



CalGEM Public Health Rulemaking “Early Engagement” Process Highlights

A glimpse at the ways in which the California Department of Conservation (DOC) engaged stakeholders and solicited feedback prior to and at the genesis of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Process Timeline Snapshot

Early Formation (November – December 2019)

1. Identified, maintained, and continually updated list of stakeholders to engage
2. Reached out to each stakeholder to develop phases of outreach and identify concerns

Proposed Process (January 2020)

3. Drafted engagement design including venue selection, language access components, and volunteer list
4. Iterated engagement design including budget, dates of engagement, and team roles

Get Ready to Implement (January – February 2020)

5. Recruited speakers, developed meeting materials
6. Kept stakeholders informed via emails

Implement – Pre-COVID (February – March 2020)

7. Held four in-person meetings between February and early March

Executive Order N-33-20 (Stay-at-Home) issued as a result of the threat of COVID-19

Implement – COVID-19 (March – June 2020)

8. Conducted three online town halls, survey, and anonymous polling

Analysis of Comments (June)

9. Comments provided to subject matter experts for deliberation

Post Process Evaluation (Mid-June on)

10. Post engagement documentation and evaluation



Ensuring Access and Inclusivity at In Person Meetings

Language Access

- Flyers advertising meetings were translated into 8 languages (tailored based on the county's 2nd and 3rd most spoken language)
- Some in-person meetings were conducted entirely in Spanish, with headsets provided to listen to real-time translation into English. All other workshops had Spanish language interpreters

Document Clarity

- All meeting materials, handouts, and wall posters were graphically branded, highly-visual, and vetted by stakeholders to ensure clarity prior to use
- 34 common topics (identified by public comments made at previous government-led oil and gas meetings) were made into posters and hung at meetings in sensitivity to oil/gas meeting fatigue

Accommodation

- Environmental justice partners in each region worked with DOC to choose meeting venues, dates, times, and customize outreach efforts to ensure a high meeting participant turn out
- Stakeholders, community leaders, and air district partners provided free food and children's activities; DOC staff ensured a welcoming room with multiple options to participate during the meeting, including verbally at the microphone and non-verbally using comment cards and hands-on activities

Evaluation

- Questionnaires provided DOC feedback about pre-meeting material clarity, meeting ambience, process, and participants' confidence in future decision making as a result of the meeting
- DOC staff maintained transparency by periodically publishing on its website summaries of public comments submitted by stakeholders and meeting participants



Engagement During the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic made the DOC creatively reinvent engagement efforts

Town Halls and Virtual Surveys

- Three bilingual virtual town hall meetings were identified as a solution and vetted with stakeholders to ensure buy-in and smooth implementation
- Virtual town hall dates and times were vetted with stakeholder leaders to ensure significant conflicts were avoided

Digital Survey and Polling

- A bilingual survey monkey enabled residents to contribute their voice at any time
- Anonymous and bilingual online instant polling initially used at in-person meetings opened on five more dates for public participation

Enhanced Communication

- Revised branding was created to help inform the public of the new effort
- Stakeholder leaders took an active role and were in close communication with DOC facilitator, Sarah Rubin, to ensure strong registration turnout for each event

Special Considerations

- Multi-family and multigenerational households were given extra time to speak and provide input during virtual town halls when more than one household member wanted to provide public comment
- Stakeholder leaders recommended registration-based virtual town halls so participants could note an affiliation (e.g., Community, Environmental, Industry, Labor, Public Health, Other/ Decline to State) to have 'voices' rotated during the public comment
- Phone in options were provided for all meetings in sensitivity to those who might have broadband access issues, no internet, or other connectivity challenges