



May 29, 2020

The Honorable Toni Atkins  
 Senate President pro Tempore  
 State Capitol, Room 205  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Support - AB 345 (Muratsuchi) Natural Resources: Environmental Justice: Oil and Gas: Regulation of Operations**

Dear Pro Tem Atkins:

We write as a coalition in support of Assembly Bill 345 by Assemblymember Muratsuchi. AB 345 will mandate that the California Geological Energy Management Division (CalGEM) complete the public health and safety rulemaking started in November 2019, provide resources and venues for impacted communities to participate in the rulemaking process, and establish a health and safety buffer zone between oil and gas wells and sensitive land uses. AB 345 must pass this year in order to influence the CalGEM rulemaking.

AB 345 will protect children and communities from the health and safety hazards associated with oil and gas extraction. Nearly five and a half million Californians—mostly people of color—live within one mile of an oil or gas well.<sup>1</sup> Studies link proximity to oil and gas wells to a host of health impacts, including increased risk of asthma and other respiratory illnesses, pre-term births and high-risk pregnancies, some kinds of cancer, and depression and other adverse mental health outcomes.<sup>2</sup> Oil and gas extraction produces toxic air pollutants, including volatile organic compounds (“VOCs”) like benzene and formaldehyde, fine and ultra-fine particulate matter (“PM”), and hydrogen sulfide. Other harms include water contamination, noise pollution, spills of toxic chemicals, and explosions. A safe distance between drilling operations and residences, schools, and other sensitive places is necessary to avoid these serious public health risks.

Of the approximately five and a half million Californians who live within a mile of one or more oil and gas wells, one-third live in areas most burdened by environmental pollution and 92 percent of Californians living in these overburdened neighborhoods are people of color.<sup>3</sup> Given these disproportionate, cumulative impacts on communities of color and low-income communities, state action is long overdue to directly address the harms and risks from oil and gas extraction and to prioritize a just transition that protects workers and communities impacted by the phaseout of drilling in these sensitive areas.

As COVID-19 continues to spread across California, early research is showing the disproportionate impact the virus is having in communities burdened by air pollution and pre-existing health conditions. People sheltering in place in close proximity to oil and gas facilities are facing increased health risks by staying home. Preliminary research from Harvard University indicates that at the county level, COVID-19 mortality rates are higher in areas with elevated levels of fine particulate matter air pollution over the long term.<sup>4</sup> Now more than ever, California must act to reduce exposure to pollution and improve public health – particularly in communities most impacted by COVID-19.

**We urge you to please refer AB 345 for hearing in July 2020, and to work with us to support its passage as an urgent matter of public health.**

Sincerely,

Ingrid Brostrom  
Assistant Director  
Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment  
[ibrostrom@crpe-ej.org](mailto:ibrostrom@crpe-ej.org)

Katie Valenzuela  
Policy & Political Director  
CEJA Action  
[katie@caleja.org](mailto:katie@caleja.org)

Kobi Naseck  
Coalition Coordinator  
VISION Coalition  
[kobi@vision-ca.org](mailto:kobi@vision-ca.org)

Dan Jacobson, State Director  
Environment California  
[djacobson@environmentcalifornia.org](mailto:djacobson@environmentcalifornia.org)  
(916) 446-8062

---

<sup>1</sup> Oil Change International, The Sky’s Limit California: Why the Paris Climate Goals Demand That California Lead in a Managed Decline of Oil Extraction (May 2018) at 21, <http://priceofoil.org/ca-skys-limit>

<sup>2</sup> Center for Biological Diversity, Oil Stain: How Dirty Crude Undermines California’s Climate Progress (November 2017), <https://bit.ly/2Cn0ZEW>

<sup>3</sup> Tanja Srebotnjak and Miriam Rotkin-Ellman, “Drilling in California: Who’s at risk?” Natural Resources Defense Council, October 2014, at 4, available at <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/california-fracking-risks-report.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Exposure to air pollution and COVID-19 mortality in the United States. Xiao Wu, Rachel C. Nethery, Benjamin M. Sabath, Danielle Braun, Francesca Dominici. medRxiv 2020.04.05.20054502; doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.04.05.20054502>

Katherine O'Dea  
Executive Director  
Save Our Shores

Dianna Cohen  
Chief Executive Officer  
Plastic Pollution Coalition

Christopher Chin  
Executive Director  
The Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, and  
Education (COARE)

Anna Cummins  
Co-Founder and Deputy Director  
The 5 Gyres Institute

Leslie Mintz Tamminen  
Director  
Seventh Generation Advisors

Emily Parker  
Coastal and Marine Scientist  
Heal the Bay

Miriam Gordon  
Program Director  
UPSTREAM

Mati Waiya  
Executive Director  
Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation

Ruth Abbe  
President  
Zero Waste USA

David Krueger  
President  
Northern California Recycling Association

Julia Jordan  
Policy Coordinator  
Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability  
[jjordan@leadershipcounsel.org](mailto:jjordan@leadershipcounsel.org)

Catherine Garoupa White  
Executive Director  
Central Valley Air Quality Coalition (CVAQ)  
[catherine@calcleanair.org](mailto:catherine@calcleanair.org),  
(559) 232-1698

Lauren Cullum  
Policy Advocate  
Sierra Club California  
[lauren.cullum@sierraclub.org](mailto:lauren.cullum@sierraclub.org)  
(916) 557-1107

Bill Allayaud  
California Director of Government Affairs  
Environmental Working Group  
[bill@ewg.org](mailto:bill@ewg.org)

Chuck Mills  
Director, Public Policy and Grants  
California Releaf  
[cmills@californiareleaf.org](mailto:cmills@californiareleaf.org)  
(916) 798-6075

Matthew Baker  
Policy Director  
Planning & Conservation League  
[matthew@pcl.org](mailto:matthew@pcl.org)  
(916) 202-9093

Bill Magavern  
Policy Director  
Coalition for Clean Air  
[bill@ccair.org](mailto:bill@ccair.org)  
(916) 527-8051

Arnold Sowell, Jr.  
Executive Director  
NextGen California

Analise Rivero  
California Program Coordinator  
Defenders of Wildlife  
[arivero@defenders.org](mailto:arivero@defenders.org)  
(916) 812-9193

Victoria Rome  
Director of California Government Affairs  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
[vrome@nrdc.org](mailto:vrome@nrdc.org)  
(415) 672-2813

Nora Privitera  
Legislative Analyst  
350 Bay Area Action  
[noraprivitera@comcast.net](mailto:noraprivitera@comcast.net)  
(510) 484-5992

Matt Leonard  
Special Projects  
350.org  
[Matt@350.org](mailto:Matt@350.org)  
(619) 246-0325

Evan Minton  
California State Policy & Programmatic Manager  
Voices for Progress  
[eminton@voicesforprogress.org](mailto:eminton@voicesforprogress.org)  
(925) 872-2250

Neal Desai  
Sr. Program Director, Pacific Region  
National Parks Conservation Association  
[ndesai@npca.org](mailto:ndesai@npca.org)  
(510) 368-0845

Melissa Romero  
Legislative Affairs Manager  
California League of Conservation Voters  
[melissa@ecovote.org](mailto:melissa@ecovote.org)  
(916) 223-5894

Molly Morabito  
Political Team Lead  
Sunrise Bay Area  
[mollymorabito@gmail.com](mailto:mollymorabito@gmail.com)  
(510) 409-5110

Bahram Fazeli  
Director of Research & Policy  
Communities for a Better Environment  
[bfazeli@cbecal.org](mailto:bfazeli@cbecal.org)

Kevin Hamilton, RRT  
Co-Founder & Co-Director  
Central California Asthma Collaborative  
[Kevin.hamilton@centralcalasthma.org](mailto:Kevin.hamilton@centralcalasthma.org)  
(559) 272-4874

Martha Dina Arguello  
Executive Director  
Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles  
[marguello@psr-la.org](mailto:marguello@psr-la.org)

Nayamin Martinez, MPH  
Director  
Central California Environmental Justice Network  
[nayamin.martinez@ccejn.org](mailto:nayamin.martinez@ccejn.org)  
(559) 907-2047

Colin C. O'Brien  
Staff Attorney  
Earthjustice  
[cobrien@earthjustice.org](mailto:cobrien@earthjustice.org)  
(415) 217-2010

Caroline Henderson  
Senior Climate Campaigner  
Greenpeace USA  
[chenders@greenpeace.org](mailto:chenders@greenpeace.org)  
(603) 355-7039

Ellie M. Cohen  
CEO  
The Climate Center  
[ellie@theclimatecenter.org](mailto:ellie@theclimatecenter.org)

Jesus A. Alonso  
Kern Community Organizer  
Clean Water Action  
[jalonso@cleanwater.org](mailto:jalonso@cleanwater.org)

David Braun  
Rootskeeper  
[thedavidbraun@gmail.com](mailto:thedavidbraun@gmail.com)  
917-514-0700

Karuna Jaggar  
Executive Director  
Breast Cancer Action  
[kjaggar@bcaction.org](mailto:kjaggar@bcaction.org)  
415-243.9301

Nicole Ghio  
Senior Fossil Fuels Program Manager  
Friends of the Earth U.S.  
[nghio@foe.org](mailto:nghio@foe.org)

Elizabeth Chopp  
Co-chair, Legislative Committee  
San Diego 350  
[beecee3@cox.net](mailto:beecee3@cox.net)  
(619) 265-1577

Dr. Rosanna Esparza  
Mural Arts | Environmental Justice Collaborative of  
Kern County  
[Resparza.usc@gmail.com](mailto:Resparza.usc@gmail.com)  
626-215-9150

Angela Mooney D'Arcy  
Sacred Places Institute  
[a.mooneydarcy@gmail.com](mailto:a.mooneydarcy@gmail.com)  
310-678-1747

Sandy Naranjo  
California Organizing Manager  
Mothers Out Front  
[sandy.naranjo@mothersoutfront.org](mailto:sandy.naranjo@mothersoutfront.org)

Rabbi Julie Saxe-Taller  
Northern California Senior Organizer  
California Religious Action Center of Reform  
Judaism (RAC-CA)  
[JSaxe-Taller@rac.org](mailto:JSaxe-Taller@rac.org)

Cc: Senator Henry Stern, Chair, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee  
Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi  
Kip Lipper, Chief Policy Advisory for Energy and Environment, Pro Tem's Office