

Polluter fees in California could boost state budget, analysts say

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California could see billions more revenue from polluter fees than expected, analysts say

California could generate much more revenue from fees on polluters than Gov. Jerry Brown expects, legislative analysts say in a report released Thursday.

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Administration officials have estimated \$1.7 billion in revenue from the fees by June 30, 2016, the end of the state's next fiscal year. But legislative analysts say the state could rake in between \$3.3 billion and \$7.7 billion in that period.

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The most likely scenario would give the state with \$3.7 billion from the fees, the report says, \$2 billion more than the administration has estimated.

Higher revenue would mean more money for programs funded with polluter fees, such as high-speed rail, affordable housing and public transit.

There would also be additional funding available for lawmakers to spend on environmental projects, which could become important as they consider new ways to extend California's effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Polluter fees are generated by the state "cap and trade" program, which requires companies to pay to emit greenhouse gases. The permits are sold through a marketplace, which means it can be hard to precisely estimate prices and how much funding will be available through the program.

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