

Our Mission

We're working to rapidly reduce climate pollution at scale, starting in California.

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March 26, 2024

The Honorable Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair
Senate Environmental Quality Committee
1020 O Street, Room 3230,
Sacramento, CA 95814
Via Committee Advocacy Portal

RE: SB 1420 (Caballero) – OPPOSE

Dear Senator Allen and Committee Members:

I'm writing on behalf of The Climate Center and its thousands of supporters statewide to respectfully express our opposition to Senate Bill 1420 by Senator Anna Caballero, et al.

The Climate Center is a California nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2001 with a mission to deliver rapid greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions at scale, starting in California. Our goal is to enact the bold policies required by science to put California on the path to net-negative emissions as soon as possible, catalyzing the nation and the world into accelerated climate action.

The Climate Center supports hydrogen production that abides by the [three pillars](#) of hydrogen production of additionality, deliverability, and temporal matching with availability of renewable energy. We also support the application of renewables-based hydrogen for difficult to electrify end uses.

We are very concerned that SB 1420 aims to streamline the most complex and controversial energy infrastructure projects – those based on bioenergy. Biomass-based hydrogen projects would be eligible for a streamlined CEQA process if the bill is enacted as written. The bill would allow for biomass fuel-based energy infrastructure projects to be eligible for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) permit streamlining in the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) program by deleting the existing *exclusion* of biomass fuels as eligible renewable energy infrastructure projects.

Biomass, although eligible in the RPS as a renewable energy source, is a highly polluting and controversial energy source, as outlined in this Center for Biological Diversity [factsheet](#). All forms of biomass energy generation, including factory farm biomethane, have varying feedstock dynamics and create local air and water quality, land use, noise, nuisance, and other impacts. There is good reason why biomass-based

hydrogen production is excluded from energy infrastructure project CEQA streamlining benefits under existing law. It should remain excluded.

We are also concerned that SB 1420 aims to accelerate the use of hydrogen for electricity generation, a use case which is hard to justify. The bill directs the California Public Utilities Commission to include defined renewables-based hydrogen in annual utility procurement targets for utility electricity generation. The purpose of the RPS is to increase use of renewable energy *sources* in utility power mixes. The RPS is not designed to elevate intermediary energy carriers that can then presumably be burned (in the case of hydrogen) while introducing significant efficiency and community impact penalties in doing so. Burning hydrogen for electricity generation or any other purpose emits oxides of nitrogen that are directly harmful to health and that are smog precursors. Hydrogen, however it is produced, should not be added to the RPS as an eligible renewable electrical generation facility.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to reject AB 1420 when it comes to you for a vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Woody Hastings", written in a cursive style.

Woody Hastings,
Phase Out Polluting Fuels Program Manager,
The Climate Center

cc:

Committee members:

Senator Brian Dahle (Vice Chair)
Senator Lena A. Gonzalez
Senator Melissa Hurtado
Senator Caroline Menjivar
Senator Janet Nguyen
Senator Nancy Skinner