

July 23, 2020 via email

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Regarding the need for a managed decommissioning of California's refineries and policies to ensure a just transition

Dear Governor Newsom,

We, the undersigned organizations, work to protect our communities and the climate from the devastating impacts of fossil fuel extraction, transport, processing, and combustion. For more than a century, communities in California have been exposed to toxic emissions, and no one more so than communities of color forced to live in proximity to oil refining infrastructure. And as the COVID-19 crisis has emphasized, communities suffering from ongoing pollution are yet more vulnerable to new diseases like the novel coronavirus.

In order to meet California's climate goals and protect communities from further unnecessary pollution, California must immediately begin a process of gradually cutting production from our oil refineries. The report "Decommissioning California Refineries: Climate and Health Paths in an Oil State," released July 6, 2020, from Communities for a Better Environment, makes a clear case for the need for government leadership to align the reduction of California's refinery throughputs with state climate policies.

The recent examples of the unplanned shutdowns of the Marathon refinery in Martinez and the PES refinery in Philadelphia further emphasize the need for policy leadership that protects communities, provides for a just transition for refinery workers and all petroleum industry workers, and avoids the economic disruption of a rapid, unplanned shutdown of refineries in communities already hit hard by COVID-19 impacts.

To avoid the worst impacts of a chaotic transition, you must lead on key elements of the transition. California needs to:

- Implement local just transition planning (Report recommendation 3). Refinery cities like Richmond will suffer severe local community justice impacts without a planned transition.
- Start these processes immediately (Report recommendation 4). The Air Resources Board has the authority to act and can begin today on the recommendations below.
- Implement a moratorium on expansions (Report recommendation 9). You can and should prevent permitting of all refinery expansions, including the Phillips 66 Rodeo refinery expansion proposal.

With this letter, our organizations also support immediate action on the conclusions drawn from the report, including the following:

1. All paths to a livable climate involve refining much less oil. California's official climate goals call for cutting carbon emissions drastically by 2050. There's no way to meet this goal without steep cuts in petroleum production and use: the petroleum industry produces about two-thirds of all the carbon emitted from all activities in California.

2. Steep reductions in petroleum also are necessary to meet our health goals. One study estimated that just the particulate matter from extracting, refining, and burning oil refined in California over five years killed 8,000 people. Pollution from petroleum also contains nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides, and other toxic chemicals. The health risks are much higher for people who live close to refineries and freeways—disproportionately low-income and people of color. Whether through Emission Reduction Credits or other mechanisms, refinery ramp downs and eventual decommissioning must ensure no increases of pollution source in environmental justice and disadvantaged communities.

3. Early action to decommission refining capacity is a critical component of the least-impact, most socially just, most feasible path to climate stabilization in California. If we start now setting limits on output for each refinery, we can reduce refinery production gradually, 4.4–8.6 percent a year, until it's 10–20% of what it is now. (That leaves room for jet fuel, the only major fuel for which we don't yet have proven petroleum-free alternatives.)

4. This planned, gradual phase-down gives us time to develop sustainable alternatives for the workers and communities now economically dependent on oil. Components of a just transition must include:

- Requiring oil companies to pay their fair share of the costs for cleaning up the toxic mess they have created and also for transition support for workers and communities now economically dependent on refineries.
- Paying workers who leave oil-dependent jobs for the hard work of learning and getting the jobs we need done to build sustainable economies, including maintaining their income and health care as well as retraining and retirement security.
- Local planning and development of sustainable alternatives that provide clean, safe, family-supporting jobs and a robust tax base for the community.
- Community-driven decision making that includes workers and residents of frontline communities in the planning and implementation of sustainable alternatives.

5. California refineries are a key link in the global fuel chain. Actions that limit refining here can cut emissions across the petroleum fuel chain. California is the biggest center of oil refining in Western North America. As California oil fields dry up and in-state demand for petroleum fuels declines, California refineries have been importing more of the crude oil they process—now about two-thirds—and exporting more of their product (20–33%). California's demand for petroleum products will decrease as we move towards our climate goals, but refineries must not be allowed to replace domestic consumption decline with increasing exports, especially when

such production is increasingly maintained by imported crudes from highly impacted habitats such as the Amazon Sacred Headwaters, Alberta tar sands, and potentially even the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

6. We must pair gradual reduction of refinery output with aggressive measures to ensure clean mobility for all people, expanding support for electric vehicles, walkable communities, expansion of convenient, accessible public transportation, and more.

We look forward to discussing taking action on these items.

Sincerely,

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Signed on behalf of:

Acterra: Action for a Healthy Planet
All Positives Possible
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN)
350 Bay Area
Bay Area-System Change not Climate Change
Bayview Hunters Point Mothers and Fathers Committee
Benicians for a Safe and Healthy Community
Biofuelwatch
Breakthrough Communities
Breast Cancer Action
350 Butte County
C'Witzan Circles
California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA)
California Interfaith Power and Light
California Safe Schools
Carbon Free Palo Alto
Center for Biological Diversity (CBD)
Center for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Technologies (CEERT)
Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment (CRPE)
Central California Asthma Collaborative
Climate 911
Climate Emergency Mobilization Task Force
Climate Health Now
Communities for a Better Environment (CBE)
Community Energy reSource

Community Health 4 Environmental Empowerment
350 Conejo
350 Contra Costa County
Crockett-Rodeo United to Protect the Environment (C.R.U.D.E.)
350Dallas
Del Amo Action Committee
Earth House, Inc.
Earthworks
Eco tierra
Electric Auto Association CA Central Coast Chapter
Environmental Health Coalition
Extinction Rebellion Los Angeles
First Generation Environmental Health & Economic Development
Food & Water Watch
Food Empowerment Project
Fossil-Free Mid Peninsula
Fresh Air Vallejo
Fresnans Against Fracking
Friends of the Earth
Good Neighbor Steering Committee (Benicia)
1000 Grandmothers for Future Generations
Grassroots Coalition
Greater Lafayette Climate Synthesis
Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice
Harford County Climate Action.org
Healing Impacted Communities
Hull Professionals
Indigenous Environmental Network
Idle No More SF Bay
Interfaith Climate Action Network of Contra Costa County
KyotoUSA
350 Lake Norman
Local Clean Energy Alliance
Long Beach Alliance for Clean Energy
350 Marin
Menlo Spark
Mothers Out Front
Movement Rights
Napa Climate NOW!, a 350 Bay Area Group
No Coal in Oakland
No Coal in Richmond
Oil Change International
Pacific Flyer
Peninsula Interfaith Climate Action
ProjectGreenHome.org
Protect Monterey County

Rainforest Action Network
Récolte Energy
Redwood Energy
Richmond Progressive Alliance
Rodeo Citizens Association
Rootskeeper
350 San Francisco
San Francisco Baykeeper
350 San Jose
San Jose Community Energy Advocates (SJCEA)
San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace
SanDiego350
Santa Cruz Climate Action Network
Shore Up Marin City
Sierra Club California
350 Silicon Valley
SoCal 350 Climate Action
350 South Bay Los Angeles
Stand.earth
St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church
Sunflower Alliance
Sunnyvale Cool
Sunrise Project
Sustainable Marin
Sustainable Silicon Valley
The Climate Center
Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto, Green Sanctuary
West Berkeley Alliance for Clean Air and Safe Jobs
West Marin Climate Action
West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project
Youth Vs Apocalypse