



VISION Coalition Statement on the Appointment of CalGEM's New Supervisor

“The appointment of California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM)’s new Oil and Gas Supervisor represents one of the most important climate decisions Governor Gavin Newsom will make. CalGEM, the state agency tasked with regulating the oil and gas industry and protecting public health, holds tremendous responsibility for the health and safety of more than 2.5 million Californians who live near oil and gas operations.

Since 2019, [the scandal-ridden agency](#) has failed to carry out its mission: to focus on the ‘protection of public health, safety, and the environment.’ Furthermore, the Supervisor position has been filled by feckless administrators who rubber-stamped every whim of the oil and gas industry, leaving California’s environmental justice communities to pay the price with their health. Now, with the appointment of Doug Ito, Californians who live near neighborhood drilling hope to see the agency finally name public health and climate action as its priority.

What Ito does in this position to end permitting new oil and gas projects and rework projects will serve as a litmus test for how serious Governor Gavin Newsom is about protecting communities and transitioning away from fossil fuels. Yet, the recent decision by the California Public Utilities Commission – where Ito is currently a division director – [to expand gas storage capacity at the Aliso Canyon](#) leak site gives some environmental advocates pause over the ability of Newsom appointees to act on climate and public health.

Next year, Californians will vote on a ballot measure that would codify SB 1137 through direct democracy and prohibit new oil and gas wells within 3,200 ft of homes, schools, churches, and medical facilities once and for all, [a measure the Governor has signaled his support for](#). Should Californians vote to keep the health and safety buffer zones law, enforcement will fall on CalGEM's shoulders, a significant responsibility for an agency with a brand new supervisor.

Environmental justice communities call on Ito to put our communities first and to come and visit our neighborhoods impacted by drilling. Californians on the frontlines of oil and gas pollution hope Ito’s appointment sets a new tone for communication between state agencies and our communities. We fervently hope he will use his position to ensure CalGEM stands as a bulwark against environmental injustice, prioritizes community needs over the profit-driven objectives of the oil and gas industry, protects oil and gas workers, and work with the administration to manage the decline of oil and gas extraction in California.”