

County Executive

David Villanueva

**Governmental Relations and
Legislative Officer**

Elisia De Bord



County of Sacramento

Board of Supervisors

Phillip R. Serna, District 1

Patrick Kennedy, District 2

Rich Desmond, District 3

Rosario Rodriguez, District 4

Patrick Hume, District 5

November 10, 2025

California Air Resources Board

**Re: Sacramento County Comments on Proposed Landfill Methane Rule
Changes**

CARB Clerk of the Board:

On behalf of the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, I respectfully offer comments on the Proposed Landfill Methane Rule (LMR) Changes:

The Sacramento County Department of Waste Management and Recycling operates Kiefer Landfill, a public facility serving the greater Sacramento community. The proposed changes to the LMR raise several concerns that would significantly increase operational costs. As a public landfill, Kiefer cannot quickly adapt to regulatory shifts of this magnitude, and these increased costs would ultimately burden the community it serves.

1) Wellhead Temperature Requirements The draft rule incorporates wellhead temperature limits and enhanced monitoring from the federal NESHAP, along with provisions from Assembly Bill 28 as outlined by CalRecycle's Todd Thalhamer. These changes would substantially increase the cost of tuning and monitoring the wellfield at Kiefer. The proposed threshold of 131°F for triggering enhanced monitoring is not uncommon for landfill wells to reach. Presently, industry has demonstrated that higher wellhead temperatures are both safe and appropriate. This could force the premature removal of safely operating wells to avoid regulatory violations, wasting public funds and disrupting efficient operations. Every removal of a landfill well is a costly burden when those wells are necessarily replaced. Additionally, shut down wells extract no methane – meaning regulations that take viable wells offline lead to greater harm to the environment without benefit.

2) Limits on GCCS and Well Downtime (Impact = greater risk of violations and increased planning for outages) Construction at Kiefer Landfill often requires temporary system shutdowns for safety. The draft regulation imposes stricter limits on landfill gas (LFG) system and well downtime, based on Bay Area Air District (BAAD) Rule 8-34. However, CARB proposes cutting the LFG system downtime allowance to 50% of BAAD's 240-hour limit, without justification. This is overly restrictive, especially given that

the current rule lacks a numeric limit. Power outages, including multi-day safety shutdowns, make the proposed 120-hour annual limit unreasonable.

Clarification is needed to ensure this applies only to full GCCS downtime—not individual control devices—and that both planned and unplanned events count toward the downtime allowance. Additionally, limits on the number of wells offline at once are impractical for large, active landfills. Furthermore, the five-day restoration requirement is wholly incompatible with any sort of construction going on at a landfill, including daily fill operations that require piping filled with flammable landfill gas not present.

3) Alternatives Kiefer Landfill frequently experiences weather conditions that necessitate ACOs to remain in compliance. Over the past year, the County has successfully applied for and received ACOs for each reporting period. Without these, the County would have violated time-bound re-monitoring rules or failed to meet weather-related compliance windows (e.g., within 72 hours of wind or rain). Under Section 95468, CARB has removed several ACO options, made others more stringent, and now requires resubmission of previously approved ACOs—allowing retroactive denial. The automatic approval timeline has also been eliminated. Under the proposed rule, ACOs must be approved in advance, regardless of agency response time, which is unworkable.

4) Wellhead Oxygen Requirements The draft rule reintroduces a 5% oxygen limit at the wellhead, previously removed from federal regulations and never part of the LMR. This limit has historically caused operational challenges, particularly in dry-climates and in new waste areas. Recurring oxygen exceedances trigger additional stringent requirements, increasing costs and necessitating more tuning staff.

5) Unsafe to Walk Areas Currently, areas deemed unsafe to walk are exempt from monitoring while dangerous. The proposed rule limits this exemption to areas unsafe for the entire quarterly monitoring period and still requires alternative monitoring. Technologies tested for such alternative monitoring have proven inconsistent and unreliable. Routinely they have “detected” methane that has not been able to be replicated by any other technology or in areas shown to be in compliance.

Moreover, many of Kiefer’s unsafe areas are the active fill area or active construction zones where methane collection infrastructure cannot be safely turned on until activities are complete. Furthermore, if an area is unsafe to walk, the area will also necessarily be unsafe to send personnel to perform any remediation.

6) Remote Plume Monitoring Kiefer Landfill has responded to approximately 10 remote plume notifications to date, none of which were detectable through field monitoring at the indicated locations. These “plume” detections have been investigated by field staff, independent consultants and regulators, with no

discernable correlation. This raises concerns about the reliability and practicality of remote plume detection.

- 7) Pressure Exceedances including Recurring Exceedances** CARB has added federal requirements for enhanced monitoring and corrective action for pressure exceedances, along with stricter rules for recurring exceedances. These changes will significantly increase costs, which may ultimately be passed on to the local community.
- 8) Wellhead Trend Analysis** The draft rule introduces a monthly Wellhead Parameter Trend Analysis, requiring review of records for each well. This new mandate will greatly increase operational costs and staffing needs.
- 9) Additional SEM Requirements** CARB's proposed changes to Surface Emission Monitoring (SEM) are incompatible with Kiefer's operations:
- a. Active areas are only exempt from monitoring for 180 days after accepting waste, which is insufficient for engineering and well installation. For multi-acre modules, entire horizontal lifts may not be complete within 6 months, and thicknesses may be so shallow as to result in system non-compliance due to oxygen intrusion. This would be even further exacerbated if the wellhead oxygen requirements are simultaneously adopted. Additionally, a 6 month timeline for a project to install wells will not be possible for a public agency that needs to follow public contracting code to go through all of the legally required steps of design, gain permission to bid, bid, award, bond, and contractually start up a project – let alone construct anything.
 - b. New criteria and tight timelines for alternative remedies to SEM exceedances will raise costs.
 - c. Recurring SEM exceedance areas face escalating requirements, potentially trapping large landfills like Kiefer in a cycle of costly monitoring and compliance.
- 10) Cover Integrity Requirements** The draft rule requires Cover Integrity Assessments under various conditions. These assessments are burdensome and impractical for Kiefer, adding numerous hours for compliance. The measures also do not consider the utilization of alternative final cover methods, which are ubiquitous.

Additionally, final cover cannot be simply installed on inactive areas. Inactivity in a landfill area triggers intermediate cover, not final cover. Final cover requires approval of the Regional Water Quality Control Board, typically a 12-18 month process followed by a multi-month construction project. This means compliance with the proposed air regulations violates existing water board regulations.

November 10, 2025

4

General Concerns

1. **Early Collection Requirements** The rule mandates early installation of horizontal or caisson wells at landfills accepting 200,000 tons/year. Operators should be allowed flexibility, including use of LCRS, bottom liner collection layers, or shallow vertical wells. Design decisions should remain with the professional engineer.
2. **Annual Reporting** The revised rule significantly expands the scope of the annual report. Kiefer will require additional staffing and requests an extension of the submission deadline from March 15 to April 30.
3. **LFG System Installation Timeline** CARB proposes reducing the installation timeline for LFG systems to six months (from 18) for active landfills and to 18 months (from 30) for closed sites. Six months is insufficient for design, procurement, installation, startup, and testing, especially since operators await regulatory approval before proceeding.
4. As all compliance requirements also correspond with an increase in coordination, reporting, and record-keeping, the likelihood of meeting all of the requirements become exponentially more difficult to obtain. Additionally, as an industry already struggling to find, train, and retain qualified staff, multiplying the burden also will lead to inability to perform.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me at (916) 874-4627 or deborde@saccounty.gov.

Respectfully,



Elisia De Bord

Governmental Relations and Legislative Officer

cc: Kathryn Chapman