

CALIFORNIA AIR RESOURCES BOARD  
DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE SCOPING PLAN

## COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS SUMMARY

### LISTENING SESSIONS PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) held a series of four Community Listening Sessions on its Draft 2022 Climate Change Scoping Plan (Plan) in the summer of 2022. The purpose of these meetings was to provide an opportunity for the community to hear an overview of the Plan and share thoughts with CARB staff and Board members.

CARB released the Plan on May 10, 2022 and held its first Board Hearing on the Plan on June 23, 2022. Over 450 people provided verbal comments at that hearing. Given the high level of interest, CARB held this series of Community Listening Sessions to provide additional opportunities for community members and interested stakeholders to share their thoughts and concerns with CARB staff and Board Members. Comments provided at these sessions will help inform development of the final proposed 2022 Climate Change Scoping Plan, which will be presented to the CARB Board in late 2022.

These sessions occurred after the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) comment period was closed.

### LISTENING SESSIONS FORMAT

Each listening session began with opening remarks by CARB Board Chair Liane Randolph, followed by a brief overview of the Plan, presented by CARB staff, and then the majority of the session was devoted to hearing public feedback. The Chair was joined by additional Board members and by senior CARB staff at each session. The purpose of these meetings was to provide stakeholders across the state an opportunity to share their feedback on the Plan with CARB.

Three listening sessions were held in person across the state, and one was held virtually, as follows:

- Oakland, July 28, 2022, at Laney College, Oakland
- Fresno, August 3, 2022, at Fresno City College, Fresno
- Los Angeles, August 4, 2022, at East Los Angeles College, Los Angeles
- Webinar, August 9, 2022, via Zoom

All meetings were held in the evening. Spanish interpretation was provided at all of the sessions; Mandarin and Cantonese interpretation was also provided at the Oakland meeting in response to community request.

The following summarizes comments made at each of the listening sessions.

## **OAKLAND SESSION**

Approximately 150 people attended, and 52 comments were made by community members, healthcare providers, and community advocates.

The most common themes/topics covered included:

- Carbon capture and sequestration (CCS)
- Timeline for reaching carbon neutrality
- Public health impacts
- Oil and gas facilities
- Transportation
- Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (EJAC) recommendations and equity issues
- Direct emissions reductions
- Solar technology
- Funding for Plan implementation

CCS, the timeline for reaching carbon neutrality, and public health impacts represented the greatest total number of comments. Because some participants provided comments on multiple themes/topics, references to the total number of comments in the summary below are approximate.

### **CARBON CAPTURE AND SEQUESTRATION**

The most common topic discussed by meeting participants was CCS. A majority of commenters expressed concern regarding the Plan's reliance on carbon capture and sequestration as a major strategy, suggesting that mechanical carbon capture is largely unproven/unworkable. In addition to broad concerns about the viability of these technologies, commenters provided the following input:

- Called for increasing emission reductions through use of alternative methods, such as solar power or increased use of electric vehicles rather than traditional fossil fuels.
- Expressed concern that mechanical/chemical carbon capture could result in increased detrimental health impacts on underserved communities and asked CARB to consider these potential impacts (e.g., the possibility of toxins released from carbon storage facilities).

One commenter expressed support for carbon capture and sequestration technology to reduce or mitigate carbon emissions.

### **CARBON NEUTRALITY TIMELINE**

Similar to CCS, numerous commenters requested that the Plan revise the timeline for reaching carbon neutrality from 2045 to 2035. This was the second-most commonly discussed theme/topic.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH**

Approximately 10 public health professionals and doctors, as well as a number of community members, expressed concern over high rates of chronic health issues in disadvantaged communities. Public health professionals in particular highlighted documented links between the location of heavy industry and transportation facilities such as ports to increased rates of respiratory illness such as asthma.

## **OIL AND GAS FACILITIES**

Many attendees expressed strong concern about the impacts of oil and gas facilities on health, such as increased prevalence of chronic respiratory illnesses. Many shared their concerns about exposure to toxic emissions released during refinery explosions including, but not limited to, the 2012 Chevron fire in Richmond. To reduce and/or eliminate these impacts, they recommended the Plan:

- Ban all new gas and oil-based facilities throughout California.
- Reduce and eliminate toxins produced by refineries throughout California through more rigorous emission control regulation.
- End oil extraction by 2035.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

There was mixed feedback on the Plan's use of electric vehicles to reach carbon neutrality. Some said the Plan relies too heavily on electric vehicles; others stated that these vehicles are essential for reaching targets. Many agreed fossil-fueled cars should be phased out by 2030. Some expressed that the Low Carbon Fuel Standard should not be relied on at the expense of zero emission/electric vehicle requirements.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EJAC) RECOMMENDATIONS AND EQUITY ISSUES**

Several commenters expressed concern that EJAC recommendations were not included in the Proposed Scenario in the Plan. They asserted that the Plan's policies as proposed do not benefit the most heavily impacted communities. By adopting the EJACs recommendations and timeline for reaching carbon neutrality, disadvantaged communities would receive more equitable benefits from Plan implementation.

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH NATIVE AMERICAN AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES**

A commenter recommended incorporating Native Americans' and Indigenous communities' experience and knowledge into the Plan.

## **DIRECT EMISSION REDUCTIONS**

Many commenters requested that CARB phase out fossil fuel extraction and invest in renewable energy and vehicles/equipment that run on electricity.

## **SOLAR TECHNOLOGY**

Some commenters expressed the importance of utilizing and incentivizing roof-top solar panels.

## **FUNDING SOURCES AND PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

One commenter expressed a need to clearly identify funding sources in the Proposed Scenario for Plan implementation.

## **FRESNO SESSION**

Approximately 100 people attended this listening session. A total of 55 comments were made by community members, community and environmental justice advocates, and representatives from the agricultural and dairy industries. The following summarizes comments received at this meeting.

## **DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES**

Many commenters expressed concern about a perceived lack of inclusion of disadvantaged communities in the Plan development process and about health impacts on these communities. Comments included:

- The Plan lacks focus on disadvantaged communities, particularly in the Central Valley.
- There needs to be more input on the Plan from disadvantaged communities.
- More multi-lingual outreach to impacted communities is needed to ensure stakeholders are able to provide feedback on the Plan.
- The Plan does not incorporate health analysis to optimize health benefits.
- Pesticide application disproportionately impacts Central Valley communities.
- Farm laborers often lack healthcare and are the most impacted by chemicals and pollution.
- Many commenters expressed concern about community health, including the increased cases of chronic illnesses such as asthma. Health care professionals stated that the infant mortality rate in Fresno County is 6.1 per 1,000 live births compared to a national average of 5.4; in the African American community the rate is 10 per 1,000 live births.

## **CARBON CAPTURE AND SEQUESTRATION/CARBON REMOVAL**

Many commenters stated that mechanical/chemical carbon capture is an unproven technology. They also raised concerns that these facilities would be located only in disadvantaged communities.

## **CARBON NEUTRALITY TIMELINE**

Many commenters requested that the Plan's timeline for reaching carbon neutrality be changed from 2045 to 2035. However, as noted below, some commenters believe the Plan moves too quickly and will negatively impact farm operations.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Many community members expressed their concern with the high cost of purchasing electrical vehicles. They noted that the incentives for electrical vehicles are not sufficient for low- and very low-income communities. Additionally, severely disadvantaged communities (SDACs) do not have infrastructure (charging stations) to facilitate the transition.

## **LOW CARBON FUEL STANDARD INCENTIVES/DAIRY OPERATIONS**

A variety of opinions were provided on the Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) and incentives for dairy/agricultural operations. For example, a few dairy operators touted the success of LCFS credits and the Dairy Digester Program, while several residents from disadvantaged communities expressed a need to reduce incentive programs and strengthen emission standards for agricultural operations. Other participants asked for a removal of the same credit programs. Additional comments included:

- The Plan moves too quickly and will negatively impact farm operations.
- Dairy digesters have helped create clean sector jobs.
- Dairy digesters have helped capture large quantities of air pollutants, generate clean and renewable energy to offset fossil fuel use, and create more clean sector jobs while preserving the livelihoods of people within the community.
- CARB should provide incentives to both large and small-scale dairy operations.
- Biogas and carbon capture and storage for dairy digesters are not sustainable and increase air and water pollution for surrounding communities.

## **JOBS**

Some commenters stated that the Plan has no guidance or reassurance regarding job retention.

## **PESTICIDES**

Meeting participants provided two conflicting opinions on pesticide regulation: a significant number of participants (approximately 10-15) requested that CARB strengthen regulations regarding pesticide use, particularly in disadvantaged communities, while several others suggested pesticide regulation should be under the sole authority of the Department of Pesticide Regulation.

## **NATURAL GAS**

Some commenters requested assurance that natural gas extraction does not exacerbate climate change and pollution issues.

## **SUPPORT FOR THE PLAN**

Some commenters expressed appreciation for the extensive breadth and scope of the Plan.

## LOS ANGELES SESSION

Approximately 50 people attended this listening session. A total of 22 comments were made by community members, community advocates, health professionals, and energy and other business representatives. The following summarizes comments received at this meeting.

### OIL AND NATURAL GAS

Many commenters called for a Plan that:

- Transitions to clean, renewable, zero emissions electricity by 2035.
- Includes no new natural gas-powered electrical power plants or other new fossil fuel infrastructure.
- Fully phases out oil extraction by 2035 and refineries by 2045.
- Implements a just transition for all workers.

Some also expressed opposition to the continued operation of existing natural gas plants.

Other recommendations included:

- Begin fossil fuel phase-out starting with facilities within a 3,200-foot setback from homes, schools, hospitals, and other sensitive sectors.
- Start planning for this transition now to avoid stranded assets.
- Provide funding to assist oil producers in transitioning from oil production to other efforts, such as landfill gas and anaerobic digestion projects, which would help meet the state's emission reduction requirements and targets.

Commenters called for phasing out oil and gas facilities to:

- Make the health of communities a top priority, particularly for environmental justice communities that have been disproportionately burdened with pollution and associated health effects.
- Reduce health impacts associated with these facilities, including recurrent sinusitis, asthma, heart and lung diseases, and cancer.
- Meet climate change goals.

### CARBON CAPTURE AND SEQUESTRATION

Some commenters expressed opposition to the inclusion of carbon capture and sequestration in the Plan, citing concerns that:

- It is a scientifically unproven technology.
- Its implementation is not practical and unlikely.
- It has low rates of capture and is very costly.
- It is an energy-intensive process and the Plan does not analyze this energy demand.

- It would prolong the life of fossil fuel operations, and thereby continue the environmental and health impacts and explosion hazards in surrounding disadvantaged and overburdened communities.

Commenters recommended that instead, the Plan should prioritize strategies for direct emissions reduction, industrial decarbonization via energy efficiency, increased recycling, materials substitution, and investment in clean industrial technologies.

One commenter noted that California will need all available technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including carbon capture and sequestration.

### **CARBON NEUTRALITY AND TIMELINE**

Many commenters called for the achievement of carbon neutrality by 2035 to address climate and health impacts.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Some commenters called for more ambitious zero emission vehicle (ZEV) goals, investment in transit, and reduced vehicle miles travelled (VMT). Others questioned the effectiveness of VMT reduction goals.

Comments related to transportation included:

- Adopt a Plan that, at a minimum, aligns with the light and heavy-duty ZEV sales targets in CARB's Mobile Source Strategy.
- Accelerate and scale investments in clean vehicles and mass transit. Aim for: 100% zero emission transit buses and trucks by 2030; 100% zero emission medium- and heavy-duty truck sales by 2035; and a 30% reduction in VMT by 2035.
- Invest in the transition to zero-emission modes of transportation. Marginalized communities located in proximity to transportation corridors have experienced associated health impacts, such as asthma. They cannot afford to relocate due to these effects or climate change.
- VMT targets are unrealistic.
- The Plan acknowledges that VMT regulations are not working, yet it proposes increasing the reduction of VMT. The Plan will deprive families of affordable low-emission cars needed to commute to work.
- Incorporate health savings from VMT reduction, due to increases in physical activity, in the cost analysis.
- Public transit has not provided an adequate mobility solution. Some people, more likely blue-collar workers, will need to drive to their jobs.
- The Plan advances transportation policies that have been effectively rejected by overwhelming percentages of the public.

### **BUILDINGS AND APPLIANCES**

Recommendations made related to buildings and appliances included:

- Develop an equitable path to building decarbonization retrofits.
- Phase out sales of new gas appliances by 2030 and ensure full decommissioning of the gas distribution system in 2045.

## **HOUSING IMPACTS**

Some commenters expressed concern about the Plan's impacts on affordable housing and called for changes to the Plan to reduce these impacts. Comments included:

- The Plan's discussion on housing conflicts with local general plan housing required under regional housing needs assessment laws. It will impede the achievement of housing production goals and thereby exacerbate the state's housing crisis, poverty, segregation, and the racial wealth gap.
- The Plan's requirement that new housing be built only in neighborhoods with high frequency public transit will result in new construction that will adversely impact families currently residing in these locations. Essential worker families and median income families cannot afford to rent or purchase condominiums in this higher density housing.
- Housing that is consistent with sustainable community strategies and approved housing elements but not consistent with the Plan will be required under CEQA to prepare an Environmental Impact Report and adopt all feasible mitigation. This will create an unworkable impediment to housing development.
- The Plan advances land use and housing policies that rule out development on 90% of California's land and prolong the approval process for new homes. This will exacerbate the state's housing affordability crisis.

## **ECONOMIC IMPACTS**

Some commenters expressed concern regarding the Plan's economic impacts and requested that CARB consider these in the Plan. Such comments include:

- The Plan will exacerbate the growing trend and outmigration of good paying jobs and industry in California, which will contribute to emission increases overall.
- The Plan advances energy consumption policies with additional cost on Californians who are already struggling under high gas prices and market inflation.
- The Plan should support policies that include a diversified energy portfolio, including biofuels, carbon sequestration, and others that will help clean air while ensuring energy reliability and jobs.
- Ensure that the Plan reduces emissions while sustaining the California economy.
- Focus upon the theme of affordability. The electrical grid does not have the capacity to serve the additional demand called for by the Plan, which will increase costs, both for consumers and for the business community. Slow down the economic impact for residents and the business sector.



- Many Californians are moving further from their jobs because of housing affordability and therefore need to commute. Transportation costs will significantly increase for those people under the Plan.
- Counting the departure of people and jobs from the state as greenhouse gas reductions because they do not occur inside of the state’s geographical boundaries does not help reduce climate change.

### **RENEWABLE DIESEL FUELS**

A commenter requested that, as CARB considers setting rules to restrict the use of lipid-based feedstocks for renewable diesel fuels, it provides exemptions for lipids like Camelina that are low carbon and do not affect food crops.

### **REQUEST FOR DATA SUPPORTING THE PLAN**

Data underlying the Plan’s graphs was requested to inform public comment about the Plan.

### **SUPPORT FOR THE PLAN**

Support for the Plan was expressed, noting that it strikes a balance between expediting emissions reductions and costs.

Appreciation was expressed for the long hours and highly complicated modelling that went into developing the Plan.

## **VIRTUAL SESSION**

Approximately 250 people attended this listening session. Roughly 70 comments were made by attendees, including community members; representatives of a variety of advocacy organizations, agricultural, industry, and business groups; and academics, among others. The following summarizes comments received at this meeting.

### **CARBON CAPTURE AND SEQUESTRATION**

Many commenters expressed opposition to the inclusion of carbon capture and sequestration in the Plan, citing concerns that:

- It is an unproven technology, and
- It would extend the life of fossil fuel operations, and thereby continue the associated health impacts and explosion hazards in surrounding communities.

Commenters recommended that instead, the Plan should focus on direct greenhouse gas emissions at the source and the transition to and investment in renewable, zero-emission energy generation technologies.

Some commenters stated that the use of carbon capture and sequestration should be limited to sectors that are hard to decarbonize and during a transition period only.

## **CARBON NEUTRALITY AND TIMELINE**

Many commenters called for the achievement of carbon neutrality by 2035.

Some commenters noted that the target should be “real zero” rather than net zero.

## **OIL AND NATURAL GAS**

Community members expressed strong concern about public health and environmental impacts of oil refineries within their communities. They called for the Plan to:

- More aggressively reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the source.
- Transition from fossil fuels to clean renewable energy sources.
- Incorporate a phase-out of fossil fuel extraction by 2035 and refineries by 2045.
- Retire existing natural gas power plants, ban new gas plants, and replace them with clean energy facilities.
- Include a just transition for communities and workers affected by the phase out of fossil fuels, including sufficient training for workers.
- Accelerate funding and community supportive strategies to provide all residents with renewable electricity and energy.
- Prevent the use of biofuels from extending the life of oil refineries.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Some commenters stressed the need to increase the use of zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs). Others emphasized the need to increase transit and reduce vehicle miles travelled (VMT). Comments related to ZEVs and transit included:

- Adopt a Plan that, at a minimum, aligns with the light- and heavy-duty ZEV sales targets in CARB’s Mobile Source Strategy.
- Make ZEV cars more affordable.
- Producing ZEVs generates emissions.
- ZEVs create traffic congestion issues.
- Replace diesel buses and diesel trains with electric alternatives.
- Reduce VMT gradually, by 1% per year to get to 22% by 2045. Coordinate with county policymakers to develop plans that work with local needs.
- For rural communities, the availability to connect to the grid, grid stability, rising utility costs, and the aggressive compliance timeline will present significant challenges in meeting ZEV goals.
- The Plan does not credibly reduce transportation emissions.

## **NATURAL AND WORKING LANDS**

Some community members stated that the Plan does not realize the full potential for sequestration in the state's natural and working lands and called for improvement and expansion of natural carbon sequestration. Related comments included:

- Expand the Plan's conservation target to include all coastal wetlands, also known as blue carbon habitats.
- The modeling should include carbon stocks deeper than the first 30 centimeters of the soil.
- CARB should assemble an advisory committee of scientists, economists, and other stakeholders to reevaluate the natural and working lands sector analysis before finalizing the Plan.
- Differentiate the targets for nature-based solutions from those for technological or engineered carbon removal, given the vastly different contexts, outcomes, and timelines of these two approaches and confusion caused by combining them.

## **PESTICIDES**

Some commenters called for an accelerated and more ambitious target of 30% of California's acreage to be certified organic by 2030 and a reduction of synthetic pesticide use of 50% by 2030. Additional comments include:

- Eliminate herbicide applications from the Plan as a climate smart strategy for all land sectors.
- Support was expressed for the Plan's inclusion of the sustainable pest management roadmap. However, pesticide reduction targets in the roadmap need to be finalized and implementation and enforcement mechanisms for the roadmap have not yet been identified.

## **DAIRY OPERATIONS**

Some commenters expressed opposition to dairy digesters and called for more stringent regulations of digesters instead. Others supported dairy digesters and called for funding and other incentives to promote their use. Comments included:

- Dairy digesters are not sustainable, increase air and water pollution in surrounding communities, and exacerbate existing environmental injustices in these communities.
- Dairy digesters do not address enteric methane emissions and actually incentivize increased enteric methane emissions.
- CARB should amend the low carbon fuel standard to remove dairy biogas and instead regulate these dairies to reduce methane emissions at the source.
- An incentive-based approach is best for dairy digesters. The program has been successful and is responsible for 30% of greenhouse gas reductions.
- Provide additional funding for climate smart agricultural programs to enable dairy farmers to make changes to their manure management and farming practices to reduce methane emissions and generate renewable energy.
- It is critical that digesters continue operating to achieve climate neutrality.

## **IMPACTED COMMUNITIES**

Many commenters encouraged CARB to incorporate the voices of the impacted communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis and to center the Plan around public health and equity.

Commenters also expressed that there is no consideration for low-income communities and small businesses that will need cost effective alternatives to follow new mandates. The Plan needs to include responsible, reasonable, and affordable options.

## **GAS APPLIANCE REPLACEMENT**

A commenter suggested that, in lieu of the 2030 zero-emission standard for space and water heaters, CARB should change the building code to require electric furnace or water heater replacement only in homes with an adequate electrical panel (defined as 200 amps or greater) and should make gas appliances available to those whose panels cannot accommodate the change to electrical appliances. The commenter stated that the requirement to add a new electrical panel is not reasonable or affordable.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EJAC) RECOMMENDATIONS**

Commenters noted that the Plan does not sufficiently incorporate the EJAC's recommendations.

## **EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Community members expressed the need for an educational component of the Plan and a method to encourage and increase community and youth involvement.

## **CAP AND TRADE**

### **A COMMENTER REQUESTED THAT CARB ACKNOWLEDGE IN ITS CAP-AND-TRADE PROGRAM SOLAR POWERED TECHNOLOGIES THAT HAVE REDUCED GLOBAL GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION (CPUC) COLLABORATION**

Commenters suggested that CARB collaborate with CPUC and gain its support for the Plan.

## **EXPERTS**

Some commenters encouraged CARB to utilize independent scientific reviews.

## **SUPPORT FOR THE PLAN**

Support for the Plan's proposed scenario was expressed, noting that it represents an economically and technologically feasible route to carbon neutrality, while providing a feasible timeline to develop the technology and infrastructure needed to achieve these ambitious goals.

Appreciation was expressed for the immense effort that went into developing the Plan, recognizing it was a monumental undertaking.