on water quality.

- The legislature should establish and enforce San Joaquin River water quality standards for target contaminants, including pesticides.

- The state should build an isolated water transfer facility to carry water in the State Water Project and the Central Valley Project around the Delta.

- California should create state/regional partnerships with local governments and private businesses to ensure that each region has a comprehensive waste management system (collection, transfer, treatment, and disposal).

- The Governor should appoint a "toxics czar" with responsibility for increasing the rate of clean-up at the State Superfund sites; transforming abandoned toxic sites into waste treatment demonstration projects; and helping local governments establish regional hazardous waste management systems.

- Local collection programs for household hazardous wastes should be established to ensure that such materials are not disposed of in sewage systems or municipal landfills.

- The legislature should create a Department of Ocean Resources to unify fragmented coastal and marine

efforts currently divided among numerous state agencies.

- The national territorial sea boundary should be extended from three to twelve miles.

Sexual Abuse: A Lifelong Legacy (December 1986) focuses on adults who were sexually abused as children. The report identifies four significant issues in the treatment of such individuals, including the following:

- Outreach to and identification of victims can help them understand that serious problems in their lives may stem from childhood abuse and will inform them of whatever help may be available.

- Current treatment for adults molested as children is inadequate, although a limited amount of such treatment is available through county child welfare services, community child abuse programs, county mental health services, community counseling programs, private therapists, and therapy or support groups.

- Most physicians, therapists, and other health care professionals are inadequately trained in the identification and treatment of adults sexually abused as children.

- The cost of long-term counseling needed by adults sexually abused as children is often prohibitive, especially for those who have trouble maintaining jobs due to severe depression, low self-esteem, or self-destructive tendencies.

Article XIII B: Government Spending Limitation (October 1986) explores some of the impacts on state government which have resulted from the implementation of Article XIII B, added to the California Constitution by Proposition 4 in 1979.

The report offers some background information on the constitutional initiative which led to Article XIII B's limit on state and local government spending; describes the implementation of the limit; and details some policy options for dealing with anticipated impacts of the spending limit.

The AOR study found that beginning in fiscal year 1987-88, implementation of the article will reduce state appropriations to less than the amount required to fund a workload budget and significantly less than available revenues. It concludes that "in the longer term, amendment or repeal of article XIII B may be appropriate."