



CalGEM Public Health Rulemaking Summary of Input from the Santa Maria Meeting

On March 4, 2020, the California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) of the Department of Conservation held a community meeting in Santa Maria, California regarding public health regulations for oil and gas operations near sensitive receptors. Participants provided both oral and written comments identifying issues of concern to the community and requesting both general and specific remedies.

- There were approximately 150 attendees, with 51 speakers and 48 written comments received.

Concerns expressed by participants included:

- Climate change impacts
- Respiratory and neurological illness, asthma, nausea, nosebleeds, cancer, allergies, disease vectors, food and waterborne disease
- Just transition for workers and royalty recipients including job training
- Potential takings claims
- Reliance on foreign oil; foreign wars
- Aquifer exemptions
- Health care costs burden us all
- Toxic chemicals in water, air, and soil
- Contamination of food products
- Transportation impacts including truck accidents and explosions
- Impact on vulnerable populations
- Relocation of capital to other states
- Environmental injustice
- Benzene
- Loss of tax revenues and charitable contributions
- Wildfires and drought
- Availability of renewable energy
- Bankruptcy of companies leaving taxpayers with the bill
- Contamination of water wells
- Dangerous techniques such as cyclic steaming
- Oil spills and leaks
- Political agenda
- Science versus fear
- Ability to start family
- Disparate impact on young people and communities of color
- Need for petroleum products
- Trucking of hazardous materials
- Acceptable risk = sacrifice
- Undue influence
- Health impacts from noise
- Radioactive produced water
- Global impact of local choices
- Export of oil
- Groundwater protections
- Noxious smells



Some participants indicated that additional regulations were not needed. Comments included:

- Operators complying with all laws and regulations
- Dedicated staff to ensure protection of environment and safety of communities
- CEQA requirements ensure extensive and ongoing environmental review
- Existing requirements for public health risk assessments
- Industry has supported strong environmental health legislation such as AB 617
- No transitional plan has yet been developed
- California has the strictest regulations in the world
- Comparative items (freeway, cell tower) not equally regulated
- 77% of air pollution from offshore shipping
- Myriad of vital products produced using petroleum such as health care supplies
- Air has never been cleaner, water has never been purer
- Vapor recovery technology, emissions tests, regular inspections
- Lack of evidence of health effects

Other participants suggested actions that could be taken to address the concerns, such as:

- A 2500-foot health and safety buffer or setback from schools, parks, businesses, waterways, and residences; supporting/passing AB 345
- CEQA reviews for all oil and gas wells
- No aquifer exemptions
- Leave it in the ground
- No new drilling in high fire hazard zones
- Reduce emissions
- Prohibit new permits in groundwater basins
- Hold permits where USGS is studying groundwater quality until study complete
- Regular testing of produced water with online database that makes it easy for the public to understand the toxicity of the water
- Stop allowing for drilling and injections through critical groundwater basins
- Restrictions on the trucking of hazardous materials
- Transition away from use of oil and gas; transition plan for workers with job training at state expense
- Stop new oil permits
- Levy and collect heavy fines for infractions
- Comprehensive air monitoring

- Don't allow use of produced water for irrigation
- Remove roadblocks to renewable solar and wind energy projects
- Stop allowing homes to be built around oil and gas fields
- No drilling in agricultural fields
- Study pollution produced at home and overseas; create policies to reduce whichever is higher
- End hydraulic fracturing and other well stimulation

This workshop is part of a series of workshops being held throughout the state to gather information from the public regarding concerns with oil and gas operations and their impact on public health. CalGEM will review the comments and recommendations received as it develops a regulator proposal to address public health concerns from oil and gas production.