

Meeting Minutes

California Environmental Policy Council Hearing

August 18, 2026

Call to Order – 2:01 p.m.

- California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) Secretary Yana Garcia calls the meeting of the California Environmental Policy Council (Council) to order. CalEPA Secretary Garcia is Chair of the Council.
- Amanda Mattes calls the roll. 7 Council members are present. The Council consists of:
 - CalEPA Secretary Garcia
 - Director Dr. Karen Morisson of the Department Pesticide Regulation (DPR)
 - Director Katherine Butler of the Department Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)
 - Chair Lauren Sanchez of the State Air Resources Board (CARB)
 - Chair Joaquin Esquivel of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
 - Director Kris Thayer of the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
 - Director Zoe Heller of the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle)
- CalEPA Secretary Garcia provides an orientation for in-room and virtual logistics.
- CalEPA Secretary Garcia provides a background on California Environmental Policy Council and an overview of the multimedia evaluation that the Council will consider.

Presentation of the Multimedia Evaluation – 2:07 p.m.

- The Multimedia Working Group (MMWG) recommends use of Gasoline Containing up to 15 percent Ethanol (E15), based on AB 30 (Alvarez, Chapter 247, Statutes of 2025). The CARB proposed regulation of E15 fuel standards will come to the Board in September.
- Aubrey Gonzalez, CARB. AB 30 allowed sale of E15. The MME is described in Health & Safety Code 4380.8, which requires CARB to establish motor vehicle fuel specifications. The MME must address air pollutants, water and soil contamination, and disposal. The MMWG determines whether the proposed regulation will cause significant impact on public health or the environment. The MMWG makes a recommendation to the CEPC.
- The evaluation follows a three-tier scientific process. Tier 1, identify knowledge gaps. Tier 2, experiments to fill gaps. Tier 3, prepare report for external peer review. The final report goes to the CEPC.
- E15 Multimedia Evaluation. Fuel applicants: Growth Energy and Renewable Fuels Association. Testing of E15 was extensive, on model year 2001 and newer vehicles, comparing E15 to E10.

- CEPC reviews the Multimedia Working Group Report and the CARB proposed regulation.
- E15 can be used in model year 2001 and newer passenger vehicles that use gasoline.
- CARBOB and ethanol are delivered separately to terminals and blended there.
- E15 is approved in all 50 states, available at 4,800 retail stations in 36 states.
- E15 does not pose a significant adverse impact on air quality impacts. Reduces particulate matter, total hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, and ethylbenzene emissions. E15 increases acetaldehyde and ethanol exhaust emissions.
- Tom Anderson, SWRCB. Report on impact on underground storage tanks. The Water Board did not find increased risks to human health and the environment from E15. Approximately 14% of current fueling infrastructure will be limited to existing E10 supplies.
- Rima Wood, OEHHA. Summarized toxicity in Tier 1 Report and exposure in Tier 1 and Tier 2 Reports. OEHHA did not find evidence of significant adverse impacts on human health.
- Mohammed Omer, DTSC. Hazardous Waste and Soil Evaluation. Examined potential routes of hazardous waste generation and cleanup of contaminated sites in case of E15 spills. DTSC did not find increased risks to human health and the environment. In the event of a release, modeling suggests E15 underground benzene plumes may be marginally longer than for E10, but natural attenuation for E15 plumes is faster than for E10. There may be increased methane production in cases of E15 spills due to increased microbial activity.
- Overview of Peer Review. 30 day period: April 29-May 29, 2025. Six peer reviewers in all four areas of expertise. Determined that E15 will not pose a significant adverse impact on public health or the environment compared to E10. Recommended continuing monitoring of acetaldehyde and ethanol emissions through existing programs.
- Proposed E15 regulation. CARB sets fuel specifications, as a voluntary fuel option. Can be sold alongside E10, does not mandate E15. E15 is not available yet, awaiting certified equipment from manufacturers. Specification allows up to 15% ethanol by volume. Adds new exception to the prohibition of downstream blending of ethanol into gasoline.

Opportunity for comments and questions from the Council – 2:41 p.m.

- No questions from Council members.

Public Comment – 2:42 p.m.

- In-person: Neil Koehler, Renewable Fuels Association. Collaborating with CARB since 2018. Significant environmental benefits, including 2.5 MMT reduction per year of CO₂. Significant benefit to reduce price of gasoline.
- No other in-person comments.
- Virtual: One participant mentions there were audio issues for the in-person commenter, and virtual attendees were unable to hear the first part of the comment.

- CalEPA Secretary Garcia responds that a written record of the public comment will be provided.

Closed the Record – 2:46 p.m.

California Environmental Policy Council Deliberation – 2:46 p.m.

- CalEPA Secretary Garcia states that the resolution being considered has been released publicly and provided to each of the Council members. After the review of the multimedia evaluation and the proposed E15 regulation, and based on the best available scientific information, the Council concludes that E15 will not pose a significant adverse impact on public health or the environment compared to California Reformulated Gasoline.
- CalEPA Secretary Garcia invites the Council to deliberate further.
- SWRCB Chair Joaquin Esquivel notes that SWRCB has been involved in the removal of single wall tanks, removing over 99%. SWRCB will continue to work with underground storage tank owners and operators on the 5,000 that are still unable to handle E15.
- CARB Chair Sanchez expresses gratitude for the work this group has done over the years to lead up to these conclusions. She motions to adopt the resolution.
- SWRCB Chair Esquivel seconds the motion.
- CalEPA Secretary Garcia requests that Amanda Mattes calls the roll.
- Amanda Mattes calls on each Council Member to vote:
 - CalEPA Secretary Garcia – Yes
 - CARB Chair Sanchez – Yes
 - SWRCB Chair Esquivel – Yes
 - DTSC Director Butler – Yes
 - CalRecycle Director Heller – Yes
 - DPR Director Dr. Morisson – Yes
 - OEHHA Director Kris Thayer – Yes
- The Council approves the resolution 7-0.
- CalEPA Secretary Garcia announces the resolution is hereby adopted.

Final call for public comments – 2:50 p.m.

- No in-person or virtual comments.

Adjournment - 2:50 p.m.