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Gov. Elect Becerra inherits strongest state climate momentum in years with largest pollution cuts in two decades

Next 10's 2026 California Green Innovation Index finds historic emissions reductions and record clean energy gains, highlighting opportunities and challenges for the incoming governor

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. — California reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by nearly **4%** in 2024, the largest annual decline outside of recession years in more than two decades, according to the 18th annual *California Green Innovation Index*, released today by nonpartisan nonprofit Next 10. The decline was driven by significant pollution cuts in the power, transportation, and residential sectors. The findings mark two consecutive years of historically large emissions cuts, providing a strong starting point for the incoming Becerra administration.

“California is reaping the reward from years of policy implementation, resulting in significant cuts to pollution in historically stubborn sectors,” said **F. Noel Perry, Founder of Next 10**. “Governor-elect Becerra will inherit a state with a growing clean energy economy and a strong foundation to build on. Maintaining that momentum is critical to fighting climate change while keeping energy affordable for California families and businesses.”

The latest data show emissions falling across several major sectors, including a **9.5% decline in emissions from in-state electricity generation**, **a 17.5%** reduction in emissions from **heavy-duty vehicles** and an **8.6% drop in residential emissions,** one of the largest reductions in a sector with rising emissions in recent years. Meanwhile, renewable electricity generation continued to grow in 2025, and California's reliance on **natural gas power generation fell to 30.4%,** just less than one-third of the state's energy mix, **a record low.**

“California’s investment in clean energy and battery storage, heat pumps, and energy efficiency will help us build on these record reductions in natural gas,” said Perry. “We’ve seen sectors deploy new technologies to overcome inefficiencies and make strides to cut pollution and costs. The next administration has an opportunity to carry that progress forward.”

California's greenhouse gas emissions fell by **14 million metric tons to 346 million metric tons from 2023 to 2024**, bringing statewide emissions to **19.7%** below 1990 levels. The state's economy continued to grow during the same period. Inflation-adjusted GDP per capita increased **2.7%** in 2024 while emissions per capita declined **4.3%**.

California's renewable energy sector reached several milestones in 2025, with renewable sources supplying **45.3% of the state's electricity mix** following two years of rapid growth. For

the first time, **solar and wind combined generated more electricity than natural gas**, while in-state natural gas generation declined **14.1%** to its lowest level on record in 2025. Fossil fuels accounted for just **32.1% of California's electricity mix**, roughly half their share in 2008. At the current pace of growth, California is on track to meet its interim renewable electricity goal of **52% by 2027**.

“The growth in renewable electricity generation is particularly encouraging,” said **Hoyu Chong, report author and Principal of CEC Economics**. “California set an ambitious goal of generating more than half of our electricity from renewable sources by 2027, and our data show that target is within reach. The challenge now is to keep adding renewable energy and storage while making better use of the clean power we're already generating.”

Growth in solar generation and battery storage contributed to the changing electricity mix, although lower electricity demand and milder summer temperatures also likely played a role in the decline in natural gas generation. The findings give the incoming Becerra administration critical context for continuing state investments in renewable energy, battery storage and efficiency to cut costs for ratepayers and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

Additional Key Findings

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

- California's greenhouse gas emissions **declined 3.9% in 2024**, following a **3% decline in 2023**. The **14-million-metric-ton reduction** in 2024 was the **largest annual decrease outside the recession years** of 2008–09 and 2019–20.
- **In-state electricity** generation emissions **fell 9.5% from 2023 to 2024**, while **residential emissions declined 8.6%**.
- **Transportation** emissions f**ell 4.1%,** including a **17.5%** reduction in **heavy-duty** vehicle emissions.
- Emissions from **light-duty vehicles fell below 100 million metric tons for the first time in 2024**, even as total vehicle miles traveled increased.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

- **Renewable sources** accounted for **45.3% of California's electricity mix in 2025**. That share reached **56.4%** with large hydroelectric power included.
- In-state **natural gas** electricity generation **declined 14.1% in 2025**, reaching its lowest level on record.
- **Solar generation**, including in-state generation and imports, **increased 12.1%** in 2025.
- California's approved **energy storag**e capacity surpassed **20,000 megawatts** in 2025, with another **8,647 megawatts** approved during the first half of 2026.

TRANSPORTATION

- California surpassed **two million registered zero-emission vehicles** in 2025, a **17.7% increase** from 2024.

- Electric light-duty pickups, SUVs and vans **surpassed one million** registered vehicles for the first time in 2025.
- The share of **new zero-emissions vehicle registrations declined by** about 1% from 2024 to 2025, indicating more progress is needed to make these vehicles more accessible and affordable.

ECONOMY AND ENERGY AFFORDABILITY

- Since California passed AB 32 in 2006, inflation-adjusted **GDP per capita has grown 42.7%**, while **greenhouse gas emissions** per capita have declined **32.6%** by 2024.
- **Electricity bills are down** in California, with households paying an average of **$153 per month** in 2025 compared to $161 in 2024. In 2025, Californians paid less on average than consumers in Florida or Texas but still just above the national average of **$147**.
- California's total energy consumption in 2024 was **13% lower than its 2007 peak**, despite continued economic and population growth over that period.

“The data shows California is moving in the right direction, but we still need to reduce emissions faster,” said **Chong**. “The recent declines are encouraging, particularly in electricity generation. Keeping up that pace, and accelerating reductions in other sectors, will be essential over the next several years.”

At the average annual emissions reduction rate of just over **3%** recorded from 2019 to 2024, California would meet its 2030 goal in 2034, one year sooner than projected in last year's Index. To meet the target on time, emissions must fall by approximately **4.7%** annually through 2030.

“The Becerra era begins with real climate momentum, but progress isn't guaranteed,” said **Stephanie Leonard, Director of Research at Next 10.** “The choices made today on clean energy, efficiency, and transportation will determine how far California can go tomorrow.”

The full 2026 California Green Innovation Index is available at greeninnovationindex.org.

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About Next 10

Next 10 is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that educates, engages, and empowers Californians to improve the state's future. With a focus on the intersection of the economy, the environment, and quality of life, Next 10 employs research from leading experts on complex state issues and creates a portfolio of nonpartisan educational materials to foster a deeper understanding of the critical issues affecting our state.

About CEC Economics

CEC Economics is a boutique economic consulting firm focusing on the intersections of economics, energy, and climate. With a data-driven and human-centric approach, CEC Economics partners with communities, municipalities, organizations, and institutions to address today’s most complex challenges to equitable development and sustainable growth.