

Proposed New Member for the California Air Resources Board's Research Screening Committee

September 24, 2026

Summary

The Research Screening Committee (RSC) provides robust scientific peer review for CARB's research projects. The Committee can have up to eleven members to guide the wide range of topics relevant to CARB programs. CARB staff have proposed Dr. Antonio Bento of the University of Southern California and Dr. Jonathan Wang of the University of Utah for the Board to consider for appointment to the Research Screening Committee. CARB solicited nominations and applications for new RSC members through a public process. The proposed new members were selected through a screening and interview process. They have demonstrated experience and expertise in economics, agriculture, fire science, and climate change.

Background

As required by State law (Health and Safety Code Section 39700), CARB sponsors a research program guided by the mission to provide sound and timely scientific results to support CARB's policies and programs. CARB's research program was established by the Legislature in 1971 and has formed the basis of CARB's programs since its inception. The research program's goals of informing health-based air quality standards, reducing air pollution exposures, and protecting California from the potential impacts of climate change have been met through a diverse portfolio of projects.

State law also requires that CARB establish the Research Screening Committee (RSC) to review proposed and completed research projects. The RSC provides robust scientific peer review for CARB's research projects and consists of up to eleven members encompassing physicians, scientists, biologists, chemists, engineers, meteorologists, and other subject matter experts who have the knowledge necessary to effectively advise on CARB's health, environmental justice, air quality, and climate research.

In August 2025, CARB released a public call for nominations and applications to fill positions on the RSC. The nominations and applications were due in October and November of 2025, respectively. CARB identified knowledge gaps and prioritized the following areas of expertise:

- Agriculture

- Air emissions measurement
- Climate science and impacts
- Community-based research
- Economics
- Fire science
- Public health
- Urban planning

Staff reviewed and scored all applications. Applications were evaluated based on the following criteria: qualifications for expertise area(s); statement of interest; relevant experience; and letter(s) of support. The top candidates were interviewed to identify the most qualified to fill the priority areas of expertise. Staff recommend Dr. Antonio Bento for his expertise in economics, and Dr. Jonathan Wang for his expertise in fire science, remote sensing, data science, and forestry. Staff provide brief biographies below. Their expertise will increase the capacity and knowledge base needed to support CARB's research programs.

Professor Antonio Bento, PhD

University of Southern California

Dr. Antonio Bento is a Professor of Public Policy and Economics at the University of Southern California, where he directs the Master of Public Policy program. He is also a Research Associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research and a Research Fellow at the USC Schwarzenegger Institute for State and Global Policy.

His research examines the design, effectiveness, and distributional consequences of environmental, energy, and transportation policies. His work addresses clean-air regulation, vehicle fuel-economy and emissions standards, environmental taxation, congestion pricing, climate adaptation, and electricity and carbon markets. His research has appeared in *Science*, *Nature Sustainability*, *Nature Communications*, *the American Economic Review*, *the American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, *the Journal of Political Economy: Microeconomics*, *the Review of Economics and Statistics*, and major economics journals. He contributed to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fifth Assessment Report, the NY state climate change action plan, and has testified before the U.S. House of Representatives on federal vehicle emissions standards.

Dr. Bento received his undergraduate degree from the Nova School of Business and Economics in Portugal and his Ph.D. in Agricultural and Resource Economics, jointly with Economics, from the University of Maryland.



Assistant Professor Jonathan Wang, PhD

University of Utah

Dr. Jonathan Wang is an Earth system scientist with expertise in remote sensing, terrestrial ecology, and the carbon cycle. He is an Assistant Professor in the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Utah, where he leads a research group focused on understanding ecosystem dynamics and the carbon cycle. He received his undergraduate degree in biology and geology from Brown University and his PhD in Earth and Environment from Boston University.

Dr. Wang's research uses satellite remote sensing and time series analysis to develop and analyze time series data products that map ecosystem dynamics across large spatial scales, with a particular focus on climate-sensitive biomes such as Arctic and boreal regions and drylands. His work examines shifts in plant communities, wildfire and drought disturbance, aboveground biomass, and carbon fluxes at fine spatial resolutions. His tools include high-performance computing, machine learning, and drone technology. Dr. Wang brings both a deep appreciation for the natural world and a commitment to science that informs climate solutions.

