# **Huge turnout expected for Kern supervisors oil meeting with state regulators**

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**Body**

Jan. 10-- Jan. 10--***Kern*** County's ***oil*** industry is expected to put forward a strong showing at a meeting between industry representatives, state officials and the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday.

Hundreds connected to the ***oil*** industry are expected to attend the meeting, which will offer a unique chance for dialogue between ***oil*** leaders, local government officials, and state department heads whose jobs could include the managed decline of ***Kern*** County's leading industry.

"It's off the charts. I've never seen a response like this. It's nonstop. We're deluged with people wanting to speak, wanting to attend, wanting details," said ***Kern*** Citizens for Energy Director Tracy Leach, who has helped organize the turnout. "It seems like there is a line being drawn in the sand and we are going to do our best to push back on the extreme measures that are being taken up by the governor in Sacramento."

Scheduled in response to a referral from supervisors, Tuesday's meeting is meant to give the ***oil*** industry a chance to directly address supervisors on their views on the state's plan to more strictly regulate production in California.

The state also will be involved, with the California Department of Conservation's David Shabazian, the department director, and Uduak-Joe Ntuk, the ***oil*** and gas supervisor, in attendance to offer their own views. Environmental activists are expected to speak during public comments, meaning all major players in the future of the state's ***oil*** production will be in one room Tuesday.

The meeting could offer a glimpse into the future of ***oil*** in California, and it might influence future decisions on all levels of government.

"There are decisions that are being made that have real consequences, and really have disproportionate impacts for our government and the people that live here," said County Administrative Officer Ryan Alsop. "We're concerned that those decisions are being made without a lot of thought being given to that."

Supervisor Zack Scrivner, who initiated the meeting, said ***Kern*** County could send a clear message to the state about where it stood on the ***oil*** question.

"The environmental extremists have had the governor's ear, having multiple meetings with the governor and his staff regarding our ***oil*** industry, while officials from the County of ***Kern*** and representatives from the industry have been excluded," he wrote in an email. "The Board of Supervisors meeting next week is our opportunity to send a loud and clear message to the governor and the bureaucrats who work for him that ***Kern*** County is united in our opposition to his hypocritical and misguided attack on our jobs and economy."

With 40,480 active wells, ***Kern*** County produces 80 percent of the state's ***oil*** and 46 percent of its gas, according to a 2019 study summarized by the county in its meeting agenda. The industry directly or indirectly supports 23,900 jobs in the county, and supplies $925 million in state and local taxes, the report says.

Yet the state has already begun implementing stricter regulations in the hope of becoming carbon neutral by 2045. The state halted approvals for high-pressure steaming wells and said it would review pending applications for hydraulic fracturing and other well stimulation practices.

With the state's plan for the future of ***oil*** uncertain, Tuesday's meeting could provide insight into how the county will be forced to change in the next few decades.

"What makes this public hearing particularly important are the representatives from Governor Newsom's administration who will be present in person, listening directly to all the comments and giving the Board a face-to-face discussion of their plans for CalGEM and carbon management," ***Kern*** County Planning and Natural Resources Director Lorelei Oviatt said in an email to The Californian. CalGEM refers to the state Geologic Energy Management Division, formerly known as the Division of ***Oil***, Gas and Geothermal Resources, or DOGGR.

She added that the meeting would also provide county officials an opportunity to educate the public on the local regulations enacted by supervisors in 2015.

When supervisors requested the meeting, they indicated it would just be the first step in the county's response to the state's new regulations. In the future, supervisors said, they could declare an economic crisis if the threat was considered dire enough to warrant such an action.

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