

Genesis Silva

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed amendments that would increase gasoline prices by an estimated 40 to 60 cents per gallon. While I understand and support California's long-term climate goals, this proposal places a disproportionate burden on residents of the Central Valley—one of the state's most economically vulnerable and transportation-dependent regions.

In the Central Valley, gas prices already range from approximately \$4.69 to \$5.25 per gallon. For many of us, commuting is not optional. I personally commute long distances for work, and it currently takes the equivalent of four hours of my wages just to fill my tank twice a week so I can get to and from my job. An additional 40–60 cents per gallon would make this cost even more unsustainable.

The Central Valley has a large population of commuters who travel 20–45 minutes each way, and a significant number of "super-commuters" who travel two to three hours per day because local wages do not match the cost of living. Unlike residents in major metropolitan areas, we do not have access to reliable public transit alternatives. Driving is the only way to maintain employment.

If fuel costs continue to rise, many workers—including myself—will face a point where working is no longer financially viable. That outcome doesn't just harm individual households; it harms the regional and state economy. When workers are priced out of commuting, they are effectively pushed out of the workforce, reducing productivity, tax revenue, and economic stability.

Climate policy should not come at the expense of the very people who keep California's essential industries running—agriculture, healthcare, logistics, education, and service sectors. Any regulatory changes must consider the unique realities of rural and semi-rural communities, where long-distance commuting is a structural necessity, not a choice.

I urge the Board to reconsider this proposal or to include meaningful protections, exemptions, or offsetting measures for Central Valley residents and other regions where driving is the only means of transportation. A just transition must be equitable, and it must not disproportionately burden the workers who already carry some of the highest transportation costs in the state.

Thank you for considering the lived experiences of Central Valley commuters as you evaluate this amendment.