

# CALIFORNIA'S POLLUTERS PAY CLIMATE SUPERFUND ACT

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Making Fossil Fuel Companies Pay  
Their Fair Share

Make Polluters Pay

March 2025

MAKE  
**POLLUTERS**  
PAY

HUMPS

# The Climate Crisis is Here

The California Natural Resources Agency estimates that climate disasters will cost California at least **\$113 billion annually** by 2050, but recent storms show this number is only growing.

## Recent Disasters:

- **Los Angeles fires (2025):** \$275 billion in estimated damages, thousands displaced.
- **Pajaro floods (2023):** \$300 million in damages, entire neighborhoods underwater.
- **Extreme heat costs:** \$7.7 billion in losses from heat events from 2013-2022

These disasters are increasing in frequency and severity, leaving lasting scars on our communities and economy.

BUSINESS

Estimated cost of fire damage balloons to more than \$250 billion



Residents search for belongings in the remains of their burned-out homes in Altadena on Tuesday. (Allen J. Schaben / Los Angeles Times)

[Read the LA Times article](#)

# California Taxpayers Shoulder the Burden

Californians are facing an affordability crisis, with inflation and climate costs driving the cost of living sky high. As insurance companies retreat, both homeowners and renters face increasing costs. Low-income communities bear the heaviest burden, with fewer resources to adapt to these mounting challenges.

- Insurance giants abandoning high-risk areas
- State Farm requesting **\$600 annual increase** per household
- By 2050, between **\$8-10 billion** of California property underwater
- Rising utility bills and medical expenses
- Working families face unaffordable housing, rent, and cost of living

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the Editor: Altadena, my neighborhood, has burned. Make fossil-fuel companies pay

01-15-2025 | IMPACT

### Why Big Oil should pay to rebuild after the L.A. fires

California lawmakers may soon consider a climate 'superfund' law that forces fossil fuel companies to pay for damages linked to emissions from their products.



Vehicles drive past a pumpjack operating within the Long Beach Oil Field in Southern California, circa 2021. (Photo: Bing Guan/Bloomberg/Getty Images)

Homes and cars burned in the Eaton (Allen J. Schaben / Los Angeles Times)

### *L.A. Fires Revive Calls for a 'Climate Superfund' Law in California*

New York and Vermont recently passed laws like these, which require energy companies to pay climate damages and will likely face fierce challenges.

## State Budgets Stretched to Breaking Point

Without a sustainable funding solution, working families, public sector workers and taxpayers across the entire state will keep paying **the price**.

- CA Governor and Legislature championed their allocation of [\\$2.5 Billion in Relief funds](#) in response to the LA fires, but much of those will be spent out of the CA General Fund.
- Local governments face revenue shortfalls due to property damage, leading to cuts in services and delays in wage increases for public sector workers.

### The Spiraling Cost Of California's Wildfires

Average annual fire suppression expenditure for the emergency fund of CDFFP



\*2023/2024 and 2024/2025 are preliminary figures  
Source: California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention

## Who's Profiting While California Burns

While Californians lose homes and livelihoods, fossil fuel giants are enjoying record-breaking profits. These companies make more money in a single hour than many families will see in a lifetime.

- In 2023 and 2024:
  - ExxonMobil: \$70,513 in profits per minute
  - Shell: \$48,024 in profits per minute
  - Chevron: \$35,691 in profits per minute
- These companies **knew about climate change for decades**—and spent billions covering it up.
- They **profit while we pay the price**.



# The Polluters Pay Solution

## What is the Polluters Pay Climate Superfund Act?

### It is actually two identical bills:

- **Senate Bill 684** authored by Senator Caroline Menjivar
- **Assembly Bill 1243** authored by Assemblymember Dawn Addis

### Both bills:

1. Direct CalEPA to quantify climate damages through 2045
2. Assess fees on largest fossil fuel polluters based on emissions (1990-2024)
3. Fund critical climate resilience programs benefiting all

This groundbreaking legislation applies a proven model: those who cause damage must help pay for cleanup. Similar to CERCLA (the toxic waste Superfund law), and California's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Act, it ensures polluters, not taxpayers, bear the financial burden of addressing climate impacts they knowingly caused.

## How It Works

- **Precedent:** Based on successful CERCLA toxic waste cleanup model and California's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Act
- **Fair assessment:** Companies pay proportional to their emissions
- **Dedicated fund:** Hundreds of billions for climate solutions
- **Labor standards:** Ensures quality jobs with strong worker protections
- **Equity focus:** At least 40% of funds to communities hardest hit by pollution

**The Climate Superfund builds on America's successful toxic waste cleanup program. Since 1980, CERCLA has made polluters pay billions without raising consumer prices. The same economic principles apply to climate damages, creating a dedicated funding source without burdening taxpayers.**

# Investing in California's Future

## Funds will go toward:

- Climate-resilient schools: Air filtration, cooling systems, shaded playgrounds
- Public transit and clean energy: Expanding access and reducing costs
- Firefighter & first responder support: Ensuring they have the tools to protect us
- Disaster recovery: Rebuilding schools, homes, and infrastructure.
- Home hardening & flood protection: Protecting the most vulnerable neighborhoods.



## Growing Coalition of Support

**Bill co-sponsors:** Center for Biological Diversity, California Environmental Voters, and Campaign for Safe and Healthy California

**200 organizations** supporting including:

- California Environmental Justice Alliance
- California Nurses for Environmental Health and Justice
- Sierra Club California
- Physicians for Social Responsibility
- Labor unions including AFSCME, California Nurses Association, and California Federation of Teachers
- Faith leaders, youth organizations, and local elected officials
- Business leaders and community groups

California is one of several states considering such legislation. Vermont and New York enacted climate superfund laws last year.



# Making Polluters Pay is Overwhelmingly Popular

Californians **strongly support** making polluters pay.

- 70% of likely California voters support a Climate Superfund to hold fossil fuel companies accountable.
- 69% say they would be more likely to support a candidate who prioritizes this bill.
- Across party lines, voters agree: the public is ready for action.

