



## CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Governor Newsom Announces Moratorium on New Steam-Injected Oil Wells**

*CalGEM Efforts to Strengthen Health and Safety Protections Near Oil and Gas Facilities*

**Sacramento, CA | November 19, 2019** — Today the Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM, formerly the Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources) announced [a series of oil and gas initiatives that will safeguard public health and safety](#).

**The California Environmental Justice Alliance issued the following statement:**

Governor Newsom's announcement demonstrates an unprecedented willingness to protect the public's health and safety from the dangers of the fossil fuel industry. Previous administrations, while active on climate policies, neglected to meaningfully regulate the oil and gas industry, allowing it to operate at a grave cost to public health, the environment, and our climate. The actions outlined by the State set an important foundation to correct-course to protect people and phase out destructive fossil fuels.

Environmental justice communities are living with the devastating health impacts of oil and gas production daily. We were pleased to see the administration's commitment to address these impacts when Secretary Wade Crowfoot, Secretary Jared Blumenfeld, and other key officials visited with frontline communities in Kern County and Los Angeles this summer to learn firsthand about the impacts of oil operations in close proximity to homes and schools. We have never been more hopeful that California will heed the calls of science and environmental justice communities to address the issues posed by oil and gas extraction in our state - we cannot call ourselves a climate leader until we confront this complex, but critical issue.

The threats from climate change are monumental and the impacts have already had devastating consequences in our state and throughout the world. Low-income communities and communities of color often experience climate crisis impacts first and worst, and have the least resources to protect themselves. The need to act boldly has never been more urgent. We hope that the Administration continues to work with frontline communities to act as quickly as possible to create transformative solutions commensurate with these crises. We must plan a holistic and community-led just transition for workers and communities heavily connected to fossil fuel industries.

"Today, Governor Newsom and his administration ushered a new day in California where the source of the climate emergency and fossil fuel public health crisis are finally being addressed. We hope that these initial strong actions result in strong, durable measures that provide overdue relief to frontline communities, which have long fought to protect their families from the unconscionable health and safety

burdens of oil operations next to their homes and schools. We look forward to working with the administration to meaningfully protect communities from these harms and further catalyze our state toward a prosperous and safe fossil-free California.”

— **Gladys Limón, Executive Director, California Environmental Justice Alliance**

“Governor Newsom’s announcement is a great victory for residents in Kern County communities who have fought for community protections from toxic oil extraction methods. We stand firm in our stance that to adequately protect communities, the state must implement a no less than 2,500 foot buffer zone between homes, hospitals and schools from oil and gas drilling. Governor Newsom and his administration have a responsibility to protect residents and our climate from this life-threatening pollution. Governor Newsom paid an important first installment on the debt owed to Californians living with this industry today.”

— **Juan Flores, Community Organizer, Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment**

“We look forward to working with the administration in creating meaningful health-protective measures in communities most impacted by drilling activities.”

— **Bahram Fazeli, Policy Director at Communities for a Better Environment**

“This announcement we hope is the first step in our transition away from fossil fuel extraction and we look forward to working with the state of California to chart a course to a healthy and just economy that puts the health of communities and workers first.”

— **Martha Dina Arguello, Executive Director, Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles and Co-Chair of the STAND-LA Coalition**

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[California Environmental Justice Alliance](http://www.caleja.org) 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.  
[www.caleja.org](http://www.caleja.org)