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Anderson faces big fine over donations

Agency also cites
Fresno GOP panel

**By John Marelus
and Michele Clock**
STAFF WRITERS

The enforcement staff of California's political watchdog agency yesterday recommended a \$20,000 fine against Assemblyman Joel Anderson for violating campaign contribution laws.

After an investigation triggered by a report in *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, the staff of the Fair Political Practices Commission found that the La Mesa Republican accepted contributions in excess of the legal limit.



**Assemblyman
Joel Anderson**

The donations originated with supporters in his district who contributed money to the Fresno County Republican Central Committee, which donated similar amounts to Anderson within days.

A fine of \$29,000 was recommended for the Fresno County GOP for its role in the transactions and for failing to properly

DRIVEN TO SUCCEED



Jimmie Johnson met students yesterday at Crest Elementary School, where he had been a student. During his visit, the El Cajon native announced nearly \$500,000 in grants to county schools. Johnson recently became the first driver in NASCAR's 61 seasons to win four straight championships. *Howard Lipin / Union-Tribune*

Jimmie Johnson believes you can go home.

In fact, he finds the exercise rewarding.

Johnson, an El Cajon native who recently became the first driver in history to win four straight championships at the highest level of NASCAR stock car racing, visited three sites in the county yesterday, starting with his elementary school in Crest.

While at the school, Johnson said he had awarded \$491,781 in grants to 11 county schools. During the past three years, Johnson has donated more than \$1.5 million-plus gifts-in-kind to projects in the county through the Jimmie Johnson Foundation.

Yesterday afternoon, Johnson spent time



Sempra wins suit over pact

\$43 billion in power contracts
signed during energy crisis

By Onell R. Soto
STAFF WRITER

Sempra Energy yesterday won a lawsuit in which California officials hoped to get out of a \$6.6 billion electricity contract signed during the 2000-01 energy crisis.

A San Diego Superior Court jury found that the 10-year deal allowed Sempra to buy cheap power from outside California and sell it at a profit to the state. State officials maintained that the contract required Sempra to produce the power at its own plants, including one near Bakersfield that opened a year later than the state expected.

The verdict was a defeat to one of the state's last challenges to \$43 billion in power contracts the Department of Water Resources signed during the height of the energy crisis. The 50 or so long-term deals stabilized prices and led to construction of the first power plants in a generation. But they also saddled the state's electric users with billions of dollars in higher rates.

That led the state to revisit the contracts. Many were renegotiated with lower rates, but Sempra rejected such a move.

"Once the Department of Water Resources received what they were hoping to achieve (with stable rates and new plants,) they wanted to get out of the contract," said Sharon Cohen, Sem-

SEE **Sempra, A6**

OVERVIEW

Background: During the 2000-01 energy crisis, state officials signed expensive power agreements with Sempra Energy and other big power