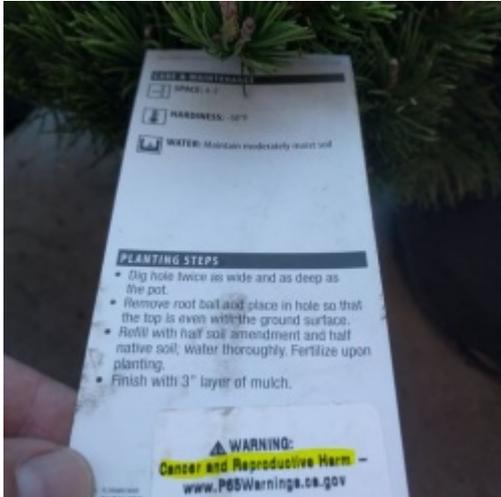


In California, Trees Have A Prop 65 Cancer Warning



By *Hank Campbell* — October 31, 2018



Credit: Dr. Layla Katiraei

California loves to show "leadership" by putting warning labels on the things they are not yet allowed to ban. Claiming that is leadership is, of course, a dog whistle for the kind of social authoritarian mentality that is the enemy of science and progress. Though California is run in both houses of the legislature and the Governor's Mansion by one party they can't get a majority vote for everything they want, so legislators often punt controversial decisions to the public.

In America's most populated state, the actual government does little legislation that isn't easily predictable along party lines. The hard decisions are by Proposition, directly decided by up to 19 million registered voters. (1)

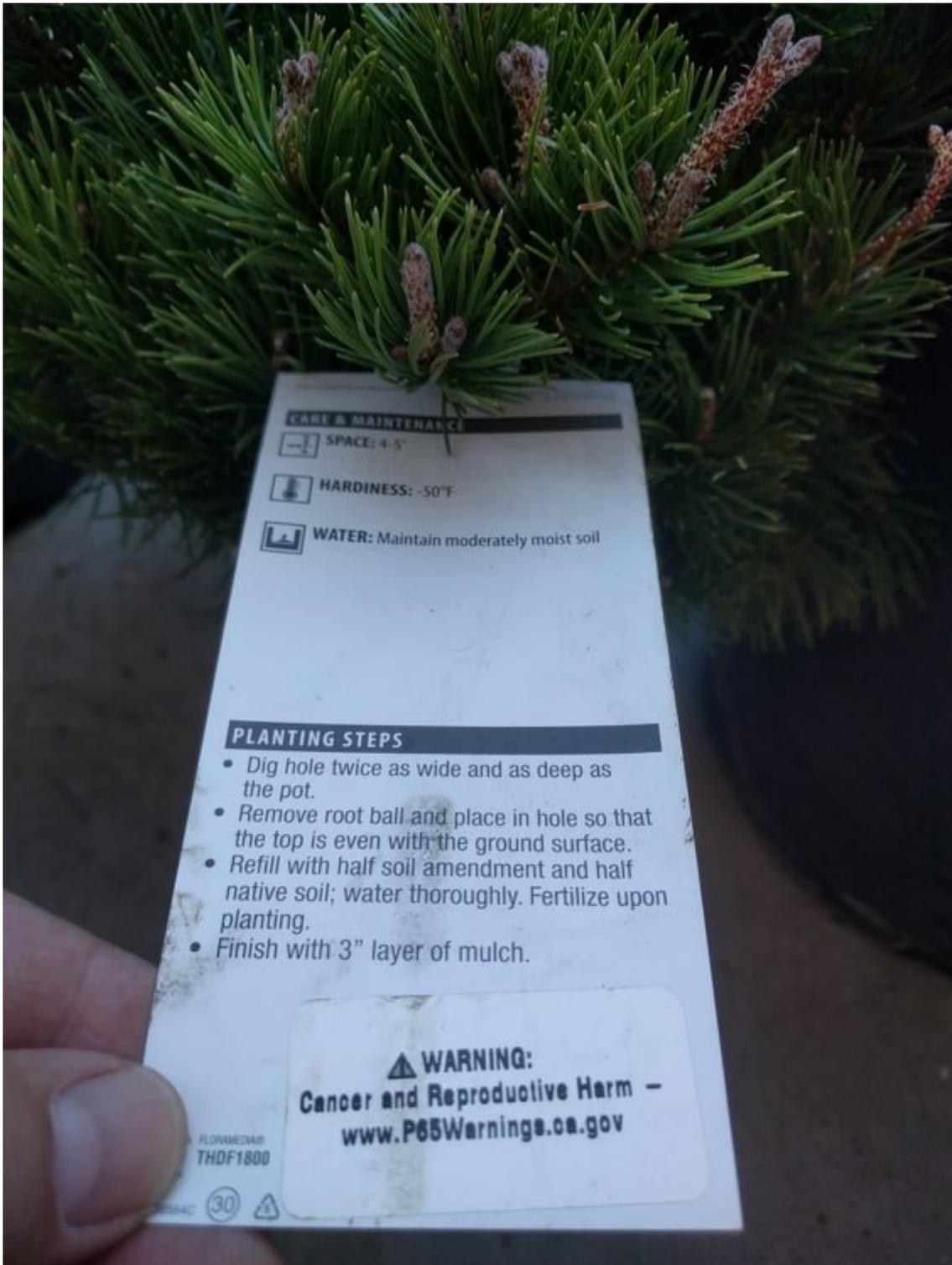
Propositions have become popular for Political Action Committees in California because they can't be overruled by the legislature - they are a super-law. Everyone in California (and most of America) knows Prop 65, which requires warning labels on any product that has been statistically correlated to cancer, is ridiculous but the government cannot do anything about it.(2) So California cancer patients visiting oncology wards in California hospitals cannot walk around without some common useful product notifying them it will give them even more cancer. Coffee, toast, tea, you name it and a trial lawyer, along with a paid expert witness like [Chris Portier](#) [1] of Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) or [Martyn Smith](#) [2] of Council for Education and Research on Toxics (CERT), is trying to sue their way into a new yacht.



This is from an actual California oncology ward, the one place where patients already have cancer and where doctors and scientists know more about cancer than the statisticians at International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) can ever hope to learn. Obviously the person who took it wishes to remain anonymous, lest the pitchforks and torches come out.

But it isn't just in cancer wards that everyone has to warn people about cancer lest they get a bill from a trial lawyer; even nature is under assault. The husband of [Dr. Layla Katiraei](#) ^[3] went shopping for a tree to plant in California. Big mistake. He got told by government he is risking

cancer by engaging in conservation.



Yes, in California trees will give you cancer. [Source](#) [4].

You may be wondering if it is not the tree at all, perhaps it is the label, or the ink on the label, or the carbon dioxide in the air, which will be far higher in a greenhouse - well, no one knows or cares at this point, it's all the same risk fatigue in California. In the 16th century, every illiterate peasant knew the dose makes the poison - if they went to a tavern and the beer was diluted with a whole lot of water, they knew they were being ripped off - even before Paracelsus phrased it so succinctly. (3) Today, activists supporting homeopathy and endocrine disrupting chemicals basically don't even realize that if you put more or less lemon in lemonade it changes the final

result - and a whole lot of wealthy people on the coasts of California believe it either helps or harms you even if you can't taste the lemon at all. (4)

Clearly most Americans are not wealthy elites on the coast, the 99% have more common sense and less money to spend on frivolous nonsense like supplements and food labels that make them feel like better human beings, but we are all overrun with scary chemical narratives, and there is comfort in the "precautionary principle" - better safe than sorry.

But how safe is really worthwhile? Are you willing to lower the speed limit to 5 miles per hour to prevent traffic deaths? Should we start screening for prostate cancer at embryogenesis?

That is an exaggeration but it is the same logic as throttling progress back to placate the lowest scared denominator in culture, those who know the least about science and medicine but yell loudly. It's fine to choose an intellectual placebo, like organic food or a "natural" chemical if you have the wealth, yay capitalism, but confusing or shaming poor people who can't afford it is not just bad ethics, it is being a terrible human being.

Yet intellectual placebos, and forcing poor people to pay more lest companies be sued, is exactly what the lawyers at Center for Food Safety are promoting with Proposition 12. In California, they want poor people to be forced to pay more money so that some food animals have slightly different living space. *These are animals being raised for slaughter* yet Center for Food Safety and its PAC friends are pretending that allowing slightly more space - with graphic images of abuse, as if that is the norm in agriculture - is going to be a better result for the animals. Center for Food Safety is a fan because they are in the "sue and settle" business and if Proposition 12 is passed they can shake down companies or prearrange a settlement with a politically sympathetic court in California whose costs would be borne by consumers.

They are wealthy lawyers, they know it will lead to higher costs for the poor. They even concede that businesses who do not comply with the tens of millions of dollars in increased costs *will have an unfair competitive advantage*, and that is why they want to add another layer of penalties on companies.

[Even PETA is against this ridiculous proposition](#) ^[5], as are farmers and government groups that see higher food costs - and tens of millions of dollars per year in new state union employees for "enforcement" - as the only outcome. But Proposition 2, which this augments and which went into effect in 2015, already showed what happens when increased regulation for no benefit occurs; by 2016 [eggs produced in California dropped 35 percent while prices rose 33 percent](#) ^[6] per dozen. Out-of-state farmers won, and lawyers won, while California consumers and farmers lost.

How you can help

We want to get America back to first principles when it comes to chemicals, food, energy and health. To do that, [we are supporting a documentary called Big Fears, Little Risks](#) ^[7], which cuts through the lawyer-driven nonsense to give the public real answers to complex questions. More importantly, we want to instill some skepticism the next time you see a political ad about science or medicine that reads too good to be true.

And it could [use your support](#) [8]!

NOTES:

(1) Just the eligible voters in California outnumber the total population of America's bottom 15 states so it seems strange that the legislature does little except find new ways to show how much they care about micromanaging the lives of citizens. Propositions have some second order benefit. Once California's ruling majority got voting laws changed so there need not even be two parties on a ballot, whoever gets the most primary votes will run in the election, meaning for Senate seats it will be Democrat versus Democrat, voter enthusiasm plummeted. Propositions are the only way that Republicans and Independents have any voice.

(2) It would require another proposition to get rid of it or change it to something meaningful and coastal Californians don't even accept vaccines, they sure are not going to accept a change to a law that protects them from warning labels on bacon.

(3) *Sola dosis facit venenum* - "Only the dose makes the poison"

(4) We like to think that science acceptance is a problem of people with less education but it's often just the opposite - less educated, poor, religious Mississippi has almost 100 percent vaccination while California had to use the force of government to mandate that supposedly educated people in Marin vaccinate their children - I wrote about one school there had almost 80 percent of children *unvaccinated*.

COPYRIGHT © 1978-2016 BY THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/10/29/california-trees-have-prop-65-cancer-warning-13550>

Links

[1] <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/07/12/iarc-chris-portier-denies-being-paid-edf-conflict-interest-iarc-members-13061>

[2] <https://www.deniersforhire.com/deniers-for-hire/martyn-t-smith/>

[3] <http://frankenfoodfacts.blogspot.com>

[4] <https://twitter.com/BioChicaGMO/status/1056921307634380800>

[5] <https://www.mercurynews.com/2018/05/11/call-to-action-for-cage-free-farming/>

[6] <http://jaysonlusk.com/blog/2017/3/3/how-animal-welfare-laws-affect-egg-prices-and-production>

[7] <https://www.acsh.org/big-fears-little-risks-help-fund-our-documentary>

[8] <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/weblink.aspx?name=acsh&id=1>