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Si Se Puede comments

Additional submitted attachment is included below.



May 2, 2024

California Energy Commission
Docket Unit
Docket No. 23-OIR-03
715 P Street, MS-4
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Good afternoon:

Si Se Puede is a nonprofit organization that aids farmworkers and other ethnic communities in the Central Valley of California. Our organization supports and aids rural communities through various education, labor, social and economic issues.

Any rule that raises the price of gas has cascading consequences for working Californians. Like it or not, the price of gas affects every aspect of their lives. High gas prices make it harder for them to work, support their families and be engaged in their community. This is especially true in the rural communities where our members live- our members have to travel a long way to go to work, school, the grocery store, and everywhere else. That means they need even more gas, and more gas means more money.

We appreciate the intent of the Commission to try to reduce the incidence of price spikes for gasoline but believe that the unintended consequence of avoiding price spikes will be to set gas prices at higher levels year-round. The lives of working Californians are hard enough; passing rules that could raise prices and dry up pumps is not going to help.

How will the CEC's new rules affect working Californians? We have recently learned about the CEC's new gasoline regulations and do not believe the CEC has fully thought through or answered this question. We have heard that the CEC has increased reporting requirements on participants in the gasoline industry and limited refinery maintenance. Now, we hear that CEC is pushing for refinery margin caps. We fear that all of this is going to increase gas prices.



We worry that the CEC has failed to adequately consider the impacts of gross margin caps on working families. Most refinery workers are our brothers and sisters in the Labor movement. Including their total compensation as part of gross margin caps, as proposed, unfairly limits their ability to negotiate the best wages possible with their employer. We worry that greedy big businesses will use the gross margin caps as an excuse to suppress the wages and benefits for their workers.

We also fear that the impact of these rules on rural communities is being ignored. Gas shortages are going to hit rural communities first. The gas stations in big cities are going to be full, but the independent gas stations in rural areas may not be. That means higher prices and the risk that there will be no gas for us. That result would be unconscionable. Can the CEC say that it has considered what the impact of its regulations will be on rural communities? We have not seen any answer to that question, and it must be answered.

Until these issues are considered and these questions are answered, the Commission will not meet its mandate to assess the impacts of gross margin caps on customers and lacks a mandate to adopt them.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly.

Regards,

Doug Kessler, Executive Director