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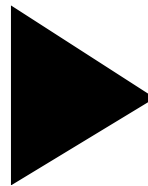
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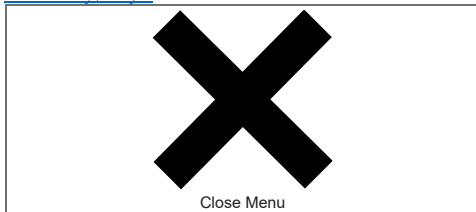
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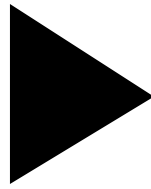


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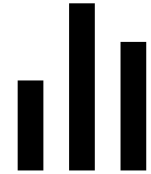


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On Sept. 4, NASA-NOAA's Suomi NPP satellite captured this view of Hurricane Irma as a Category 4 hurricane approaching the Leeward Islands. Photo by NOAA/NASA Goddard MODIS Rapid Response

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 People who fled fighting in South Sudan are seen walking at sunset on arrival at Bidi Bidi refugee's resettlement camp near the border with South Sudan, in Yumbe district, northern Uganda December 7, 2016. RI

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 Human brain, computer illustration. Photo by Sebastian Kaulitzki/via Getty


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 PHILADELPHIA, PA - JULY 20: Art Gutierrez, 42, holds an orange container, "trash can," filled with heroin powder, that he bought on Thursday, July 20, 2017, in Philadelphia, PA. Gutierrez who grew up in Califor

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 Angel Nalubega, senior at Antioch College, and Jeanne Kay, alumni relations coordinator, organize registration cards for at the Antioch College reunion weekend in Yellow Springs, Ohio Saturday, July 15, 2017. I

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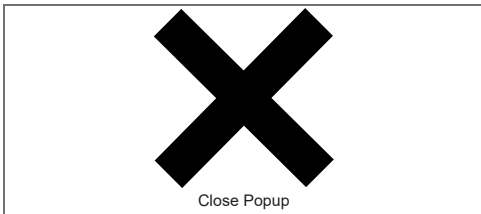
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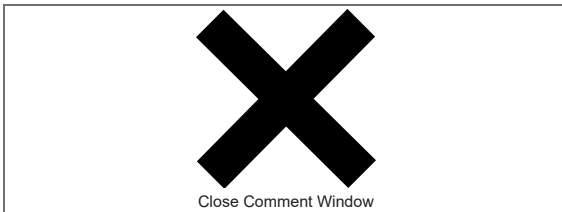
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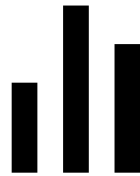
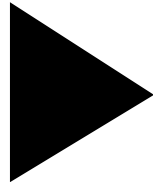
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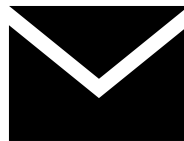
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California cap-and-trade is working — for other states

[Science](#) Jul 15, 2018 2:25 PM EDT

A new report indicates California's much-heralded carbon trading program may actually be harming the neighborhoods it was designed to protect.

In the [first study examining](#) social disparities in California's cap-and-trade program, researchers found that 52 percent of companies regulated by the program saw an increase in annual average greenhouse gas emissions — and those companies are largely situated in disadvantaged communities, historically hit hardest by environmental pollution.

"The communities that live on the fence line near these industries saw hope in the [cap-and-trade program] that emissions might be reduced," [Lara Cushing](#), the study's lead author, said in a [statement](#). "But so far, we haven't seen the kind of environmental equity benefits people were hoping for."

The study, [published](#) in PLOS Medicine, looked at the first three years of the program, first launched in 2013.

California boasts the world's fourth-largest carbon-trading program, which [was developed to help](#) the state meet its ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets.

The program caps the total amount of emissions in the state but companies can increase their emissions by purchasing pollution "allowances" from companies that pollute less.

So while the program succeeded in lowering overall emissions statewide, the study found that specific industries actually produced more emissions since the program was launched.

Cement plants saw the highest increase in emissions, or 75 percent, followed by electricity generators, and the oil and gas industry.

The increased emissions fell on neighborhoods with higher proportions of people of color and low-income residents, according to the recent study.

Yet, the carbon trade program was partly intended to mitigate the disproportionate impact of air pollution in these communities. California law requires 25 percent of the program’s revenue to be invested in environmental measures that benefit vulnerable neighborhoods.

But Cushing and other researchers found that most of the program’s revenue stream is actually flowing out of the state, due to the way the program is designed.

Under the program, companies can offset their emissions by purchasing credits through forestry or agriculture projects, including those in other states. Rather than investing in local green projects, the study found that 75 percent of those credits — which are part of a regulatory scheme paid for by California taxpayers — went towards projects outside of California.

“Good climate policy is good for environmental justice,” said Cushing. “What we’ve seen from our study is that so far, California’s cap-and-trade program hasn’t really delivered on that potential.”

Still, Cushing says that California should be praised for its ambitious climate goals. She points to the state’s [urban greening program](#) that funds forests and greenways in vulnerable communities.

Additional measures may be needed, according to Cushing, to ensure that California’s cap-and-trade program lives up to its potential.

“Placing geographic restrictions on trading and limiting the amount of pollution ‘offset’ credits that companies can use to comply with the program could help incentivize local emissions reductions.”

This report was produced by KQED Science. You can view the [original report](#) on its website.



Left: An offshore oil rig is seen from the Coal Oil Point Reserve (COPR) west of the UC Santa Barbara campus in Santa Barbara, California, on July 30, 2015. Photo by Patrick T. Fallon/Reuters

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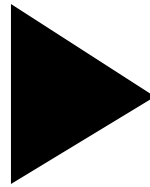
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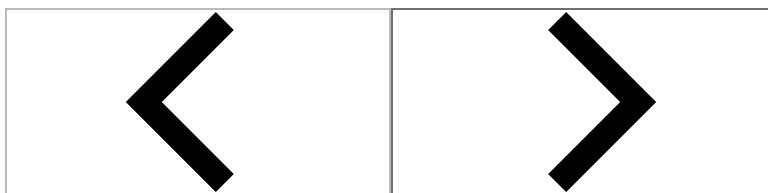
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