

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS  
SB 1137 Health Protection Zones**

**Workshops March 19 and 20, 2025**

1. So not all parks are considered sensitive receptors?

All parks are considered sensitive receptors, but not all outdoor areas for recreation are considered parks.

2. If you have an existing production facility and a sensitive receptor is proposed within the HPZ [health protection zone], would that require the operator to create a Leak Detection and Response Plan? How is that initiated?

The requirement to have a Leak Detection and Response Plan applies to all existing wells and production facilities within the HPZ. Operators are required to develop and submit plans by July 1, 2028. The Division, in concurrence with CARB, must either approve the plans or provide notices of deficiencies by July 1, 2029, and the plans must be fully implemented by operators by July 1, 2030. Among other things, once fully implemented, an operator will be required to continuously monitor for chemical constituents of concern and to identify leaks before emissions impact the surrounding communities. CARB is in the process of developing performance standards that set the minimum requirements that the monitoring system should consistently meet during operation. Additional information can be found at <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/senate-bill-1137-establishment-health-protection-zones-oil-and-gas-production>.

3. Do Health Protection Zones (HPZs) apply to all types of wells (active, idle, orphan)?

Yes, HPZ applies to all areas within 3,200 ft of a sensitive receptor. This would encompass all well types or production facilities within that area with the exclusion of wells and production facilities associated with an underground gas storage facility.

4. What is the rationale for not all open areas for outdoor recreation being considered parks? Recommend this be reconsidered, as open areas for outdoor recreation should also be sensitive receptors.

The Legislature opted for health protection zones around specifically listed sensitive receptors, including education resources, with parks being a type of education resource. The statute does not define sensitive receptors to also include all open areas for outdoor recreation. Although many parks provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, not all

outdoor areas for recreation fall within the boundaries of a park and therefore do not meet the statutory definition of a sensitive receptor.

5. What is the rationale for only 20 days for property owners to request water sampling/testing? Recommend extending to at least 30 days.

The 20 days for property owners to request water sampling and testing is in the statutory language of Public Resources Code section 3284(b) and cannot be changed by regulation.

6. What is the rationale for waiting 48 hours to notify communities if leaks cannot be fixed? Recommend shortening to 24 hours.

Public Resources Code section 3283(a)(1) provides the 48-hour notice requirement. This cannot be changed by regulation.

7. Much of LA metro area is shown as a Health Protection Zone (HPZ). What does it really mean? How does this protect or help communities?

The existence of a HPZ has several implications for surrounding communities. Permits for new oil and gas wells to be drilled will not be issued in the HPZ areas except under limited exceptions, so oil and gas production activity will naturally reduce over time as old wells are plugged and abandoned and no new wells are drilled. The construction and operation of new production facilities within HPZ areas is also prohibited, again with limited exceptions for public health and safety and environmental quality. Operators with existing oil and gas operations within HPZ areas are subject to various requirements, including implementing an approved Leak Detection and Response Plan aimed at promptly identifying and repairing leaks.

8. Please clarify date when written comments on SB 1137 Implementation are due. The email notification about joint workshops that was sent out by CARB on February 24, 2025 states that written comments are due April 30, 2025. Information in tonight's chat (posted by Kelsi K.) notes that written comments are due by March 31, 2025. Are these two different deadlines, one for each agency's own independent process?

Yes, each agency has its own comment process, and they have different deadlines. CARB's information can be found at <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/senate-bill-1137-establishment-health-protection-zones-oil-and-gas-production>. CalGEM's information can be found at <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/Pages/SB1137.aspx>

9. What is CalGEM's/CARB's level of jurisdiction over federal land and federal mineral estate or private land over federal mineral (Split Estate)?

Regarding CalGEM authority, CalGEM is tasked with overseeing the state's drilling, operation, maintenance, and plugging and abandonment of oil and gas wells, including ensuring compliance with SB 1137 and the SB 1137 First Emergency Implementation Regulations. CalGEM's statutes and regulations apply statewide, including on federal land and federal leases. CARB has its own responses to questions from the workshop which can be found at <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/senate-bill-1137-establishment-health-protection-zones-oil-and-gas-production>.

10. Is there any case where an operator could drill an existing well deeper or do slant drilling within a Health Protection Zone?

SB 1137 does not apply to NOIs for nonfossil fuel production and injection purposes, to plug and abandon or re-abandon a well, including for intercept wells necessary for plug and abandonment, and underground gas storage wells and their attendant production facilities. To the extent that sidetracking is necessary to plug and abandon a well, this activity could occur within an HPZ. In addition, the Division may approve an NOI to do sidetracking within an HPZ if the activity is to prevent or respond to a threat to public health, safety, or the environment, as in the case of drilling a relief well. These wells are typically drilled with the intent of intersecting and sealing another well in a blowout situation or subsurface leak, i.e., where there is an uncontrolled release of oil or gas from the well.

11. For drilling new wells, 1137 does not apply to an oilfield that is being used as an underground gas storage operation. Playa Del Rey underlies neighborhoods and adjacent neighborhoods, does this not apply to this field?

All wells, except those that have been plugged and abandoned, and production facilities associated with an underground gas storage facility are exempt from the requirements of SB 1137. This means that in a mixed field like Playa Del Rey, there will be exempt and non-exempt existing wells and facilities. CalGEM may approve an NOI for drilling a new well if it is associated with the underground gas storage facility.

12. CARB and CalGEM mentioned having data available on the public website. How will this data be made available? Real time, weekly updates, monthly updates?

CalGEM data is available in real time on the CalGEM WellSTAR and WellFinder websites which are updated as submissions and documents are processed. Data from continuous monitoring of sites will be displayed in some version for the public but this has not been worked out yet. CARB is at the beginning stages of evaluating options on how to make data available to communities. There will be a lot of data that we will be working with, and we are exploring a number of options. CARB will be consulting with CalGEM on how to best provide this information, at what interval, and where to provide it.

13. Would residences located in industrial or ag zoned areas still be included?

In defining “sensitive receptor,” the Legislature did not limit residence by land use. Accordingly, residences located in industrial or ag zoned areas are included. Often these zoning types have limitations on residential uses, but these on their own do not mean that an HPZ could not exist within these zones.

14. Water testing: Will rework permits/operations still trigger water sampling? If rework permits will be granted in the Health Protection Zone for emergency scenarios, it is likely that the scenario could put groundwater at risk.

Rework permits will not trigger the water sampling requirements unless the work involves drilling.

15. If water sampling is required when drilling or redrilling a well within a Health Protection Zone (HPZ), but SB1137 outlaws any drilling or redrilling in a HPZ, would there ever be a scenario in which water sampling is required?

There are two scenarios in which water sampling would be required. First, if a new well is approved under an exception for health and safety purposes, or otherwise to comply with a court order, water sampling would be required, unless the operator demonstrates that the delay in well work is likely to result in significant damage to life, health, or natural resources. Second, there are operators who have current permits for new drills that were issued prior to SB 1137 going into effect that would require water sampling prior to work.

16. What is the actual definition of edge of the facility? Is that the property line of the facility or the furthest component from the center point of the facility?

The draft regulations are being updated to clarify that, for purposes of identifying an HPZ, measurements must be to the edge of the production facility that is closest to the sensitive receptor. “Production facility” is defined in CalGEM’s existing regulations, and includes equipment such as tanks and valves.

17. How can the public verify a permit was issued for work being performed?

All permit data is accessible in WellSTAR. Links to the program can be found at [https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/Online\\_Data/Pages/Index.aspx](https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/Online_Data/Pages/Index.aspx).

18. What specifically defines a well re-work?

Per the regulatory definition in California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 1720 (b), “‘Rework’ means any operation subsequent to drilling that involves deepening, redrilling, plugging, or permanently altering in any manner the casing of a well or its function.”

19. Will there be a consideration of using a web portal for uploading maps as opposed to pdfs or email to account for the issue of file size?

These submissions will be made directly into WellSTAR. CalGEM plans to issue a notice to operators (NTO) with further guidance for the annual submission of a sensitive receptor inventory and map.

20. Why the exclusion of underground storage wells in SB1137? Do these not have gas that flows in and out of the well?

The Legislature opted to exempt underground gas storage wells from the requirements of SB 1137. CalGEM's role is to implement the statutes passed by the Legislature.

21. If the permits affect the health or climate, the agency should be allowed to deny the permit. Shouldn't CalGEM just deny all new permits?

SB 1137 prohibits CalGEM from issuing many different kinds of permits for work within 3,200 ft of a sensitive receptor except under very narrow circumstances including if necessary to prevent or respond to a threat to public health, safety, or the environment; 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; and to plug and abandon or reabandon a well, including an intercept well necessary to plug and abandon or reabandon a well.

22. What guardrails will be in place to make sure that any proposed "replacement or relocation" of facilities within the HPZ is not functionally new construction?

CalGEM cannot issue permits for new wells to be drilled except with limited exceptions for public health and safety and environmental quality. Without new wells, there is very little need for operators to construct new production facilities. The construction of new production facilities is allowed if associated with an approved NOI determined to meet the statutory exception criteria. Under specific criteria, the replacement or relocation of existing production facilities will not be considered new construction.

23. Will there be any restrictions on reactivating idle wells within an HPZ?

SB 1137 does not impose specific restrictions on idle wells. Rather, CalGEM is prohibited from approving any NOI within an HPZ, except under limited circumstances. An idle well remains idle unless it is properly plugged and abandoned or has a continuous six-month period of use. Resuming use of the well may or may not require the submission of an NOI as it depends on whether the operator needs to repair or rework the well, or drill in a new direction to restart use.