On the last day of its term, the California legislature did wind up passing SB 14, the hotly debated bill to boost the state's renewable energy supply requirement to 33% by 2020. But its prospects don't look good — the Governor announced within hours that he would veto (SacBee story here). Presumably in its stead, he has also just signed a new executive order mandating that 33% by 2020 be reached via an alternate route, namely regulation under AB 32, California's Global Warming Solutions Act.

SB 14 (which I wrote about here) was backed by labor, enviros, and some utilities. SB 14 differed from a preexisting Executive Order requiring 33% renewables by 2020 in part because it would have been legislative-branch-made law, unrepealable by future govenors. Bill sponsor Sen. Simitian and others point out (as reported by LA Times) that the new executive order suffers the same flaw, and NRDC and others appear still to be rallying to change Arnold's mind.

One thing I'm puzzling over in the new exec order is the phrase "expand the timeframe" in this paragraph, which seems to provide the regulatory agency ARB with flexibility to renege on the original 2020 timeline for reaching 33%:

> [T]he ARB, under its AB 32 authority, shall adopt a regulation consistent with the 33 percent renewable energy target established in Executive Order S-14-08 by July 31, 2010. In developing the regulation, the ARB may consider different approaches that would achieve the objectives of the Executive Order and may increase the target and accelerate **and expand the time frame** based on a thorough assessment of such factors as technical feasibility, system reliability, cost, greenhouse gas emissions, environmental protection or other relevant factors.

Is it just late and I'm misreading? Doesn't "expand the time frame" mean "delay"?