

PRESS RELEASE

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New analysis shows pace of emissions cuts has accelerated in California in recent years, narrowing the gap to achieve climate targets as showdown with Trump administration looms

Emissions analysis shows California has cut close to a quarter of the state's climate pollution in 16 years, as officials scramble to protect clean air progress

SAN FRANCISCO — California has cut more than 22% of its greenhouse gas emissions since passing its landmark climate law in 2006, while growing its gross domestic product per capita by 38%, according to new data released today. The 16th *California Green Innovation Index* from think tank [Next 10](#) shows that the pace of emissions reductions has accelerated in recent years, with steep drops in key sectors helping to narrow the gap to achieving its 2030 climate targets.

“California’s progress in cutting emissions is accelerating. We’re seeing real-time proof that the state’s climate policies are working,” noted Noel Perry, venture capitalist and founder of Next 10. “As we enter the holiday season, it’s important to remember these cuts are not just numbers on a page; they represent healthier kids and blossoming industries supported by an innovative workforce that has mainstreamed clean energy technologies. Unfortunately, it also underscores what’s at stake under a federal administration hostile to clean air standards and climate action.”

The report highlights that some of the state’s greatest success has been seen in sectors potentially at risk under Trump, particularly the transportation sector. Overall transportation emissions fell by 13.5% from 2019 to 2022. Emissions from heavy-duty vehicles, which are a significant contributor to California’s air pollution, fell more than 13% in just one year between 2021 and 2022. Pollution from passenger vehicles also plummeted in recent years, falling 14% from 2019 to 2022 as zero-emission vehicle sales soared due to rising public demand and state air quality standards. The state hit its goal to have 1.5 million zero-emission vehicles on the road by 2025 two years early, in 2023.

“The data show that the state’s standards, programs, and incentives are working to drive down pollution and increase electric vehicle adoption,” noted Perry. “But these same standards are at risk if the Biden administration does not release California’s Clean Air Act waivers before Trump takes office, or if the administration seeks to roll them back via other means in coming months.”

Federal waivers allow California to implement stronger-than-federal tailpipe pollution standards, standards which are then adopted by other states with air pollution problems.

While previous editions of the *California Green Innovation Index* have highlighted a growing gap between California's pace of emissions reductions and its climate targets, this 2024 report finds that gap has narrowed considerably in recent years. Between 2018 and 2022 emissions decreased by an average of 2.5% each year, despite fluctuations due to the pandemic. At the current pace, the state is seven years off its goal of cutting emissions 40% below 1990 levels by 2030. While California will need to almost double the rate of emissions reduction to meet that goal, this represents a smaller gap than existed in years previous.

“The trends are definitely improving and the state’s climate pollution target is now within reach,” said report author and principal of CEC Economics, Hoyu Chong. “However, it is critical that we meet our greenhouse gas emissions targets on time.”

Looking more generally at California’s performance in cutting emissions since the passage of AB 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act in 2006, the state has slashed emissions from every sector except commercial (in which emissions increased by 43%). The state cut 68% of imported electricity emissions, 24% of transportation pollution, and 18% of industrial emissions in 2022 compared to 2006. In the same period, California’s carbon intensity – the amount of carbon dioxide emitted per unit of economic output – declined at a pace of about 3.3% per year.

The report contains the following topline statistics and information:

ELECTRIC POWER

- In total (combining imports and in-state generation), power sector emissions fell by 43% from 2006 to 2022.
- New power plant additions in the state have been 100% renewable since 2021.
- Emissions in the electric power sector fell more than 4% from 2021 to 2022. In comparison, total emissions for this sector fell by less than 1% from 2019 to 2022. The reductions from 2019 to 2022 came mostly from imports, where emissions fell by 19.2% compared to an increase of 9.5% from in-state-generated power.

TRANSPORTATION

- Pollution reductions from heavy-duty vehicles fell more than 13% between 2021 and 2022. Total emissions for light-duty vehicles fell almost 12% and passenger car emissions fell 14% from 2019 to 2022.
- The percentage of on-road registered vehicles that are zero-emission broke 5% in 2023, almost doubling its share from 2021.
- California reached the 2025 goal of 1.5 million zero-emission vehicles on-road two years early in 2023.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

- Renewable energy is the fastest-growing fuel source for electric and non-electric energy consumption, growing by 36.1% and 119.6%, respectively, between 2012 and 2022.
- From 2022 to 2023, energy storage capacity grew by 23% in California and 117% in the rest of the U.S. In 2023, California accounted for 44% of energy storage additions nationwide.
- In 2023, total renewable energy generation in the power mix was 36.9%, up 1.1% compared to 2022. This is short of the interim SB 100 goal of hitting 44% by the end of 2024.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- Electricity rates have increased in California, and the state's long-held advantage of having lower residential electricity bills overall has disappeared. But thanks to the state's energy efficiency investments, residential electricity bills are still in line with the national average, coming in about 2% higher than the U.S. average in 2022.
- In 2022, the average monthly bill for industrial customers in California was 32.1% lower than the U.S. average—even though the cost per kilowatt-hour was more than double the national average.
- Natural gas non-electricity consumption fell by 4.7% between 2021 to 2022.
- In owner-occupied housing, solar and other fuels had the greatest percentage growth from 2021 to 2022, at +8.4% and +18.6% respectively.

OTHER SECTORS — FROM 2019 to 2022

- Industrial emissions were down 9.1%.
- Recycling and waste emissions fell 1.2%.
- Agriculture emissions were down 4.4%.
- Commercial sector emissions rose 1.6%.
- Residential sector emissions fell 1.1%.

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About Next 10

Next 10 is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that educates, engages and empowers Californians to improve the state's future. With a focus on the intersection of the economy, the environment, and quality of life, Next 10 employs research from leading experts on complex state issues and creates a portfolio of nonpartisan educational materials to foster a deeper understanding of the critical issues affecting our state.