



News Release

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Cal/EPA Celebrates 20 Years of Environmental Leadership

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Highlighting its long list of achievements and reaffirming its commitment to a green future, the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) – formally established on July 17, 1991 – celebrates its 20th year of environmental leadership this week.

“I am proud of everything that Cal/EPA has accomplished over the years and honored that I was able to be a part of it. California’s leadership on environmental policy goes back decades and we must recognize that we’ve all played a part in making California green,” said Acting Cal/EPA Secretary Linda Adams.

“Cal/EPA has accomplished many wonderful things over its 20 year history and I am proud to be a part of this effort. I look forward to continuing this commitment to environmental excellence throughout my term and adding another chapter in California’s environmental history,” said incoming Cal/EPA Secretary Matt Rodriquez.

The foundation for Cal/EPA was laid decades before the Agency was formally established in 1991. The movement began in 1961 when Governor Edmund G. Brown oversaw a comprehensive reorganization of the Executive branch, which established state agencies and placed most of the state’s environmental quality programs within the Resources Agency. When Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. took office in 1975, one of his first actions was to propose establishing a separate agency dedicated to the environment. While the plan was not adopted by the Legislature, Governor Brown was able to successfully establish a new Cabinet-level position – Secretary of Environmental Affairs – tasked with advising the Governor and broadening environmental protections.

While this Cabinet-level role continued under Governor George Deukmejian, it was not until 1991, when Governor Pete Wilson took office, that Cal/EPA as we now know it was established.

Since then, Cal/EPA has led California in creating and implementing some of the most progressive environmental policies in America, from negotiating the Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32), to launching the Green Chemistry Initiative, implementing Environmental Justice programs, adopting a Tribal Policy, expanding enforcement efforts, and implementing the nation’s first environment-based education curriculum. [Click here for a link to California’s environmental accomplishments.](#)

Today’s Cal/EPA consists of the Air Resources Board (ARB), the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR), the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB).

- ARB has reduced air pollution and diesel exhaust so Californians can breathe cleaner air throughout our state, particularly in our trade corridors.

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- DPR has ensured the safe use of pesticides through registration, permitting and training.
- DTSC has cleaned up hazardous sites to put them back into productive use to reduce blight and contamination to the neighborhoods and surrounding environments.
- SWRCB has ensured that the quality of our water ways is safe and that we balance its use to meet the needs of all Californians.
- OEHHA has served as the scientific basis for all of Cal/EPA's environmental regulations and provided valuable information to consumers, policy makers and manufacturers on the safety of chemicals in our environment.

The California Environmental Protection Agency is charged with developing, implementing and enforcing the state's environmental protection laws that ensure clean air, clean water, clean soil, safe pesticides and waste recycling and reduction. Our departments are at the forefront of environmental science, using cutting-edge research to shape the state's environmental laws. Housed since 2001 in the greenest high rise in the nation, the Cal/EPA building, known for its sustainable building practices, became a model for the nation in the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building standards.

The building is a unique public private partnership between the City of Sacramento and Thomas Properties Group and was built to maximize energy efficiency and sustainable design. It's the first state project to participate in the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Existing Buildings (LEED-EB) Pilot Program. Cal/EPA has been certified at the Platinum Level – the greenest high rise in the nation. Some of its green attributes include: 1) recycled building and construction materials; 2) high efficiency lighting and cooling designs; 3) electric vehicle charging stations in the adjacent parking structure; 4) solar panels; 5) an indoor air quality plan that uses non-toxic and biodegradable cleaning products and an integrated pest management program; 6) reduced water usage through low flow toilets and a water recycling program; and 7) an aggressive building wide recycling and composting program. [Click here for a link to the Cal/EPA building's green attributes.](#)

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