

Senate Committee Votes 7-4 in favor of ground-breaking clean energy program

Bill to bring clean energy to low-income communities and communities of color passes Senate Utility Committee

For Immediate Release

Contact: Amy Vanderwarker, CEJA Coordinator [\(206\) 579-3147](tel:2065793147)

Sacramento, CA – Community advocates are one step closer to bringing green jobs to communities impacted by pollution. AB 1990, or “Solar For All,” passed out of the Senate Utility, Energy and Communications Committee with a vote of 7 - 4. Authored by Assemblymember Paul Fong (D-Cupertino), AB 1990 will build small-scale renewable energy projects in low-income communities and communities of color.

“This bill will spur private investment in rooftop solar generation, create high-quality jobs, generate economic growth in low income communities across California, and help the state meet its 33% renewable energy goal,” explains Assemblymember Fong. The bill is sponsored by a coalition of grassroots groups, the California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA).

AB 1990 directs the California Public Utility Commission to create a pilot program for clean energy projects that are 0 – 1 megawatt in size by creating a uniform system of payments for clean energy producers. The program targets projects in communities that are highly impacted by pollution. The next step for the bill will be the Senate Appropriations Committee in August.

“We need jobs in our communities, but we want them to be jobs that reduce climate change and provide a living wage. Low-income communities and communities of color have been heavily hit by the recession, and Solar for All brings green jobs into communities that are struggling to get by,” says CEJA Coordinator Strela Cervas. If passed, Solar for All will create up to 9,000 new jobs. “We have a huge opportunity to rebuild California’s economy with clean energy, but it has got to start in the areas that need it the most.”

AB 1990 targets “disadvantaged communities” that bear a high burden of pollution and face a range of socioeconomic issues, such as low incomes and high unemployment. Research from Los Angeles has shown that some of the best areas to build small-scale solar projects are areas of high economic need.

“For years, our communities have breathed dirty air. The quicker we get more clean energy online, the sooner we reduce the need for dirty energy,” says community advocate Darryl Molina, of Communities for a Better Environment in Los Angeles. “For

too long, renewable energy policy has left out low-income communities and communities of color, but we are the ones who need it the most. AB 1990 will get us one step closer to bridging that green divide.”

###

The California Environmental Justice Alliance is a statewide coalition of community-based groups working to achieve environmental justice by organizing in low-income communities and communities of color – those most impacted by environmental hazards – and pushing for statewide policies that protect public health and the environment. Our members are: Asian Pacific Environmental Network, Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice, Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment, Communities for a Better Environment, Environmental Health Coalition, and People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights.

For more information, please visit: www.caleja.org