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For immediate release:

EJ groups supported by California Legislature on ask for no Carbon Capture for Enhanced Oil Recovery

Sacramento, Ca.—In a historic 47-23 vote, the California Assembly passed Senator Monique Limón's bill (Senate Bill 1314) to prohibit the use of captured carbon in enhanced oil recovery operations, sending the bill to the governor's desk. Carbon capture, use, and storage (CCUS) is a process that involves capturing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions and pumping it underground. More than 80% of the CO₂ recovered with current CCUS projects is being used by oil companies to pump more oil out of the ground with enhanced oil recovery (EOR), a practice that quadruples net emissions and increases risk for oil spills and water contamination in nearby communities¹.

Environmental justice groups have urged decision makers to properly evaluate the potential impacts of CCUS and for [common sense protections](#) to be put in place, starting with no EOR. If signed by Governor Newsom, SB 1314 would restrict CCUS from becoming another tool to further the extractive legacy of the fossil fuel industry responsible for disproportionate harm to our frontline communities under the guise of climate policy. By separating the EOR practice from CCUS, this bill aims to disincentivize projects that do not align with our state's climate goals.

"While we look into solutions to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, we must ensure that those solutions don't cause more damage or deepen our reliance on fossil fuels," said Senator Limón. "This bill sets an appropriate guardrail to prevent using carbon capture to increase oil production, ensuring we responsibly pursue our climate goals. I am grateful for the support of my colleagues and feel hopeful the Governor will sign this timely bill."

"We thank Senator Limón for her leadership on SB 1314 and for continuing to fight for frontline communities. Legislators have held the line in the face of massive oil and gas opposition and

¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160412082901039?via%3Dihub>.

showed that enhanced oil recovery should never be marketed as climate policy. Climate policy must be focused on direct emissions reductions, not drastically increasing carbon emissions by building a new vicious cycle to expand oil and gas extraction. This is a win for climate, a win for frontline communities, and a win for environmental justice.” said Dan Ress, staff attorney with the Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment.

“We are grateful for the legislature’s powerful vote of confidence in SB 1314. Banning enhanced oil recovery will keep a dangerous tool out of Big Oil’s toolbox. True climate action is possible and we look forward to working with legislative leaders, the Governor, and CARB Board members to protect the health of frontline communities and our climate future.” said Raquel Mason, California Environmental Justice Alliance Policy Manager.

The San Joaquin Valley, one of the state’s most polluted air basins, has continued to be ground zero for extractive operations and an apparent example of environmental racism. Despite not meeting federal protective health standards for criteria pollutants and a continued failure to regulate existing polluters, our region has been identified as the most promising geological hub for CCUS projects². Currently, dozens of project applications – several of which intend to use EOR – are being considered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). SB 1314 is a great start to mitigating potential harm, but we still need more immediate protections to ensure the uncertainties of CCUS do not become the latest threat to our frontline communities.

“As SB 1314 moves forward to the Governor's desk, we are pleased that frontline communities can finally have a voice at the table in what happens in their own backyards. The communities in Kern County bear the brunt of the most concentrated oil and gas fields in California, and SB 1314 is a necessary protection to prevent greater exposure to toxic air contaminants from expanded operations. We must invest in this and other safeguards for a just transition that dismantles sacrifice zones. Thank you to our legislators who stood in solidarity with us and are part of passing climate policy aligned with the needs of our communities,” said Gustavo Aguirre Jr., Central California Environmental Justice Network.

“We stand in solidarity with communities on the frontlines of oil and gas extraction in demanding that carbon capture, use, and storage must not be used for enhanced oil recovery, and are grateful to the legislators who agree. The state must facilitate a plan for a managed decline, not expansion of drilling in some of our nation's oldest and dirtiest oil fields. The governor must now sign this common sense bill into law,” stated Catherine Garoupa White, Executive Director of the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition.

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CVAQ works toward awareness, acts as a watchdog, advocates for policy and mobilizes communities to restore clean air to the San Joaquin Valley.

² <https://www.osti.gov/servlets/purl/903323>.