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Governor's Call to Boycott Gas Stations Puts Small and Minority-Owned Businesses in the Crossfire

Neighborhood Fuel Retailers Do Not Control Taxes, Refinery Capacity, or Crude Oil Markets — But They Will Bear the Cost of Misdirected Blame

Sacramento, CA – May 22, 2026

The California Fuels & Convenience Alliance (CFCA) issued a response today to Governor Newsom's public directive urging California motorists to avoid certain gas stations, cautioning that the Governor's remarks — however politically targeted — inflict their greatest harm not on major energy corporations, but on the state's neighborhood fuel retailers: small, family-owned, minority-owned, and independently operated businesses that survive on razor-thin margins while keeping millions of Californians on the road every day.

California drivers are bearing a genuine and growing burden at the pump, and their frustration is entirely warranted. But a call to boycott neighborhood gas stations is not a policy — it is a deflection. It does nothing to reduce prices, expand fuel supply, bring stability to volatile markets, or provide meaningful relief to the small business owners and frontline workers caught in the crossfire of a political dispute not of their making.

"California's fuel affordability challenge will not be solved by turning drivers against neighborhood businesses. It will be solved through transparency, supply reliability, cost accountability, and by working with the businesses that keep California moving." says, Elizabeth Graham, California Fuels & Convenience Alliance

The economic reality is straightforward: fuel retailers exercise no control over California's tax structure, regulatory compliance costs, refinery output, crude oil markets, or the state's uniquely stringent fuel specifications. They occupy the final link in a long, costly, and heavily regulated supply chain — and have become, with

troubling consistency, the most convenient scapegoat in a conversation that demands far more accountability upstream.

WHO OPERATES CALIFORNIA'S FUEL STATIONS

- Over 95% of fueling establishments are operated by small business owners — either branded franchisees or independent operators
- 60% of gasoline establishment owners own just one station, making them true micro-businesses
- 61% of California gas station owners are first-generation, foreign-born immigrants — the highest share of any industry in the U.S.
- 10,423 fueling establishments across California, employing 66,000 workers directly and supporting 59,000 additional jobs
- \$15 Billion contributed to California's gross state product annually, with \$5.7 billion in wages and nearly \$10 billion paid in state and local taxes

"Local fuel retailers are often the people who hear consumer frustration first, but they do not control every cost built into the price at the pump. They should be part of the solution, not treated as the problem," an independent gas station owner and California Fuels & Convenience Alliance Member who asked to remain anonymous.

California has the highest state gasoline taxes and fees in the nation, and additional regulatory changes now under consideration could place even more pressure on supply and prices. If the goal is affordability, the state should be working with fuel providers, retailers, refiners, labor, small businesses, and consumer advocates on practical solutions — not encouraging Californians to punish the local stations that keep communities, workers, emergency vehicles, agriculture, delivery fleets, and small businesses moving.

CFCA welcomes a serious conversation about California's fuel affordability crisis that begins with facts, not frustration and finger-pointing.

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About CFCA

CFCA is the industry's statewide trade association representing the needs of small and minority wholesale and retail marketers of gasoline, diesel, lubricating oils, motor fuels products, and

alternative fuels, including but not limited to, hydrogen, compressed natural gas, ethanol, renewable and biodiesel, and electric charging stations; transporters of those products; and retail convenience store operators. CFCA's members serve California's families, agriculture, police and fire, cities, construction, and all consumer goods moved by the delivery and transportation industries.

