Talking Points for EPA at the Cat Canyon Aquifer Exemption Hearing

- Thanks to the Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources and the State and Regional Water Boards for inviting EPA to attend the state's public hearing.

- I'd like to take a moment to explain the federal Environmental Protection Agency's role in the aquifer exemption process.

- First, in the early 1980s, EPA authorized the State DOGGR to implement the Underground Injection Control (UIC) program for oil and gas-related injection wells (Class II). This is referred to as UIC program "primacy."

- Federal UIC regulations authorize EPA to exempt specific aquifers that do not currently serve as a source of drinking water and will not serve as a source of drinking water in the future.

- Aquifer exemptions have been used primarily to allow mineral, hydrocarbon or geothermal energy production.

- UIC permit applicants who are seeking an aquifer exemption for their injection activities submit an application, with supporting data, to the State.

- The State reviews the application and conducts a public comment and hearing process; if all the information submitted supports a determination that the proposed exemption meets federal and state regulatory criteria, the State submits a request for approval of the exemption to EPA.

- Upon receipt of an aquifer exemption request from the State, EPA compiles and reviews the information submitted and may seek additional information from the State about the request.

- EPA considers whether the application submitted meets federal aquifer exemption criteria and we document our final determination to approve or deny the aquifer exemption request in a Record of Decision that explains the factual, technical, and legal bases for the determination.

- If anyone has questions, please stop by the table in the back.