

PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GOVERNOR NEWSOM'S EXECUTIVE ORDER WILL ADVANCE AIR POLLUTION REDUCTIONS, BUT FAILS TO MEET THE AMBITION NEEDED FOR THIS CLIMATE CRISIS

Executive Order falls short of the bold climate action needed by frontline residents and all Californians

Sacramento, CA - Today, as 26 wildfires continue to burn across the state, CA Governor Newsom signed executive order [N-79-20](#) intended to hasten the timeline for California's transition to a carbon neutral economy. The executive order takes strong steps on electrifying our transportation sector, but falls short on protecting frontline communities from severe health impacts of oil extraction, and creates false solutions in the face of our environmental imperative to act boldly on real climate solutions.

While pursuing zero emission vehicles is a critical step to reducing pollution burdens suffered disproportionately by environmental justice communities, today's executive order will not curb the largest impacts of oil and gas extraction and production on our communities. The governor's executive order is an insufficient commitment to ensure workers benefit from our transition to zero emission technologies. The California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) calls on Governor Newsom to stop fueling the flames of our climate emergency, and to take urgent action to address the gaps in today's Executive Order.

"In a moment when Californians are experiencing the worst wildfires in the state's history, we can't afford to settle for half-steps and incremental changes that tinker around the edges of the real impacts of the oil and gas industry," said **Miya Yoshitani, Executive Director of Asian Pacific Environmental Network**. "We hope that in the future, Governor Newsom will rise to meet the scale of the crises we're facing today and set the bar at what is necessary to stabilize our climate and protect our health, instead of settling for piecemeal reforms that continue letting big polluters poison our air and destabilize our climate."

"Having placed California on a critical path to zero-emission vehicles, it defies logic to continue to expand our fossil fuel-based economy and perpetuate the climate and air pollution crises borne heaviest by communities at the frontlines of fossil fuel infrastructure," said **Gladys Limon, Executive Director of the California Environmental Justice Alliance**. "The Executive Order reflects alarming contradictions in California's path forward. On the one hand, it sets an ambitious target for zero emission transportation and reiterates a commitment to establishing health and safety protections for environmental justice communities. On the other hand, the Executive Order also calls for investments in false solutions of low carbon fuels that could create a dangerous off-ramp that will hinder our progress, and fails to directly name critical protections like a buffer zone to protect frontline communities from unconscionable impacts of oil drilling in dangerous proximity."

“In this time of multiple climate crises, we need actions that address the immediate health risks facing Californians. Today, millions of Californians are suffering from the ill effects of living near oil and gas drilling, and California remains one of the only oil producing states without an oil and gas health and safety buffer zone. To be a climate justice leader, Newsom needs to immediately adopt a 2,500 foot setback between communities and oil extraction,” said **Ingrid Brostrom, an environmental justice attorney and Assistant Director of the Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment.**

“We remain concerned with the State’s continued commitment to false solutions like polluting dairy biomethane production which only delays the environmental, environmental justice, and health benefits we could see from shifting to truly clean fuels,” said **Phoebe Seaton, Co-Executive Director and Co-Founder of Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability.** “State action must go much further than the programs and policies included in the Executive Order to ensure that we are not building a bridge to lower emissions on the lungs of lower income Californians.”

“The recent Executive Order is a step in the right direction to help California reach zero emissions but must be paired with strong ZEV requirements for heavy-duty and drayage trucks and enforceable zero-emission regulations on indirect sources. The impacts of COVID-19 have set unprecedented sales for e-commerce and unprecedented expansion of indirect sources of pollution such as warehouses and logistics centers. Communities at the front-line of freight are more likely to die of COVID-19 than their counterparts, we cannot wait until 2045 to breathe. Addressing the indirect sources of pollution of diesel fuel-powered freight must be prioritized,” said **Esther Portillo, Executive Director Center for Community Action And Environmental Justice.**

The omission of any direction to procure more clean energy and storage in frontline communities in this Executive Order is glaring, particularly as the state continues to fall behind on meeting the goals of SB 100 (2018, De León) and has over relied on fossil fuel power generation to manage demand in recent weeks. The Administration must do everything in its power to accelerate the deployment of clean energy, storage, and distributed energy in frontline communities to replace fossil fuel generation and increase grid reliability and resilience.

CEJA hopes that the directive for zero emission transportation in the Executive Order ensures that disadvantaged communities and workers benefit, and encourages the Administration to move more quickly on identifying how our transition to zero emission vehicles can align with a Just Transition for workers and communities. CEJA encourages the Administration to ensure that the needs of frontline communities and workers are centered in the creation of a Just Transition Roadmap.

Environmental justice communities have waited long enough for meaningful action that will protect public health and address economic inequalities - we look forward to partnering with the Administration to ensure the potential for California to lead on climate justice is finally realized.

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The **California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA)** is a statewide, community-led alliance that works to achieve environmental justice by advancing policy solutions. We unite the powerful local organizing of our members in the communities most impacted by environmental hazards –

low-income communities and communities of color – to create comprehensive opportunities for change at a statewide level. We build the power of communities across California to create policies that will alleviate poverty and pollution. Together, we are growing the statewide movement for environmental health and social justice. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).