

THE REFINERY RULE: CLEAN AIR NOW

The Refinery Rule (or Proposed Rule 1109.1) will require refineries and related facilities to finally install pollution control equipment that reduces harmful air pollutants, such as nitrogen oxides (NO_x), in communities already overburdened by toxic emissions. The Refinery Rule is necessary because the prior industry-backed market-based system failed to clean up our air. The Refinery Rule implements a “command-and-control” system in place of RECLAIM that will provide much-needed relief for communities as it will ensure that refineries actually control their dangerous emissions.

Quick Facts

Facilities Covered: 9 refineries, 3 small refineries, and 4 related operations for a total of 16 facilities

Expected Emissions Reductions: 7 to 8 tons of NO_x per day

Number of units that will be Upgraded: Over 200

Regions Affected: portions of Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties and all of Orange County

Key Terms

Command-and-control: Regulatory structure being implemented in place of RECLAIM that involves the establishment of an emission limit for each equipment category

NO_x: Nitrogen oxides; harmful air pollutant emitted by refineries

RECLAIM: Regional Clean Air Incentives Market; market-based program used to control NO_x emissions

Decades of Uncontrolled Pollution

For decades, petroleum refineries have avoided installing life-saving pollution controls through their participation in the RECLAIM program. This program allowed facilities to either buy RECLAIM Trading Credits or install pollution controls to achieve the maximum reduction in emissions. Unfortunately, the market model has not been effective in getting refineries and related facilities to control NO_x pollution because it was cheaper for refineries to buy pollution credits than it was to install life-saving pollution controls. In fact, 88% of pollution emitting equipment at these facilities does not meet applicable air emissions limits. Under the Refinery Rule, over 200 pieces of equipment will need to be upgraded or modified, including heaters, boilers, gas turbines, and flares, among others. Some of this equipment was originally installed decades ago, as far back as the 1960s.



Grave Harm to Frontline Communities

NOx is harmful to people's health and the environment. Exposure to NOx emissions can cause a range of symptoms, including fatigue, headaches, abdominal pain, strained breathing, lung disease, and an increased risk of respiratory infections in children. NOx also combines with volatile organic compounds to create ozone. Breathing elevated levels of ozone can cause chest pain, coughing, throat irritation, reduced lung function, damage to lung tissue, and exacerbation of certain conditions, such as asthma, bronchitis, and emphysema. Thus, the significant NOx pollution from petroleum refineries worsens the levels of lung-burning ozone that harm individuals, particularly children and the elderly.

Petroleum refineries are among the largest stationary sources of air pollution in the South Coast. The refineries and refinery-related facilities that will be subject to the Refinery Rule emit over 60% of the total NOx emissions released by all sources in the RECLAIM program. Further, petroleum refineries are among the largest point sources of NOx pollution in the Wilmington-Carson-West Long Beach area, contributing 29% of all NOx emissions.



Opportunities to Get Involved

The Governing Board is scheduled to vote on Refinery Rule 1109.1 on November 5 at 9:00 am.

[Call or send an email](#) to the Governing Board members and encourage them to support a strong Refinery Rule 1109.1.

Join us on Twitter to push **@SouthCoastAQMD** to implement a **#RefineryRule** to curb harmful emissions and tackle **#RefineryDangers**.