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California leads the nation with 3,200 ft oil and gas safety buffer zones policy, ban on captured carbon for enhanced oil recovery

Advocates praise climate investments and setbacks bill headed to Governor's desk while calling out dangerous reliance on carbon capture usage and storage

Sept 2, 2022 - This week, the California legislature concluded midnight votes on the last bills in the 2022 legislative session.

Raquel Mason, Policy Manager of the California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA), released the following statement in response to the climate provisions passed by state legislators:

“This week, CEJA and our member organizations celebrate. From the oilfields across Kern County to the neighborhood wells in Los Angeles, organizers and residents have fought for decades for the health and safety buffer zones as outlined in the landmark legislation, SB 1137 (Gonzalez, Limon). Together, we take a collective sigh of relief knowing their work will result in cleaner air safer neighborhoods for the millions of working class Californians living near oil and gas drilling.

Communities across California will benefit from key climate legislation, including a ban on captured carbon for enhanced oil recovery (SB 1314 (Limon)), the creation of California's very first community solar and storage program (AB 2316 (Ward)), and new resources for low-income water ratepayers (SB 222 (DodD)). The final budget strengthens important environmental justice programs, including community resilience centers and healthy and resilient homes, to put us on a path toward achieving safe indoor temperatures. These investments come as California enters its third consecutive year of extreme heat waves and electricity flex alerts, and will bring life-saving benefits and relief to those most vulnerable.

However, this session was not without its disappointments. Carbon capture, usage and storage is a costly, ineffective, and polluting scheme that should have no place in California's climate toolbox. Continued reliance on polluting factory farm gas, and harmful nuclear energy at Diablo Canyon will continue to endanger frontline residents. Carbon offsets and market mechanisms continue a legacy of environmental racism.

As we celebrate the monumental achievement of setbacks on oil and gas extraction, we urge lawmakers and the Governor to take the next step and commit to a managed and just transition off of fossil fuels. Too much is at stake, and our communities deserve better.”