

**Synopsis & Goals:** This five-part documentary web series shines a light on “The California you don’t see on postcards”. The progressive advocacy organization NextGen America, founded by philanthropist and billionaire Tom Steyer, financed the creation of this short, environmental impact series with the goal of public engagement. The series exposes the consequences of lax regulatory enforcement of oil and gas industries. Producer Ali Hart uses humor to take viewers on an entertaining, informative road trip through California with comedian Kiran Deol.

# Case Study: Spotlight California (2016) 9 minute episodes

**Creative Design:** The approach combines of comedy and investigative journalism, with the goal of engaging a broader range of viewers. Deol speaks with Californians who are hit hardest by water and air pollution. Handheld camera techniques add to the investigative feel of the piece. Beauty shots are juxtaposed against the harsh realities of environmental devastation. Hart and Deol collaborated on how to interweave factual data with short comedic bits. For instance, Episode 2 (Water & Oil), which exposes the use of recycled oil water, ends with a comedic sketch of Deol hosting a wine tasting and using wastewater terminology to describe the wines.

**Collaborative Models:** Tom Steyer’s non-profit NextGen America (NextGen Climate) funded the series and Producer Ali Hart worked with NextGen’s policy director to determine calls-to-action for each episode. In addition to the use of comedy, they decided to spotlight an organization involved in creating solutions, such as the Center for a Better Environment, to inspire viewers.



**Outreach Strategies:** The series screened in the New Media Film Festival, San Francisco Green Film Festival and ^ Film Festival. It was the winner of Best Web Series at the New Media Film Festival. Each 9-minute episode ends with Steyer inviting viewers to take action and support local environmental organizations. These call-to-actions were the main outreach strategy, and links provided an easy way for viewers to donate, sign a petition, etc. The series was initially available on NextGen’s Facebook and a dedicated website, as well as YouTube. It now exists solely on YouTube.