

South Bay News 

Governors stress the importance of infrastructure repairs

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SAN JOSE, CA (KGO) -- Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger visited San Jose Wednesday to talk about job creation. He joined Gov. Ed Rendell of Pennsylvania and San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed at a water pollution control plant.

The San Jose-Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant is a perfect example of an infrastructure in dire need of upgrades and repairs. It is 56 years old and five of its 16 plant digesters that help treat wastewater are offline due to decay.

It was a perfect backdrop for politicians to push for national investment in the country's infrastructure.

The governors, along with Reed, discussed the critical importance of broad infrastructure investment. They are part of a bipartisan, national coalition called Building America's Future, which is working to get government and private investment to improve infrastructure, ranging from the nation's drinking water and wastewater treatment plants, to energy grids and better transportation.

Schwarzenegger and Rendell said that federal funding is absolutely necessary in order to help invest in America's future and keep it safe and globally competitive.

An added-benefit of this will be job creation.

"This is economic power. If we don't have that infrastructure, everyone is going to suffer in future," Schwarzenegger said.

"And don't forget governor, you talk about it all the time, this is the single best job creator to do what the governor is talking about. If we are worried about recession, and we all are, and if we need to create jobs, and we do, this is the single best way to create good jobs that can't be outsourced -- rebuild our infrastructure," Rendell said.

Much of the infrastructure, from roadways to water treatment plants, is up to 50 years old without much funding for improvements.

The U.S. only spends about 2 percent of its gross domestic product on infrastructure, compared with Europe's 5 percent and China's 9 percent investment.

The American Society of Civil Engineers has given a failing "D" grade to U.S. infrastructure, and estimates the country needs more than \$2 trillion over five years just to bring the nation's infrastructure into good condition.

One recommendation from the Building America's Future group is to create a national infrastructure bank to help with low-interest loans.

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