

Consumers Say They're Moving On Initiative ^{11/19/87}

BY SIGRID BATHEN
RECORDER CAPITAL CORRESPONDENT

SACRAMENTO — A coalition of consumer groups Wednesday made a tentative start toward qualifying a major insurance-reform initiative for the November 1988 ballot that would immediately cut liability premiums by 15 percent.

Announcing its effort at press conferences in Los Angeles and Sacramento, the coalition nonetheless did not have an initiative prepared for filing with the attorney general's office and lacked the participation of several consumer groups.

Leading the effort is Harvey Rosenfield, executive director of the Access to Justice Foundation, a Santa Monica-based consumer advocacy coalition that includes a wide range of local and state consumer organizations. Rosenfield declined to name any groups supporting the drive, which he said will be filed with the attorney general's office in the next few days.

Rosenfield said he expects numerous consumer organizations to support the initiative.

"This is not the campaign kickoff," Rosenfield emphasized to perplexed reporters. "We will announce the campaign committee and structure in about five weeks."

Rosenfield did not support a recently announced agreement between consumer groups and the insurance industry, a pact that is expected to result in major insurance reform legislation when the Legislature convenes in January.

The proposed initiative would:

- Roll back current insurance rates by 15 percent and require that future rate increases be justified and approved by the state Insurance Commissioner.

- Require that auto insurance premiums be based upon a driver's safety record and number of miles driven rather than "unfair and arbitrary classification factors such as ZIP code."

- End the insurance industry's exemption from state antitrust laws.