

EDITORIAL: Toyota loss is latest example of failed leadership

BY THE BEE EDITORIAL BOARD

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Occidental Petroleum. Raytheon. Legalzoom. Waste Connections. Daegis and Revionics. And, this week, Toyota Motor Sales.

The list of major companies that have left California recently, or are planning on leaving and taking jobs with them, is getting long. Toyota announced Monday it was moving 3,000 white-collar jobs from Torrance to a new headquarters in Plano, Texas.

Add in two plants in the Los Angeles area — Huy Fong Foods of Sriracha sauce fame and Exide Technologies of arsenic and lead pollution infamy — that may be forced to leave the state without some relief from their particular emission problems, and it would seem the exodus has reached crisis proportion.

The question is, when will our state leaders — virtually all of them Democrats — start working to make California economically competitive again?

Despite Gov. Jerry Brown's bragging about California's great comeback, proof of our economic malaise arrives every month with the latest unemployment rate. In March, it was 8.1% — a percentage that masks the double-digit unemployment of California's non-coastal regions. The national unemployment rate for March was 6.7%.

California clearly isn't capitalizing on its many advantages: a diverse, multicultural workforce, access to worldwide markets, the country's largest ports, amazing weather and an address known worldwide.

With all of these things in our favor, we should have the country's lowest unemployment rate; the reason we don't is a continuing failure by state leaders to create a favorable environment for economic investment.

Sadly, California's political leaders answered the Toyota announcement with a big "oh, well." There was no show of concern. There was no fist-

pounding or outrage, Sen. Ted Lieu excepting. Lieu's district includes the Toyota facility and on Monday he put out a press release saying he was angry.

Brown's two main Republican rivals in the governor's race are making hay out of the Toyota move, saying it symbolizes a pervasive anti-business attitude in the Golden State. That's an overstatement, and doesn't take into account the many important new businesses created here. Still, our state often is hostile to many companies and industries.

It's past time for the Democrats who run California to make us business friendly and put more people to work — instead of losing major companies to other states.

We hope that the move of Toyota Motor Sales to Texas is Gov. Brown's wake-up call.

Read more here: <http://www.fresnobee.com/2014/04/29/3901758/toyota-loss-is-latest-example.html?sp=/99/274/#storylink=cpy>