

8. Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change

The Secretary for Natural Resources adopted amendments to the CEQA Guidelines addressing greenhouse gas emissions in December, 2009. The amendments become effective March 18, 2010. The Natural Resources Agency was directed to adopt amendments by Senate Bill 97. The amendments are available at <http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/guidelines/>.

The amendments add the following impacts to the environmental checklist form Appendix G in the CEQA Guidelines:

VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS—

Would the project:

- a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?
- b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Air districts have traditionally provided guidance to local lead agencies on evaluating and addressing air pollution impacts from projects subject to CEQA. Recognizing the need for a common platform of information and tools to support decision makers as they establish policies and programs for GHG and CEQA, the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association has prepared a white paper reviewing policy choices, analytical tools, and mitigation strategies. This white paper, entitled “CEQA and Climate Change” is available at <http://www.capcoa.org/>. The District recommends the use of this white paper by local lead agencies.

Other available resources are the California Natural Resources Agency’s Climate Change Portal webpage located at: <http://www.climatechange.ca.gov/>. This webpage includes general information on climate change, links to California climate change agencies, legislation, and upcoming events.

The website of the Office of the Attorney General has many resources for local agencies evaluating GHG impacts through the CEQA process, including comment letters submitted by the Attorney General’s Office, the impacts of climate change in California, and mitigation measures available to reduce GHG emissions. The website is available at: <http://ag.ca.gov/globalwarming/index.php>.

CoolCalifornia.org website is a partnership between government agencies, universities, and non-governmental organizations including the California Air Resources Board, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Berkeley Institute of the Environment, California Energy Commission, Next 10, and the California Public Utilities Commission. The site provides a “Local Government Toolkit” that provides guidance and lists resources to help local governments reduce GHG emissions and save money. The website is located at: <http://www.coolcalifornia.org/local-government>.

The District recommends that local agencies use these resources when developing GHG evaluations through the CEQA process. The District has not established Thresholds of Significance for GHG.