Recently, CBS's *60 Minutes* ran a story on the current environmental damages litigation 30,000 Ecuadorians are bringing in that country's courts against Chevron. The case arises out the toxic oil wastes a Chevron subsidiary left behind in the Ecuadorian rain forest following decades of oil production deep in the headwaters of the Amazon. The plaintiffs, represented by American lawyers, are seeking $27 billion in damages to clean up and compensate for the abandoned waste pits of toxic oil drilling residue, which have polluted Ecuadorian waterways and seriously disrupted the lives and health of the indigenous population. Chevron's myriad efforts to dismiss the lawsuit have been unsuccessful, and the company now faces the very real possibility of being on the receiving end of the most expensive environmental damages judgment in history.

Tom Knudson, the Pulitzer Prize-winning environmental reporter for the *Sacramento Bee*, has another take on this controversy. Knudson, who has similarly reported on the Ecuadorian lawsuit against Chevron, points out that Californians have been disproportionately large beneficiaries of imported oil from that nation–in 2008, California imported 62.5 million barrels of oil from Ecuador, an increase of over 60% from just five years earlier.

California, of course, is the same state whose residents and political leaders are adamantly opposed to new oil development within its borders. Indeed, in a jurisdiction where Republicans and Democrats have difficulty agreeing on what day it is, opposition to offshore oil drilling is the rare issue that unites most voters of both parties.

Knudson further points out that imported oil–and out-of-sight oil pollution–is but one manifestation of Californians' willingness to export the environmental consequences of their affluent lifestyle to other states and nations. A couple of years ago, for example, Knudson reported on how, at the same time in-state timber harvesting is declining, Californians' insatiable demand for wood and paper products is increasingly satisfied by timber harvested and imported from Canada. And many California policymakers and residents tend to overlook the fact that much of the electricity consumed in climate change-conscious California is generated by coal-fired power plants in other Western states that would never stand a chance of being permitted in the Golden State.

Resource economists refer to this phenomenon, whereby the adverse

environmental consequences of a jurisdiction's actions are experienced beyond its borders, as "leakage." When it comes to exported pollution of the type chronicled by *60 Minutes* and *Sacramento Bee* reporter Tom Knudson in Ecuador, there's another term for it: environmental hypocrisy.