

# Stop! Look! Act!

One of the most obnoxious special-interest bills of 2007, which was stopped by public outrage, is back with a new author.

Senate Bill 1310 would break down regulatory barriers to help billboard owners across the state convert their signs to the new high-voltage digital variety, such as that monstrosity near the Bay Bridge toll plaza that has been drawing complaints ever since it went up last spring.

Last year's version was withdrawn by its author, Assemblywoman Fiona Ma, D-San Francisco, after a furious public response that included many of our readers.

The industry has found a new author in Sen. Gloria Negrete McLeod, a Democrat from Chino. Her version includes a few minor amendments to slow the transition, but make no mistake: SB1310 clears the way for many more energy-wasting billboards that distract drivers by flashing new mes-



KIM KOMENCI / The Chronicle 2007

**Overpowering:** CBS Outdoor's digital billboard near the Bay Bridge.

sages every few seconds.

"We need to get these off our highways," said Marcie Keever, program director for San Francisco Beautiful, which is working hard to overcome the billboard industry's clout in Sacramento.

Last year's demise of Ma's AB830 shows that citizen input can make a difference. Speak now or prepare to wear your sunglasses at night when driving on California highways.

## Contact Senate transportation committee members

The hearing on SB1310 is scheduled for Tuesday. Make your voice heard. You can be sure that the outdoor advertising industry will put its lobbyists and campaign contributions to work between now and then.

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