



California State Bill 1137 “Health Protection Zones”

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
Tribal Affair Workshop March 19, 2025

1. What is a “sensitive receptor” under SB 1137?

Per SB 1137, a Sensitive Receptor is defined as a residence; education resource; community resource center; healthcare facility; live-in housing; and any building that houses a business that is open to the public.

2. Can tribal lands and cultural sites be considered a Health Protection Zone (HPZ)?

In order to qualify as Health Protection Zone, the tribal lands and cultural sites will need to contain sensitive receptors. This is evaluated on a case-by-case basis for each site.

3. Who defines “significant impact to health”?

CalGEM will be the one to interpret the statute and regulations for a significant impact to health. CalGEM may approve a Notice of Intention (NOI) within a Health Protection Zone:

(1) To prevent or respond to a threat to public health, safety, or the environment.

(2) To comply with a court order finding that denying approval would amount to a taking of property, or a court order otherwise requiring approval of a notice of intention.

(3) To plug and abandon or re-abandon a well, including an intercept well necessary to plug and abandon or re-abandon a well.

CalGEM’s determination of whether there is a threat to health is based on the facts unique to each application and may include a risk assessment by the applicant. Risk factors could be proximity, groundwater/surface water contamination, or a gas leak from the facility, for example. CalGEM examines all the relevant risk factors and makes a determination if there is a threat to public

health. When an operator submits a permit application concerning a well with a wellhead within a health protection zone, the burden of proof is on the operator to document and demonstrate that an exception applies.

**4. What does water quality testing look like in relation to larger projects?
What does communication look like?**

Water quality testing occurs when an operator will drill a well. The operator must contact property owners and tenants within 3,200 feet of the well and facilities and offer water sampling and testing. When requested by the property owner or tenant, there must be samples taken before and after drilling, with testing data sent to the property owner, regional water quality control board, State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board), and CalGEM. The data will also be publicly available. CalGEM will work with the regional water quality control board and the local water district to determine what steps are next. That could mean additional testing or information-gathering, and that would be collected under authority derived from the Water Code. The property owner will get a copy of results, and the regional water quality control board will upload those results to the GeoTracker website. You can also contact the regional water quality control board via [email](#) for the latest results in certain areas if you're not the property owner or tenant who made the request.

5. How did you come to the number of 3,200 feet for Health Protection Zones (HPZ)?

That requirement is imbedded within the statutory language that the Legislature adopted in its passage of SB 1137.

SB 1137 establishes a health protection zone of 3,200 feet around homes, schools, and other sensitive receptors and prohibits oil and gas permits in Health Protection Zones, with limited exceptions.

6. Regarding mapping – what is the difference between HPZ and potential HPZ?

The map contains verified health protection zones, potential health protection zones, and verified non-health protection zones. Potential means that we have identified through data screening that there lies potential for a health protection

zone in each location. We actively do extra work to verify sensitive receptors. Conclusion is that we change mapping to include our verification.

7. Regarding mapping – how often is data updated? What are sources?

You can find a listing on CalGEM's website [here](#) for a list of 1137 data sources. There are commercial and public sources. Updates happen as needed based on new data; throughout the year with no set frequency. CalGEM has the ability in the map tool to provide response to any public comment that identifies corrections or updates.

For more information, visit

<https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/Pages/SB1137.aspx/>

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