



# CALIFORNIA METALS COALITION

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January 17, 2023

Liane M. Randolph, Chair  
California Air Resources Board (CARB)  
1001 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

cc: Eugene Rubin, Staff Air Pollution Specialist, Toxics Control Section ([eugene.rubin@arb.ca.gov](mailto:eugene.rubin@arb.ca.gov))  
Submitted Electronically: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/applications/public-comments>

**RE: Comments on Public Hearing to Consider the Proposed Amendments to the Airborne Toxic Control Measure for Chromium Electroplating and Chromic Acid Anodizing Operations**

Dear Chair Randolph:

The California Metals Coalition (“CMC”) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the *Proposed Amendments to the Airborne Toxic Control Measure for Chromium Electroplating and Chromic Acid Anodizing Operations*, and working groups, led by the California Air Resources Board (“CARB”).

**SUMMARY**

This comment letter addresses the upcoming January 26, 2023 workshop for “Proposed Amendments to the Airborne Toxic Control Measure for Chromium Electroplating and Chromic Acid Anodizing Operations.” It may also reference previous public workshops on this topic.

**ABOUT ADVANCED METALS INDUSTRY IN CALIFORNIA:**

California metal manufacturers utilize recycled metal (ex: aluminum, brass, iron, steel) to manufacture new metal parts installed in clean energy technologies, electric cars, medical devices, agriculture, infrastructure, aerospace, defense, food processing, movement of water, and millions of other products demanded by Californians.

Statistics about the state’s metal sector<sup>1</sup>:

- Metalworking jobs in California pay \$80,000/year, on average, in wages and benefits.
- Metalworking jobs benefit working class communities and continue to be the only path to the middle-class for many disadvantaged Californians.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.metalscoalition.com/metals-industry.html](http://www.metalscoalition.com/metals-industry.html)

- The metals industry in California is comprised of approximately 4,000 businesses, most of which are family-owned small businesses.
- The metals industry in California generates over 350,000 total jobs.
- The metals industry in California accounts for \$87 billion in total annual economic activity.
- The metals industry in California generates \$28 billion in total annual wages.
- The metals industry in California accounts for \$8.6 billion in total annual state and federal taxes.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF MANUFACTURING METAL PRODUCTS IN CALIFORNIA:**

Californians discard more metal than any other state in the US. In fact, Californians generate enough aluminum scrap each day to build 5 commercial aircrafts. Fortunately, recycled metal is the choice material consumed by California's metals industry.

As metal can be recycled and reused indefinitely without losing its physical properties, metal recycling allows us to preserve the finite resources we have on earth. The Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries (ISRI) reports that recycling one ton of aluminium saves up to 8 tons of bauxite; and recycling one ton of steel conserves 1,115 kg of iron ore, 625kg of coal and 25kg of limestone. In addition, using scrap metal instead of virgin ore generates 97 percent less mining waste and reduces 40% water pollution. In total, the process of recycling discarded metal and manufacturing new metal parts can cut greenhouse gas emissions by 300 million to 500 million tons.

A healthy metals sector also has a big impact on energy conservation. Recycling discarded metal into new metal parts requires drastically less energy than manufacturing new metal parts from virgin material. The estimated yield in energy saving by using recycled metals is: 95% for aluminum; 85% for copper and 75% for iron and steel.

Finally, the environmental footprint of the metal products we all consume starts with manufacturing. Local metal recycling and manufacturing reduces overall emissions as California's metals industry adheres to the world's most stringent environmental standards. Shipping metals out of California—only to have the finished product shipped back into the state—can result in significant localized transportation emissions, as well as increased global greenhouse gas emissions.

### **COMMENTS ON JANUARY 26, 2023 PUBLIC WORKSHOP**

#### **Item #1: Concepts increase California's warehouse construction and congestion.**

The California Metals Coalition (CMC) has members that manufacture parts which require them to utilize chromium electroplating and chromic acid anodizing to satisfy customer specifications. Regardless of whether the finish is required to be decorative, or functional, the metal parts must meet the stated testing, engineering and product specs approved by the customer.

Eliminating local sources of chromium electroplating and/or acid anodizing in California will break a link in California's manufacturing chain.

Currently, parts are manufactured and kept at the same facilities prior to finishing. Without a local source of plating in California, keeping up with customer demand may lead to increased use of warehousing as the parts wait for interstate, or international, metal finishing.

California has seen a boom in warehouses, and trucks that carry the products to and from warehouses. This has resulted in an increase in pollution and rulemaking<sup>2</sup> related to warehouse activities. In December 2021, SupplyChainDive published *7 charts show Southern California's warehousing crunch*<sup>3</sup>. According to the article, the increase in warehousing has resulted in "Stakeholders are attempting to provide relief in several ways, such as filling parking lots with drop trailers, (and) securing warehouse space outside port markets."

CMC questions whether CARB staff has considered the overall increase in congested warehousing, or even the increase in trucking/transportation based on its proposals. This analysis should quantify the pollution from localized warehousing, trucks, trains, planes, or ports—which includes hexavalent chromium.

### **Item #2: Concepts further congest statewide truck transportation and truck pollution.**

The maximum total vehicle weight for a commercial truck in California is 80,000 lbs. Of all the different products shipped across the state, metal parts are heavy and can quickly hit the capacity limit of trucks on California's roads. Rules that further the distance of trucks traveling on our roads is a concern to CMC as it impacts local, regional and statewide health.

A metal part that is manufactured in California will see an increased travel route if the part must be shipped out of state for chromium electroplating and chromic acid anodizing—and then back into the state. CMC questions whether CARB staff has considered the overall increase in transportation routes (ex: trucks, train, ships, plans) to get the product out of California—and back into California—rather than utilizing in-state commerce. This comparative analysis should quantify the increased pollution—which includes hexavalent chromium.

It should also be noted that the relationship between a local manufacturer of metal parts, and the local finisher of metal parts, occurs because very often individual parts must first be tested and accepted prior to placing a full order.

Without a local chromium electroplating and/or acid anodizing facility, even 1 or 2 parts that are being cleared for initial approval must travel much longer distances out of California—and then back into California.

### **Item #3: Exhaustive analysis of pollution control technologies.**

The CARB website on "chrome plating ATCM" includes several references to local and national rules. More specifically, the local California air agency South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) has completed several rounds of rulemaking in recent years specific to chromium electroplating or acid anodizing.

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<sup>2</sup> [Fighting Toxic Pollution: The Indirect Sources Rule – California Green Zones \(calgreenzones.org\)](https://calgreenzones.org/)

<sup>3</sup> [7 charts show Southern California's warehousing crunch | Supply Chain Dive](#)

Since SCAQMD is authorized and monitored by CARB it is unclear why SCAQMD rules for chromium electroplating or acid anodizing are not acceptable to CARB and has sparked this rulemaking.

SCAQMD's health agents, air experts, legal, staff and board are heralded as the best local air district team in the United States. CARB staff has not commented on where it disagrees with SCAQMD rulemaking; and if it does disagree with SCAQMD, why it didn't make comments while local rulemaking was being debated by industry, communities, and local government?

CARB staff should specifically analyze the control measures in SCAQMD rules and provide data, analysis, and testing that shows SCAQMD's rules are not effective in protecting public health.

**Item #4: Object to technology reviews to potentially adjust phase out dates.**

Future technology reviews should only occur if the rulemaking does not include the elimination of a process.

It is confusing why CARB would propose a rule that would include the following phase outs: (1) phase out use of hexavalent chromium in decorative plating by 1/1/2027; and (2) phase out use of hexavalent chromium in functional plating (hard plating and chromic acid anodizing) by 1/1/2039—and then concurrently propose further reviews that would question its conclusions.

The regulated community, and its employees/families, rely on rulemaking agencies to make thorough and informed decisions. Any loss in the livelihood of our small businesses and workforce is not acceptable if the agency already plans to go back and alter its decisions.

Lastly, if CARB staff is relying on California to accelerate innovation and technology changes through this rulemaking, it has not accepted that California is no longer the driver of decision making for metal manufacturing. Over that last 20 years, worldwide commerce, international competition, and the ability to share technology has allowed metal manufacturing to thrive faster in neighboring states and far away continents.

Please take the time to work with local metal manufacturing and local metal platers to find local solutions that allow us to survive locally, address public health concerns, limit warehousing and truck pollution, and find a balance between productivity and innovation.

**CONCLUSION**

Thank you for your time, and for allowing CMC to participate and comment on CARB's *Proposed Amendments to the Airborne Toxic Control Measure for Chromium Electroplating and Chromic Acid Anodizing Operations*. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions:

[james@metalscoalition.com](mailto:james@metalscoalition.com).

Sincerely,



James Simonelli  
Executive Director