



Senate Bill 97

SB 97 (Dutton), signed in 2007, charges the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) with the responsibility of preparing guidelines to mitigate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions identified through the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document review process, including the effects associated with transportation and energy consumption.

In January 2009, OPR released draft guideline amendments to provide direction on how to determine significance and mitigate the effects of GHG emissions. The guidelines add greenhouse gases to the environmental checklist (Appendix G) used in preparing initial studies. The guidelines also make recommendations as to how agencies should describe and calculate a project's GHG significance under CEQA and require that lead agencies consider all feasible means of mitigating GHG emissions.

Recommended actions local governments should take to comply with this legislation:

- Calculate baseline emissions through development of a community-wide and municipal greenhouse gas emissions inventory, which will include:
 - An estimate of all emissions caused by energy use, land use, waste production and transportation from commercial, residential, industrial and municipal sources.
 - A discussion of which sectors are the major emitters of greenhouse gas emissions in order to inform the GHG reduction process.
- Develop a climate action plan (CAP) to address GHG emissions and climate change. The CAP should include:
 - A GHG emission reduction target. The California attorney general recommends a reduction target of 15% below 2005 levels by 2020 to remain consistent with the goals of AB 32.
 - A goal to reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT).
 - Specific and general tools and strategies to reduce the current and projected GHG levels and to meet the CAP targets for GHG reductions by 2020.
 - Resiliency and adaptation strategies to prepare for the inevitable effects of climate change.
 - An evaluation plan to monitor effectiveness of adopted programs and adaptively manage emission reduction measures to achieve the goals of the CAP.
- Adopt a green building program or green building policies in the general plan, since the emission reductions associated with these programs are quantifiable and immediate.
- Promote infill policies and incentives in the general plan.
- Adopt a transit program or general plan transit policies to increase transit ridership and reduce VMT by supporting transit services and operations, including the possibility of bus rapid transit.
- Update general plans and spheres of influence to reflect preferred growth strategies before completion of the Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS).
- Coordinate with the metropolitan planning organization to ensure that assumptions used in the SCS modeling reflect actual growth patterns and approved projects.
- Review opportunities and concerns related to local programs:
 - Potential transportation funding implications
 - Potential CEQA relief
 - Limitations on denial of affordable housing programs