



Cal/EPA's 20 Years of Environmental Excellence

Top accomplishments from its five boards, departments and offices

Office of the Secretary

- **Green Chemistry Initiative (GCI):** Launched the Green Chemistry Initiative in 2007 to reduce the toxins in everyday consumer products. The GCI seeks to reduce or eliminate chemicals during the manufacturing, use and/or disposal of a product to seek safer alternatives. SB 509 and AB 1879 were subsequently passed in 2008 giving DTSC and OEHHA authority to implement two of its key provisions.
- **Education and the Environment Initiative (EEI):** Successfully developed the EEI curriculum with a unique partnership between the State Board of Education, Cal/EPA, Natural Resources Agency and Heal the Bay to deliver 85 units of the nation's first environment based curriculum free to California's K-12 grades.
- **AB 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006:** Successfully negotiated the passage of California's landmark greenhouse gas reduction law which includes a host of various GHG reducing measures as well as a cap-and-trade program.
- **Governor's Environmental and Economic Leadership Awards (GEELA):** In 1993, launched the first GEELA awards program to recognize California businesses for their entrepreneurial leadership in protecting both our environment and enhancing our economy.
- **Tribal Policy:** In 2009, Cal/EPA adopted California's first Tribal Policy to better communicate with California's Tribes on common environmental issues.
- **Environmental Justice:** In 2004, Cal/EPA adopted California's first environmental justice interagency strategy which lays out a mission, vision and core values for environmental regulatory state boards, departments and offices. Subsequently, Cal/EPA adopted California's first environmental justice action plan for action-oriented EJ priorities to protect vulnerable populations from environmental impacts.
- **Enforcement Initiative:** Adopted the Enforcement Initiative in 2004 to begin to track environmental complaints, standardize environmental laws and consequences, standardize data amongst the various local and state enforcement agencies, provide training for enforcement and legal staff, and have awarded millions of dollars in grants for environmental projects.
- **The Unified Hazardous Materials Regulatory Program:** The program, created in 1994, effectively consolidated and streamlined the efforts of more than 1,000 regulatory bodies to 121 coordinated state and local agencies. The program has consolidated inspections, standardized enforcement and created an electronic permitting system. This system also allows public access to information on how hazardous materials are handled throughout the state creating a much more transparent government.

Air Resources Board

- **Cleaner Fuels:** Adopted the nation's first Low Carbon Fuel Standard to reduce the carbon intensity of fuels by 10% which is spurring energy diversity, lower costs and less dependence on foreign oil.
- **Diesel Exhaust:** For more than a decade ARB has steadily – and successfully – worked to clean up toxic diesel exhaust emissions with the goal of an 85 percent reduction by 2020. A combination of regulations and financial incentives have driven down diesel emissions from trucks, buses, construction and port equipment, generators and marine engines.
- **Cleaner Cars:** Fought the auto industry and the federal government for California's right to implement clean car standards, which then became the national standard. Thirteen other states followed in California's footsteps to implement clean car standards, which helped push for the national standard.
- **Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Began implementing AB 32, California's first-in-the-nation law to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020, and an 80 percent reduction over 1990 levels by 2050. Subsequently adopted its cap-and-trade regulation in 2010 for a market based approach to reducing emissions

- **Goods Movement:** ARB has worked closely with California's major ports, local air districts, railroads and trucking associations to bring cleaner air to communities near goods movement corridors through a variety of regulations, incentive funds, agreements and coalition support,

Department of Pesticide Regulation

- **Completing Pesticide Data Collection:** By 2000, DPR had completed collection of required health effects data on a priority list of 200 pesticides of highest health concern. The mandate to collect data came with the 1984 passage of the Birth Defect Prevention act. DPR has also completed risk assessments and risk reduction measures for the highest-risk chemicals.
- **Advancing Reduced-Risk Pest Management:** The Pest Management Alliance and an associated grants program, established in 1997, has provided more than \$9 million in funding for projects that increase implementation and adoption of proven, effective integrated pest management (IPM) practices that reduce pesticide risks to human health and the environment.
- **Reducing Pesticide Emissions:** California was the first state in the nation to reduce volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions from pesticides. In areas with severe air quality problems, DPR put regulations into place that limit fumigant emissions by reducing the amount applied and requiring low-emission application methods. In 2008 and 2009, the first two years of fumigant controls, pesticide VOC emissions dropped significantly.
- **Making Pesticide Information Accessible:** DPR has increased public access to its unparalleled pesticide databases including those on pesticide use reporting, pesticide illnesses, endangered species protection, surface water monitoring, residue monitoring of fresh produce, Section 18 emergency exemptions from registration, restricted materials, pesticide product lists, and VOC emissions.

Department of Toxic Substances Control

- **Enacted DTSC's Schools Program:** For 11 years, DTSC has worked with school districts and parents to evaluate potential school properties and address contamination if it is found. DTSC's Schools Program has helped ensure environmental safety on more than 1,600 properties, resulting in almost 130,000 classrooms for more than 800,000 students to learn and play in safe environments.
- **Brownfields and Military Sites:** On average, DTSC completes 125 brownfield cleanups each year. Returning contaminated properties to reproductive use helps spur the local economy and create jobs. DTSC is currently investigating, cleaning up or providing technical assistance at Fort Ord, Beale Air Force Base, Treasure Island and Camp Pendleton, resulting in more than 35,000 jobs.
- **Toxic Chemicals in Products:** DTSC is reducing the impacts from toxins in products such as chemicals used in packaging, shopping bags, jewelry, plumbing products, light bulbs and thermostats. DTSC hopes to reduce pollution at the source rather than regulating a material when it becomes a waste.
- **Environmental Justice:** DTSC's Environmental Justice Enforcement Initiative provided a new model for environmental enforcement by bringing together government agencies and EJ communities as partners to address local environmental harms. Bus tours and workshops provide regulators the opportunity to see environmental problems and hear the concerns of residents. In these meetings, DTSC has committed to responding to environmental complaints.

Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment

- **Diesel Exhaust:** OEHHA conducted a health effects assessment on diesel exhaust that air quality regulators use in setting statewide standards and permits for diesel equipment. The health risk assessment describes health effects that range from lung cancer to asthma attacks, enhanced allergy symptoms and light-headedness. OEHHA's assessment found that children and the elderly are more sensitive to the combination of toxic gases and pollution particles that make up diesel exhaust.

- **Environmental Tobacco Smoke:** OEHHA's comprehensive health effects assessment of Exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) found that children shoulder an especially high share of the health effects associated with smoke including sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), increased asthma attacks, infections, low birth weight and impaired lung growth. State regulators are using OEHHA's study to control the health effects of secondhand smoke.
- **Proposition 65:** OEHHA implements the voter-approved Proposition 65 which informs Californians about exposures to substances known to cause cancer, birth defects and other reproductive harm, and protects the State's drinking water sources from these substances. Proposition 65 has resulted in the removal of lead from toys, candy, vitamins, computer components, cosmetics, jewelry, dishes and clothing; removal of mercury from certain medications; removal of toluene from paints and coatings; and reduction of acrylamide, a known carcinogen, from common foods.
- **Public Health Goals (PHG):** OEHHA develops PHGs for contaminants in drinking water that provide scientific guidance when developing enforceable cleanup standards. OEHHA recently proposed PHGs for perchlorate and hexavalent chromium, two contaminants detected in many California drinking water systems. The PHGs consider all potential health effects of these contaminants, including special consideration for effects on children and those with compromised immune systems. The hexavalent chromium public health goal will be the first in the nation for this contaminant and an important step toward development of the nation's first standard for the chemical.
- **Children's Health:** OEHHA pioneered the compilation of research showing that cancer-causing chemicals affect children in different ways than they affect adults. OEHHA also integrates consideration of children's health into its air and water health risk assessments that are used by other agencies. OEHHA created "child-specific reference doses," which are special guidance documents used to determine whether a contaminant at a school site might put kids at risk of cancer or other types of harm.

State Water Resources Control Board

- **Mono Lake Restoration:** In 1994, State Water Board issued Decision 1631, which ended decades of conflict between conservationists and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's diversion of water from four streams that are tributary to Mono Lake. As a result, Mono Lake levels have risen, protecting wildlife and water quality, the fishery in the four streams have improved, and restoration efforts continue.
- **Once-through Cooling Policy Enacted:** In May 2010, the State Water Board adopted its once-through cooling policy for power plants to reduce ocean water intake by 93 percent to protect marine life, recreational and commercial fishing.
- **Cleaning Up Impaired Water Bodies:** During the last decade, the State Water Board has approved total maximum daily load limits to reduce pollutants that continue to impair water quality at Lake Tahoe, along the Klamath River, in the Los Angeles River basin and more. As a result, there has been a significant reduction of pollutants that can hinder aquatic and human benefit of these once pristine locations.
- **Underground Storage Tank Program:** For more than 20 years, the State Water Board has administered a program that assists businesses and property owners in cleaning up contamination from leaking underground storage tanks (UST) that contained petroleum products. During this time, more than \$2.9 billion has been distributed from a designated UST tank cleanup fund to clean-up nearly 6,500 contaminated locations.
- **Funding Public Pollution Prevention and Water Quality Projects:** The State Water Board has a two-decade long history of providing the necessary financing, resources and grants for the construction of publicly-owned facilities such as waste water treatment plants, sewage systems, storm water treatment and collection basins through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF). Some \$250 million is distributed, on average, every year to eligible projects to improve public health and/or water quality.