

## Newsom to be sued over fracking permits

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### Body

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Oct 21, 2020( CalMatters: <https://calmatters.org> Delivered by Newstex) ;;; Good morning, California. It's Wednesday, October 21. Emissions rise slightlyNewsom announces an executive order on Sept. 23, 2020, at Cal Expo in Sacramento. Photo by Daniel Kim, The Sacramento Bee via AP/Pool A national environmental organization is preparing to sue Gov.

Gavin Newsom's administration for issuing new fracking permits, including six approved on Friday[1], Kassie Siegel, director of the Center for Biological Diversity's Climate Law Institute, told me Tuesday. The news comes a day after Newsom delivered the keynote speech at a major event[2] devoted to California clean energy policy and less than a month after he tasked the state Legislature with halting new fracking permits by 2024[3]. Siegel told me: 'By passing the buck to the Legislature and continuing to fast-track more fracking and drilling, Newsom is fanning the flames of the climate emergency.' Siegel said the permits are 'illegal' and fail to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act. The Center for Biological Diversity warned Newsom on Sept. 21[4] of their intent to sue if his administration continued to issue fracking permits. Don Drysdale, a spokesperson for the California Department of Conservation, told me the permits were approved Friday following independent scientific review[5] to ensure they met public health, safety and environmental standards. He added that the Newsom administration has approved 54 fracking permits this year and denied six. Drysdale told me: 'For the remaining time that hydraulic fracturing is expressly permitted under state law, (California's) process for reviewing permits continues to be the strongest in the country.' The impending lawsuit highlights the complexities facing the governor as he attempts to fast-track the state's transition to clean energy — i.e. his ban on selling new gas-powered cars starting in 2035[6] — while ensuring Californians' energy needs are met in the meantime. That anxiety was revived this summer after the state's first rolling blackouts in nearly two decades[7], which an investigation[8] found was largely due to agencies' poor planning. As a result, the state decided to keep four controversial gas-powered plants running past a 2020 deadline set a decade ago[9]. That decision likely won't help California reach its goal of 100% clean energy by 2045. According to data released Monday by the state's Air Resources Board[10], California's greenhouse gas emissions rose slightly in 2018 for the first time in six years.\_\_\_\_\_The coronavirus bottom line:As of 9 p.m. Tuesday night, California had874,077 confirmed coronavirus casesand16,992 deathsfrom the virus, according toaCalMatters tracker[11].Also:CalMatters regularly updates this pandemic timeline tracking thestate's daily actions[12]. And we'retracking the state's coronavirus hospitalizations by county[13].Need another reason to vote early? As Ben Christopher writes[14], it might be the surest way to avoid 'all kinds of bull\*\*\*\*' after the election.Advertisement<https://mattressrecyclingcouncil.org/programs/california/> Other stories you should know 1. Report sheds light on human trafficking in CA Image via iStock The thousands of Californians forced every year into various forms of human trafficking are disproportionately young, female and Black, according to a new report from the Little Hoover Commission[15], an independent state oversight agency. The statistics paint a deeply disturbing

picture that remains incomplete, as the report only includes data from those who sought state help to recover from sex trafficking, labor trafficking or both. The report found: More than 14,000 Californians received state help from 2016 to 2019 to recover from human trafficking. Of those, 78% were trafficked for sex and 22% for forced labor. 26% were under the age of 18. 86% were female. 33% were Black, although African Americans make up only 5.5% of the state population. Labor trafficking appears to be concentrated in the Central Valley. Although Fresno County is home to 2.6% of California's residents, 21% of labor trafficking survivors were served by a provider based there. To strengthen the state's response to human trafficking, the commission recommends creating a California Anti-Trafficking Council, evaluating programs provided to survivors and empowering additional state agencies to investigate labor trafficking crimes. Commission Chair Pedro Nava[16]: 'It is unacceptable that perpetrators of this despicable crime are too often not held accountable. Our recommendations will transform California's ability to bring these evildoers to justice and ensure that survivors receive the care they need.'

2. PG&E back in hot water The sun peeks through a PG&E transmission line on Nov. 12, 2018, near Pulga. Photo by Karl Mondon, Bay Area News Group PG&E appears to have taken a few steps backward when it comes to vegetation management policies, according to a new report from court-appointed investigator Mark Filip[17]. Though the utility made progress in 2019 on cutting down dangerous trees that could slam into power lines and spark major wildfires, 'that improvement appears to have, at best, plateaued, and perhaps actual regression has occurred,' Filip wrote. He also wrote that PG&E appears to be prioritizing rigorous inspections in low-risk areas rather than high-risk areas. The news comes as the beleaguered utility, whose equipment was recently seized[18] in an investigation into the cause of the deadly Zogg Fire, said it would likely shut off power tonight for 54,000 customers in portions of 19 counties[19] to mitigate fire risk amid dry, powerful winds.

3. Union keeps taking industry fights to ballot Kaiser Oakland Medical Center employees lead a march during a statewide Labor Day protest organized by SEIU-UHW on Sept. 2, 2019. Photo by Dylan Bouscher, Bay Area News Group Ballot measures — or threats of ballot measures — have increasingly become a way for interest groups to gain leverage in the Capitol, CalMatters' Laurel Rosenhall reports[20]. Dave Regan, president of the Service Employees International Union-United Healthcare Workers West, has capitalized on the strategy, taking many of the union's battles against the health care industry to the ballot — including this year's Prop. 23, which would add new regulations to kidney dialysis clinics[21]. All told, the union has spent at least \$43 million on California ballot campaigns — and hasn't won any. But Regan told Laurel[22] that he's seen success in other forms. In 2016, the union floated an initiative to raise the state minimum wage, but withdrew it after then-Gov. Jerry Brown agreed to sign a similar increase into law. Regan: Brown 'just saw the writing on the wall and reversed his course. I don't think there's any question whatsoever that it was the concrete, direct result of what we did.'

4. Theme park guidelines spark pushback Six Flags Magic Mountain. Image via iStock California released theme park reopening guidelines[23] Tuesday, but its long-running saga with Disneyland[24] and other major amusement parks appears to be far from over. Under the new guidance, smaller theme parks can reopen at 25% capacity or 500 people — whichever is fewer — once their county has entered the orange reopening tier, and tickets must be limited to people living within the county. All amusement parks can reopen at limited capacity once their county is in the yellow, or least restrictive, reopening tier. The state released similar reopening guidelines for outdoor stadiums[25]. Disneyland Resort President Ken Potrock[26]: 'These state guidelines will keep us shuttered for the foreseeable future, forcing thousands more people out of work, leading to the inevitable closure of small family-owned businesses, and irreparably devastating the Anaheim/Southern California community.' Santa Clara County Executive Jeff Smith: 'Putting an audience in a stadium is just asking for trouble. It's like a petri dish right now is not the time to be relaxing regulations.' As the state hammers out reopening plans for certain sectors of the economy, pressure is increasing on Newsom and other state leaders[27] to focus on reopening schools instead.

Advertisement <https://www.chcf.org/collection/modernizing-payment-californias-community-health-centers> Upcoming events TODAY, 5-6:30pm: Rebuilding and Resiliency: How We Need to Handle Wildfires From Now On[28]. In this two-part virtual event, CalMatters examines California wildfires through the lens of Rebuilding Paradise, a new documentary from Academy Award-winning director Ron Howard. Register[29] Submit Your Questions[30] CalMatters columnist Dan Walters[31]: California has a stubbornly high unemployment rate, and the state's slow handling of benefit claims is increasing the pain of jobless workers. Websites riddled with fake reviews: California's consumer protection agencies have done nothing to prevent companies from deceiving residents with fake reviews, writes Kathryn Dean of the Alliance to Counter Crime Online[32]. State must help Salton Sea: We continue to see no action or purposeful decisionmaking to prioritize the needs and public health of Salton Sea communities, argue community advocates Sandra Ramirez of Coachella and Christian Mendez of Desert Shores[33]. Other things worth your time California attorney general takes GOP ballot

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box fight to court. // CalMatters[34]San Quentin must release or transfer half of its prisoners because of lack of COVID care, appeals court rules. // San Francisco Chronicle[35]Some California hospitals refused COVID-19 transfers for financial reasons, state emails show. // Wall Street Journal[36]California schools see big jump in number of homeless students. // EdSource[37]Hundreds seek payouts in lawsuit over Caltrans homeless camp sweeps. // East Bay Times[38]How Californians are employing mutual aid to help with pandemic relief. // CalMatters[39]Black Lives Matter sues Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey over gun-waving incident. // Los Angeles Times[40]Rep. Devin Nunes mailed his book about socialism to California voters. Do they want it? // Fresno Bee[41]See you tomorrow.Tips, insight or feedback? Email Emily@calmatters.org [42].; Follow me on Twitter: @emily\_hoeven[43]Subscribe to CalMatters newsletters here[44]. Follow CalMatters on Facebook[45] and Twitter[46]. CalMatters is now available in Spanish on Twitter[47], Facebook[48] and RSS[49]. [ 1]: <https://filerequest.conservation.ca.gov/?q=Aera-%E2%80%8BBelridge-Approved-Permits-October-16-2020> [ 2]: <https://symposium.meetatepic.com/> [ 3]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/09/newsoms-gas-carban-dependent-on-next-president/> [ 4]: [https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/climate\\_law\\_institute/energy\\_and\\_global\\_warming/pdfs/20-09-21-Ltr-to-Gov-Newsom-Re-Illegal-Permitting.pdf](https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/programs/climate_law_institute/energy_and_global_warming/pdfs/20-09-21-Ltr-to-Gov-Newsom-Re-Illegal-Permitting.pdf) [ 5]: <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/Pages/Well-Stim-National-Lab-Scientific-Review.aspx> [ 6]: <https://calmatters.org/environment/2020/09/california-ban-gasoline-powered-cars-in-2035/> [ 7]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/08/california-pge-blackouts-lightning-fire-tornado/> [ 8]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/10/why-california-rolling-blackouts/> [ 9]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/08/california-fires-reopening-evictions-covid-gavin-newsom/> [ 10]: [https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/cc/inventory/data/tables/ghg\\_inventory\\_scopingplan\\_sum\\_2000-18.pdf](https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/cc/inventory/data/tables/ghg_inventory_scopingplan_sum_2000-18.pdf) [ 11]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/03/california-coronavirus-by-the-numbers-cases-testing-masks-hospital-beds/> [ 12]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/04/gavin-newsom-coronavirus-updates-timeline/> [ 13]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/04/california-coronavirus-covid-patient-hospitalization-data-icu/> [ 14]: <https://calmatters.org/politics/post-it/2020/10/california-ballots-counted-first/> [ 15]: <https://lhc.ca.gov/sites/lhc.ca.gov/files/Reports/252/Report252.pdf> [ 16]: <https://lhc.ca.gov/report/labor-trafficking-strategies-help-victims-and-bring-traffickers-justice> [ 17]: <https://www.sacbee.com/news/california/fires/article246594858.html> [ 18]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/10/pge-zogg-fire-investigation/> [ 19]: <http://investor.pgecorp.com/news-events/press-releases/press-release-details/2020/Forecasted-High-Wind-Event-Means-PGE-Might-Need-to-Proactively-Turn-Off-Power-for-Safety-for-About-54000-Customers-in-Portions-of-19-Counties-and-Two-Tribal-Communities-on-Wednesday/default.aspx> [ 20]: <https://calmatters.org/politics/california-election-2020/2020/10/california-healthcare-union-proposition-23/> [ 21]: <https://calmatters.org/health/2020/10/should-dialysis-rules-up-to-voters/> [ 22]: <https://calmatters.org/politics/california-election-2020/2020/10/california-healthcare-union-proposition-23/> [ 23]: <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-amusement-theme-parks--en.pdf> [ 24]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/10/california-more-fire-danger-ahead/> [ 25]: <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-outdoor-live-professional-sports--en.pdf> [ 26]: <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2020-10-20/disneyland-california-theme-parks-reopen-guidelines> [ 27]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/10/california-prop-15-prop-20-prop-16/> [ 28]: <https://calmatters.org/events/2020/10/rebuilding-and-resiliency-how-we-need-to-handle-wildfires-from-now-on/> [ 29]: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rebuilding-and-resiliency-how-we-need-to-handle-wildfires-from-now-on-tickets-124614424097> [ 30]: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScKG7pHNnRqpAunghWThjApu6W\\_k-0H2ldKew-M2mZz0P11FQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScKG7pHNnRqpAunghWThjApu6W_k-0H2ldKew-M2mZz0P11FQ/viewform) [ 31]: <https://calmatters.org/commentary/2020/10/california-unemployment-rate-slow-benefits/> [ 32]: <https://calmatters.org/commentary/my-turn/2020/10/fake-online-review-fraud-california-agencies-are-not-protecting-consumers/> [ 33]: <https://calmatters.org/commentary/my-turn/2020/10/eastern-coachella-valley-residents-urge-the-state-for-action-on-the-salton-sea/> [ 34]: <https://calmatters.org/politics/california-election-2020/2020/10/becerra-gop-ballot-box-fight-california-court/> [ 35]: <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/San-Quentin-must-release-or-transfer-half-its-15662794.php> [ 36]: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/some-california-hospitals-refused-covid-19-transfers-for-financial-reasons-state-emails-show-11603108814> [ 37]: <https://edsource.org/2020/california-schools-see-big-jump-in-number-of-homeless-students/641752> [ 38]: <https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2020/10/20/hundreds-seek-payouts-in-lawsuit-over-caltrans-homeless-camp-sweeps/> [ 39]: <https://calmatters.org/california-divide/2020/10/california-mutual-aid-networks-pandemic-relief/> [ 40]: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-10-20/black-lives-matter-sues-jackie-laceys-husband-over-gun>

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