

State Building and Construction Trades Council of California

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Established 1901
Chartered by
BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES
DEPARTMENT
AFL - CIO

SB 342 (Lena Gonzalez) - **OPPOSE** South Coast Air Quality Management District Board Packing

ISSUE

The state's air quality management district boards (AQMD) are the tip of the spear for meeting the climate crisis. The rules that these boards promulgate are and will be the guideposts used for local and state policymakers in California and across the nation as leaders grapple with how to meet the challenges of the climate crisis. But, unfortunately, those decisions will have a significant effect on the jobs and livelihoods of industrial workers.

The environmental justice community has time and again shown a willingness to support policies that lead to the shutdown of worksites and facilities, all in the name of environmental concerns with little to no acknowledgment about how those decisions will affect workers in those industries. Therefore, it is critical that construction workers, and those in other sectors whose work will be affected by decisions made by AQMDs, have their voices and concerns represented on these boards as they deliberate policies and regulations that could lead to the elimination of their jobs.

THIS BILL

This bill adds two more members to the South Coast Air Quality Management Board (SCAQMD) that could be filled only from the environmental justice community. We have asked the author to amend her bill to designate one of these new seats for a representative of the Building Trades, but she has so far refused. We are therefore OPPOSED to SB 342.

BACKGROUND

The California Building Trades have been at the forefront of renewable energy production in California, creating a portfolio of green energy that sets the bar for the rest of the nation. Our members have built both the traditional means of power production as well as the vast majority of the utility-scale wind, solar, hydroelectric, pumped storage, and geothermal projects across the state. We believe that we can build ourselves out of the climate crisis, and it is our workforce that will make that happen. Our state should wholeheartedly join President Biden's admirable efforts to meet the climate crisis in partnership with industrial and construction workers rather than dismiss them. There is arguably no time more critical than now to support and respect this same blue-collar workforce whom we have the privilege of representing.

We shouldn't make the same mistake that policymakers made when they passed NAFTA by ignoring the pleas of workers from the industries that will be directly affected by policies such as those debated and enacted at the SCAQMD. The manufacturing, power production, and construction workers whom the SCAQMD's policies will affect number in the tens of thousands in California alone. We need to ensure that their voices are part of the process.

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