

Eric Maldonado
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Eric Maldonado
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Contra Costa County
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My name is Eric Maldonado, and I'm the CEO of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Contra Costa County.

We appreciate the hard work you are doing to protect our environment and to address the challenge of global warming.

Our Chamber has been active in promoting sustainable, healthy, responsible and profitable practices. Please note that we advocate not only green, but "profitable" practices. That's because if being green puts our members out of business, it not only impacts them personally but their families, their employees and their families, the communities in which they live and the economy of the entire state. If we're not doing business, employing people, supporting our community and paying taxes, everyone suffers. There has to be a balance.

We are very concerned that the low carbon fuel standard as proposed today creates an unacceptable risk for our businesses and the state's economy as a whole. It doesn't appear that your staff has fully explored the costs of meeting the standard, or even knows if all the fuels, technologies and infrastructure necessary will be even available, much less affordable. We've all seen what happens when fuel costs go up – and unfortunately high fuel prices hurt small and minority-owned businesses and low-income community hardest because we spend more of our budget on energy.

Regardless of your staff's optimistic projections about the cost of this standard, previous fuel reformulations have proven to be expensive. CARB cleaner-burning gasoline is acknowledged by the Energy Commission to be one of the reasons gas costs more in California, and California's unique diesel fuel standards have a history of contributing to higher diesel prices here. Those costs flow through not just to the tank but to goods and services that rely on energy and transportation – essentially everything we buy or use in one way or another.

The costs of this rule won't be the only new costs we'll be looking at in the near and long-term future. There are new taxes not related to the environment, and lots of new taxes, fees and costs for AB 32 over and above the low carbon fuel standard. In the Bay Area where I'm from, the Air District is trying to impose a carbon fee on businesses. The federal government is looking at a carbon tax and a low carbon fuel standard of its own. We're looking at costly new green building standards. The list goes on and on and just keeps growing.

And our businesses and economy can't sustain it.

We understand the need to address global warming, but California can't do it alone. If you go ahead with this rule now, without honestly assessing the costs and benefits, you could well be imposing extreme financial burdens on an already-struggling economy, without making a dent in global warming. This rule should be well-researched, and adopted in the context of the policy actions of other states and the federal government. We can't afford to spend billions of dollars on merely setting an example.

Thank you.