



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact - Isa Flores-Jones isa@caleja.org

CA Environmental Justice Alliance Responds to Governor's Directive

2045 oil phaseout is a "hard-fought, historic victory" but lacks urgent health protections

Sacramento, CA - April 23, 2021 - Today, Governor Newsom announced [a directive](#) to end oil production in the state of California by 2045, including a hydraulic fracturing ban set to take place in 2024. The plan for oil phaseout will be directed by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and the hydraulic fracking ban will be enacted by the California Geological Energy Management Division (CalGEM).

The oil phase-out comes a day after announcement of a limited fracking ban received strong pushback from environmental justice and environmental organizations and a week after three Democrats joined Republicans to block the first stage of SB 467, the bill that would have paired an expansive fracking ban with a 2,500 ft. buffer zone between homes and oil and gas wells.

"For decades, communities of color living next to refineries and oil fields have demanded an end to fossil fuel extraction that endangers families and shortens their lives. Today's commitment to ending oil extraction is a hard-fought victory and a historic signal that California is committed to addressing the root of our climate crisis," said **Gladys Limón, Executive Director of the California Environmental Justice Alliance**. "As we move to sunset oil extraction, we need swift steps to achieve California's climate and equity goals, including immediate protections via a 2,500 ft. setback for families experiencing unconscionable health and safety impacts from neighborhood oil drilling, and deep investments to create quality, healthy jobs in the renewable energy economy. After today's directive, legislators, regulatory agencies and local decision makers have no excuse for incrementalism."

"As we celebrate today's directive—the result of decades of organizing by frontline communities—we urge the Governor to further direct the Air Resources Board to center climate justice and equity in their Climate Change Scoping Plan. CARB's past efforts to address oil production and refining have sacrificed community health for false solutions. Even with today's commendable action, unless the state also addresses the refining sector, it cannot meet its climate and equity goals. With refinery production and exports growing each year, and refineries seeking the replacement of petroleum feedstocks with more carbon intensive and climate disruptive biofuels, California risks locking itself in as the gas station of the Pacific Rim, and at the expense of our communities' health."

"In 2021, our state faces the threats of white supremacy, a historic drought and looming fire season, and a long and devastating COVID-19 recovery. Any elected official who wants to keep the peoples' trust and our vote must stand with frontline communities for bold, expansive climate



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE

action: anything less is a missed opportunity. In this time of pandemic, when research demonstrates increased risk of COVID-19 comorbidity when exposed to poor air quality, communities already ravaged by the virus are forced to shelter in place next to these polluting oil and gas sites, creating even deadlier conditions. The Governor's timeline for an oil phase-out is critical - and the first step should be a 2,500 ft health and safety buffer zone between homes, schools, hospitals, playgrounds, and oil and gas wells."

Numerous studies, including from California, have shown the devastating health effects of living in proximity to inherently dangerous oil and gas sites. Respiratory diseases, cancers, low birth weights, and cardiovascular disease number among a few of the life-threatening illnesses faced by low-income and communities of color every day.

"Living within 2,500 feet of oil and gas production can be the difference between a baby delivered safely to term, or a dangerous preterm birth," **Limón continued.** "According to the state's own findings, a fracking ban would not protect residents from neighborhood drilling that pollute the areas communities live, work, learn, and play in. As we stare down a COVID recovery and another record-setting fire season, we must come together with communities to implement a statewide transition off of oil and gas."

###