



February 10th 2015

NEW CLIMATE LEGISLATION PROMISES TO BENEFIT COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

Senators include low-income communities in plans for a greener California

SACRAMENTO – The California Senate released a sweeping package of bills aimed at addressing climate change today. The measures include creating a target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, divesting California retirement funds from coal, increasing the amount of renewable energy in the state to 50%, reducing use of petroleum, and a study to explore green jobs within the clean energy sector. The announcement of the 4 bill package came from Senate pro Tem de León, Senator Pavley, Senator Hueso, and Senator Leno.

The California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) joined Senators during the announcement, applauding their bold leadership and highlighting the need for this “next generation” of climate policies that benefit and protect low-income communities and communities of color, who are overburdened by the effects of air pollution and climate change.

Statements from CEJA and our member organizations

Asian Pacific Environmental Network

Low-income and immigrant Asian Americans in California know that climate change is a serious threat to their quality of life. Under Senator de León's leadership, environmental justice communities are starting and will continue to benefit from climate policies that bring us closer to the core promises of AB 32: cleaner air for our children, more economic opportunities for our neighborhoods, and a healthier climate for our planet.

Miya Yoshitani, Executive Director

Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment

We strongly support the Senate's commitment to reducing greenhouse gases and look forward to working with them to emphasize the health and job-creating benefits of increased reductions directly from sources in California. Direct reductions will bring desperately needed air pollution reductions and good jobs, which are particularly important to communities in the Central Valley, who suffer from some of the worst air pollution and highest poverty levels in the country.

Caroline Farrell, Executive Director

Communities for a Better Environment

We are enthusiastic and applaud the leadership of Senator de León in proposing aggressive targets in reducing petroleum fuel usage in California. We know that moving towards carbon-free transportation, promoting clean alternative options, and enhancing public transit is a win-win strategy that enhances public health and allows Californians to invest their money in their own state, as opposed to sending it out to oil companies. We look forward to working with Senator de León and other elected officials and implementing agencies to make sure that low-income communities of color are given priority in these investment decisions, and communities most in need benefit significantly from this new green economy.

Byron Gudiel, Executive Director

California Environmental Justice Alliance

The California Environmental Justice Alliance supports the bold climate policies of the Senate leadership. Low-income communities and communities of color have borne a disproportionate burden of pollution for too long, and these policies will equitably reduce emissions in all communities while bringing good jobs to communities that most need them. California needs a strong renewable energy mandate to get to 50 percent renewable energy by 2030 with a clear roadmap to transition off of fossil fuels.

Strela Cervas, Co-Coordinator

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****MEDIA BACKGROUNDER****

9 Key Environmental Justice and Climate Policy Issues for 2015

With a new generation of statewide climate and renewable energy policies being drafted, the California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) would like to share our analysis on some of the key environmental justice and climate issues that are critical to include in the policy proposals that are being formulated in the Legislature.

1. Pass post-2020 greenhouse gas emission targets, as outlined in SB 32. The target should include short-lived climate pollutants and other co-pollutants.
2. Ensure any post-2020 climate goals are achieved through direct emission reductions, with a focus on communities already overburdened with pollution.

3. Transition California to 100 % renewable energy by 2050, with an interim target of 60% renewables by 2030.
4. Bring small-scale renewable energy into the communities most impacted through a feed-in tariff.
5. Create dedicated Environmental Justice staff at the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). Given the range and depth of environmental justice issues at stake within energy, air quality and statewide climate policy, both CPUC and CARB need dedicated staffing with sufficient authority to support implementation of Environmental Justice policies and ensure other policies address Environmental Justice needs.
6. Increase climate investments in disadvantaged communities by, at a minimum, doubling the carve-out for disadvantaged communities within the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to 50%.
7. End our reliance on fossil fuel in the transportation sector, including: reducing emissions from goods movement and freight, and aggressively enhance access to clean transportation alternatives and clean, affordable public transit, especially for low-income Californians. This can be accomplished through a wide range of equity measures including rebates, increased access to charging facilities, financing assistance programs, and car-sharing options.
8. Codify the already established loading order at the California Public Utilities Commission. The state has already prioritized renewable energy, energy efficiency, conservation, and demand response. These strategies should be implemented aggressively over the development of new energy sources, such as natural gas power plants.
9. Ensure energy efficiency programs create high-road, long-term, accessible jobs for communities who have suffered from chronic under and unemployment.

About the California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA)

CEJA is a statewide, community-led alliance that works to achieve environmental justice by advancing policy solutions. We unite the powerful local organizing of our members in the communities most impacted by environmental hazards – low-income communities and communities of color - to create comprehensive opportunities for change at a statewide level. We build the power of communities across California to create policies that will alleviate poverty and pollution.

All together, we represent approximately 15,000 Latino, Asian Pacific American, and African American residents. 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
- People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights