

Environment & Energy

Newsom's 'Powerful' Climate Plan Sparks Optimism Among Advocates

By Zach Bright

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- Goal of 20 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2045
 - Would accelerate state's climate change plan
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California Gov. Gavin Newsom's new climate plan that aims for 20 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2045 and 7 million highly efficient homes by 2035 would ramp up the state's actions on climate change, environmental groups say.

Newsom on Friday told the state air regulator it needed to take "even bolder action" than what its staff proposed for a five-year emissions plan due for adoption this fall.

The goals Newsom set in his letter to the California Air Resources Board amount to a "powerful tonic" amid congressional inaction on climate, said Laura Deehan, state director for Environment California.

"We can still meet our agreements under the Paris Accord, and even more, with state leadership," Deehan said.

The building goals, which also include deploying 6 million heat pumps in buildings by 2030, were singled out as a particularly potent decarbonization tool by the Natural Resources Defense Council. Residential and commercial buildings produce about a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions, according to a California Air Resources Board inventory.

CARB staff's preferred draft scoping plan would make the state carbon neutral by 2045. Newsom's request to speed that up included steps to transition away from fossil fuels, such as an end to building new gas power plants.

The board's draft plan "would have perpetuated fossil fuel production and continued to harm California's communities and ecosystems," Sierra Club California's director, Brandon Dawson, said in a statement.

Newsom also called for removing carbon dioxide stored in the atmosphere through the use of land management and machines made for that purpose.

Environmentalists widely object to one type of carbon removal that Newsom supports—the technology that would be used to take the gas out of the emissions stream of fossil fuel plants and sequester it permanently.

“There’s concern that it could be used to justify keeping fossil fuel plants open for longer if there’s some rationale that you can capture the carbon from them,” Deehan said.

Last month’s *West Virginia v. EPA* decision by the US Supreme Court weakened the Environmental Protection Agency’s ability to regulate greenhouse gas emissions, but doesn’t have any effect on state climate efforts.

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