

FLOOR ALERT SB 237 - OPPOSE



September 12, 2025

Senate Bill 237 (Grayson, et al) - As amended on September 10, 2025

Position: OPPOSE

SB 237, a last minute gut-and-amend, is a disappointing large shift from the productive dialogue that environmental justice organizations have had with the Governor and Legislature in recent years. This bill falls woefully short of protecting the Kern communities that will be burdened by the expansion of oil drilling.

The reality is, **more in-state drilling is not a plan to address inevitable refinery closures and guarantees nothing about gas prices**, despite Big Oil claims. California oil fields are mostly depleted, and **additional permits won't increase local annual crude production; they will only deepen racial and climate injustice**.

Major Concerns:

- **Endangers Public Health:** SB 237 would expose Californians to toxic pollution and the dangers of thousands of new oil wells each year. A third of oil and gas facilities near homes, schools, and other sensitive receptors in Kern County have been found to be leaking dangerous oil and gas. These leaks are sometimes allowed to persist for months because of loopholes in leak detection and repair requirements. This bill does nothing to address regulatory loopholes, and these health harms will only increase with the increased drilling.
- **Undermines Protections:** SB 237 reverses decades of progress to protect vulnerable and underserved communities from the harmful effects of oil drilling.
- **Process Breakdown:** A policy shift of this magnitude should not be rushed through in the Legislature's final hours without transparent hearings and thoughtful debate.
- **No Consumer Benefit:** More in-state drilling will not prevent inevitable refinery closures or guarantee lower gas prices. Additional permits will not change the fact that California oil fields are in decline, nearly completely depleted, but will worsen racial and climate injustice.
- **Leaves Refinery Communities Behind:** Despite important legislative findings about the absence of California refinery closure requirements, no actual action on asset retirement obligations (AROs) is being taken.
- **Wrong Direction:** Instead of hoping Big Oil will be appeased with a regulatory giveaway, California should be increasing investments in the path to clean energy and a worker- and community-led transition that safeguards health, climate goals, and affordability.

Rather than yielding to Big Oil's demands, **we ask that you VOTE NO to safeguard public health** and plan for a managed transition to clean energy.

Instead of adopting a last-minute exemption for new oil drilling permits, the Legislature should pursue a **transparent and collaborative process** to develop solutions that both protect our residents and advance the state's climate goals. **We respectfully urge your NO vote on SB 237.**