



CalGEM Public Health Rulemaking Summary of Input from the Arvin and Bakersfield Meetings

On February 18 and 19, 2020, the California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) of the Department of Conservation held two workshops in Arvin and Bakersfield regarding public health regulations for oil and gas operations near sensitive receptors. Participants provided both oral and written comments identifying issues of concern to the community and requesting both general and specific remedies.

- In Arvin, there were approximately 85 attendees, with 26 speakers and 8 written comments received.
- In Bakersfield, there were approximately 75 attendees, with 25 speakers and 4 written comments received.

Participants generally agreed that health and safety of the community were the highest priority. Concerns expressed by participants included:

- Contamination of air, water, and soil by oil, gas, and pesticides
- Fugitive emissions and toxic smells
- Health problems such as asthma, exhaustion, and cancer
- Effects on tax revenue and local economy
- Power of big industry and ranchers
- Protection of vulnerable populations including prenatal, children, elderly
- Fumes and smells at local schools
- Arsenic contaminated water wells
- Arvin pipeline leak and evacuation
- Regulations haven't worked
- Drilling pits and sumps
- Small operators don't have the same rules as large operators
- Pumping units noise
- Danger from earthquakes
- Workers suffering from burns, blisters, sores that aren't healing
- Use of fracking water for irrigation
- Harm from foreign oil imports
- Losses for mineral rights owners
- Loss of good jobs, just transition
- Disproportionate impact on low income and communities of color
- Regulatory taking of property rights
- Corruption/conflicts-of-interest
- Economic and environmental justice



Some participants indicated that additional regulations were not needed. Comments included:

- Operators perform safety analysis of every job; existing safety training programs
- Engineers inspecting tanks and pipes to prevent leaks; surveying equipment and repairing of marginal and idle wells
- All wells are already monitored
- World class environmental and human rights standards in California
- Other sources of pollution and noise such as cars and buses
- Operators in compliance with all statutes and regulations
- Industry safety record is good
- Kern County regulations as gold standard with extensive mitigations
- Lack of evidence of health effects and contamination
- Negative impact on jobs and the economy
- Hydrocarbon jobs as path for upward mobility
- Lack of qualifications of government officials to make decisions on public health

Other participants suggested actions that could be taken to address the concerns, such as:

- A 2500-foot health and safety buffer or setback from schools, parks, and residences; supporting/passing AB 345
- Reduction or phase out of oil and gas production
- More renewable energy
- Full monitoring of refineries
- Monies paid in fines used in affected communities
- Justice for those exposed to chemicals
- AB 1420 inspections
- Stricter regulations
- Monitoring of all wells
- Additional scientific/health investigations
- Bring rules for small operators in line with those for large operators
- Apprenticeship programs for new jobs
- Clean up pits
- The ability to report conflicts of interest so state can take action
- Stop moving oil production closer to the homes due to the hazards

These two workshops are part of a series of workshops being held throughout the state to gather information from the public regarding concerns with oil and gas operations and their impact on public health. CalGEM will review the comments and recommendations received as it develops a regulator proposal to address public health concerns from oil and gas production.