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Normally, in a time of significant unemployment, seeing a help wanted ad is a good thing. That is, unless the ad has been placed by the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), in which case you can be sure that part of the job description involves actually killing thousands of jobs.

You may remember the CBD. It is the same extreme activist group that led the effort to impose water rationing in the Central Valley in the name of a tiny fish, the delta smelt, regardless of the human cost. Now hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland sit fallow and thousands and thousands of jobs have been lost. The staggering unemployment in the region is a scandal.

Now, the CBD is taking aim at another pillar of California's economy — oil and natural gas. For more than 150 years, California has been one of the nation's leading oil producers. In fact, as Gov. Jerry Brown said earlier this year: "California is the fourth-largest oil producing state and we want to continue that."

Why? Because in other states, there's an economic renaissance happening right now thanks to the development of oil and gas trapped in deep shale deposits, and it could be repeated here in California. The state's Monterey shale is estimated to contain more than 15 billion barrels of oil. That's five times bigger than the Eagle Ford shale in Texas, which supports 47,000 jobs, contributes more than $600 million a year in revenue for state and local governments, and generates about $25 billion in overall economic activity, according to the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Good news, right? Not for the extremists at the CBD. Accessing oil and gas in deep shale deposits requires the combination of a technology called hydraulic fracturing, which has been safely used in this country more than a million times since the 1940s, and advanced drilling methods.

So, as part of their ongoing ideological crusade against domestic energy production, the CBD and other activist groups have recently started campaigning for a ban on hydraulic fracturing — which they insist on calling "fracking" to make it sound scary.

That's what the CBD's help wanted ad is all about. The group wants a lawyer to help escalate its "anti-fracking campaign," which falsely claims presents "grave threats to public health." The CBD does need a really good lawyer because those claims aren't even remotely true.

Just listen to Interior Secretary Ken Salazar: "There's a lot of hysteria that takes place now with respect to hydraulic fracking," he told Congress earlier this year. "It can be done safely and has been done safely hundreds of thousands of times."

That was also the conclusion of a recent court-ordered study of hydraulic fracturing at the Inglewood Oil Field near Los Angeles, which detected no environmental or public health impacts from the use of this technology.

Despite this, the CBD has already filed a lawsuit against the California Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources, demanding that the agency ban hydraulic fracturing, never mind that it is currently drafting new regulations on the process, and that California already has some of the toughest, if not the toughest, environmental laws in the United States.

The fact that the CBD, and other fringe groups, are escalating their campaign against the state's energy producers should be a concern to all Californians. If they succeed, the state will be robbed of tens of thousands of jobs, and billions of dollars in tax revenue and economic activity.

We are fortunate to live in a state with abundant natural resources and laws in place to ensure those resources are developed responsibly. The oil and gas industry welcomes a debate over the state's energy future, but in these tough times, environmentalists shouldn't be using the courts to put the brakes on our economy.

If you think that isn't a real possibility, just ask a Central Valley farmer.