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NEWSLINES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

and a new bill introduced.

- **Require public schools to reopen:** Public schools may be open for in-person classes this semester (most of them anyway), but that isn't because the governor forced them. As ticked-off parents, teachers' unions and a divided Legislature did political battle this spring over when and how to reopen schools, Newsom struck a balance: offering financial incentives and urgent pleas, but no mandates.

- **Increase funding accountability:** How exactly are school districts spending state money set aside for disadvantaged kids? In 2018, Newsom vowed to push for more transparency and accountability to ensure that the money was actually being spent on narrowing the achievement gap. But in 2020, he vetoed a bill that would have slapped school districts with new financial reporting requirements for the funding over concerns about "new and unnecessary procedural requirements." This year's budget includes a massive increase in funding for high-need schools. While it includes a new requirement that districts account for the dollars they're awarded, it stopped short of the bill that Newsom vetoed and does not require that the money be spent on students being targeted for help.

Environment

What he's done:

- **Ban future fracking:** After dancing away from this hot-button campaign promise, Newsom finally moved toward a phase-out. The fracking ban isn't slated to go into effect until 2024, but in July, the administration denied 21 additional fracking permits, citing environmental concerns.

- **Announce the end of fossil fuels (eventually):** The governor has set two especially audacious goals for the state: an end to oil extraction by 2045 (he wants to bump it up to 2035) and a ban on new gas-powered cars by 2035. These aren't detailed policies, and Newsom won't be governor long enough to see them implemented, but they're signals to both business and other policymakers where the state is headed.

- **Prohibit a widely used pesticide:** For decades, California farmers have used chlorpyrifos to kill the pests that ravage their fields and orchards. It's also a neurotoxin. The administration ordered it banned, though it won't be fully outlawed for two years.

What he hasn't:

- **Defend environmental rules against Trump:** In 2019, top Senate Democrat Toni Atkins pushed a bill to give state agencies carte blanche

to turn any Obama-era environmental regulations reversed by the Trump administration into state law. The bill passed, but Newsom vetoed it, siding with water agency heads and farmers who were particularly concerned that endangered species protections would be used to curtail water transfers.

- **Prevent wildfires:** Clearly not. Newsom's time as governor has coincided with some of our worst wildfire seasons. Though his administration has ramped up spending on forest management and fire prevention—a budget item that often gets the financial short shrift over fighting active fires—Newsom has also overstated the scope of its recent efforts, according to CapRadio.

- **Support buffers between oil wells and homes:** State lawmakers have twice proposed mandatory setbacks between oil and gas-related facilities and "sensitive receptors"—namely, homes, schools and medical facilities. Both bills died in the Legislature, buried in opposition from industry, labor, business-aligned Democrats and Republicans. Newsom didn't vocally support either bill and hasn't stepped forward to offer executive workarounds, despite calls to do so from environmentalists.

Health care

What he's done:

- **Expand Medi-Cal for undocumented residents:** For years, one of the top items on California progressives' wish list has been to make Medi-Cal, the publicly funded health insurance program, available to the largest group of uninsured people: undocumented immigrants. In 2019, Newsom signed a law letting young adults as old as 26 sign up. And this year's budget covers those 50 and older.

- **Boost Obamacare subsidies:** Few states embraced the Affordable Care Act like California. In 2019, Newsom proposed a few enhancements: Though Congress stripped the



A free drop-in flu shot clinic at Santa Clara County fairgrounds on Oct. 17, 2020.

PHOTO BY ANNE WERNIKOFF, CALMATTERS