



COMMUNITIES FOR A BETTER ENVIRONMENT established 1978



Acterra ACTION FOR A HEALTHY PLANET



Community Environmental Council



Sustainable Claremont Working for Environmental Economic and Social Sustainability



BOLD CLIMATE ACTION ACCIÓN CLIMÁTICA AUDAZ



Industrial District Green



RUFF



The Honorable Toni Atkins  
 Senate President pro Tempore  
 State Capitol, Room 205  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony Rendon  
 Speaker of the Assembly  
 State Capitol, Room 219  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Nancy Skinner  
 Chair, Senate Budget Committee  
 State Capitol, Room 5094  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Philip C. Ting  
 Chair, Assembly Budget Committee  
 State Capitol, Room 6026  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Recommendations for an Equitable Climate Budget**  
 Date: May 26, 2021

Dear pro Tem Atkins, Speaker Rendon, Senator Skinner, and Assembly Member Ting,

On behalf of the Just Recovery Network, led by the Asian Pacific Environmental Network, The Greenlining Institute, and California Releaf, and the 46 undersigned organizations, we urge the legislature to fully fund programs that maximize climate equity benefits in the most impacted communities. The Administration’s May Revise supports several equity elements, but fails to uplift key resiliency programs that help our most disadvantaged communities build ongoing economic, health, and social resilience alongside responding to climate disasters (e.g., extreme heat, wildfires, smoke waves, power shutoffs, and flooding). The historic state budget surplus must be invested in all equity areas in order to promote a truly just recovery for communities most impacted by poverty and pollution.

- **SGC Community Resilience Centers -- Direct additional \$350M for SGC grant program to expand and complement Governor’s proposed approach involving CDFR and CalOES**

We urge investment in the construction and rehabilitation of neighborhood-based community facilities to achieve community resilience centers that address the growing needs of working class communities of color in the face of the converging climate, economic, public health crises (e.g., wildfires, power outages, smoke waves, extreme heat, and evacuations). This program would enable community-driven and whole building upgrades in order to provide integrated delivery of emergency response services including clean backup power, clean air respite, cooling, food storage and distribution, shelter, telecommunications and broadband services, economic assistance, and other public health measures. We recommend expanding the approach outlined in the May Revise to position the Strategic Growth Council to oversee program administration for “other community facilities” (beyond fairgrounds) including senior and youth centers, park and recreation sites, libraries, health clinics, schools, food banks, community centers, emergency shelters, healthcare centers, nonprofits and places of worship.<sup>1</sup> Community-based organizations and community residents must be involved in governance and decision-making processes for the design and development of the community resilience centers. All of the funds for this program shall be allocated for projects located in and providing direct benefits to disadvantaged communities as described in Section

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<sup>1</sup> We recommend modeling the approach outlined on [pg. 124 in the January 2020-21 Governor’s Proposed Budget](#) which proposed directing “\$225M to the Strategic Growth Council for the construction of new and retrofitting of existing facilities to support adaptation needs to address locally relevant climate risks. These centers will serve both as community evacuation and emergency response centers, and to build long-term resilience and recovery operations for local communities.”

39711 of the Health and Safety Code and vulnerable communities as described in Section of the 71340 of the Public Resources Code.

For more info: Ameer Raval ([amee@apen4ej.org](mailto:amee@apen4ej.org))

- **CSD Low-Income Weatherization Program -- Increase funding to \$375 M from Governor's proposed \$50M**

Clean energy services, including energy efficiency and solar, for low-income households and building owners leading to affordable housing preservation, utility bill reduction, job creation, improvement of resident health, safety, resilience and comfort. Streamlining delivery of energy upgrades through LIWP and home health remediation efforts is also being undertaken with the implementation of AB 1232 (Gloria, 2019), which will ensure that priority populations can access and maximize these integrated benefits quickly.

For more info: Ameer Raval ([amee@apen4ej.org](mailto:amee@apen4ej.org))

- **CalFIRE Urban and Community Forestry -- Increase funding to \$200 M from ZERO new dollars proposed in Governor's May Revise**

Extreme Heat is the next human health hazard to confront Californians as a result of climate change. Local shade trees and local access to nature is critical to the mental and physical health of disproportionately underserved communities – now more than ever, California's urban forests are critical to helping the most vulnerable populations adapt to climate change and create community resiliency against extreme heat. In urban areas, where 90% of Californians live, the primary mechanism to sequester carbon, clean our air, and reduce stormwater runoff is our urban forests. CAL FIRE's Urban & Community Forestry Program advances all of these objectives while also supporting jobs and workforce development in California's most underserved communities and contributing to the goals and objectives of Governor Newsom's Executive Order on Natural and Working Lands.

For more info: Chuck Mills ([cmills@californiareleaf.org](mailto:cmills@californiareleaf.org))

- **SGC Transformative Climate Communities -- Increase funding to \$500 M from Governor's proposed \$420 M**

The Transformative Climate Communities program advances community-led decision-making to address the needs of residents and achieve local transformation. Multiple emission-reducing services delivered in a coordinated way – like affordable solar-powered housing with access to public transit and active transportation – can transform long-neglected neighborhoods into models of economic and environmental sustainability.

For more info: Emi Wang ([emiw@greenlining.org](mailto:emiw@greenlining.org))

- **Low Carbon Transportation Equity Programs -- Increase funding to \$500 M<sup>2</sup> from Governor's proposed \$400 M**

Electric vehicle equity programs have proven health and economic benefits for families and communities. These programs create innovative clean mobility strategies including electric car share and micromobility options that provide alternate modes of connection between people and their jobs.

For more info: Alvaro Sanchez ([alvaros@greenlining.org](mailto:alvaros@greenlining.org)); Leslie Aguayo ([lesliea@greenlining.org](mailto:lesliea@greenlining.org))

- **SGC Regional Climate Collaboratives -- Increase funding to \$35 M from Governor's proposed \$20 M**

Implementation of SB 1072 (Leyva, 2018) to create the Regional Climate Collaboratives program will build the capacity of local communities to make the investments necessary to transition all of California to a climate resilient future. The collaboratives will assist in building community-driven leadership, knowledge,

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<sup>2</sup> We are also advocating for investments for the electrification of medium and heavy duty vehicles through the Charge Ahead Coalition.

skills, technical assistance and resources to identify and access public funding for climate mitigation and adaptation projects.

For more info: Emi Wang ([emiw@greenlining.org](mailto:emiw@greenlining.org))

- **CNRA Urban Greening -- Approve Governor's proposed \$200 M**

Vulnerable populations generally cannot access parks and green spaces within walking distance of their homes. CNRA's Urban Greening Program helps to mitigate these inequalities by increasing access to cool, quiet places to breathe fresh air, exercise, and experience shade and outdoor solitude in disadvantaged and underserved communities. This popular and multi-faceted program can support converting existing built environments into parks; and reduce commute vehicle miles traveled by constructing bicycle paths, bicycle lanes or pedestrian facilities that provide safe routes for travel between residences, workplaces, commercial centers, and schools.

For more info: Chuck Mills ([cmills@californiareleaf.org](mailto:cmills@californiareleaf.org))

- **OPR Vulnerable Communities Mapping Platform -- Approve Governor's proposed \$5 M**

We support the Governor's May proposal for including this priority in the proposed \$5 million under Community resilience. The mapping platform will provide California with a tool that holistically and comprehensively displays the data needed to identify communities most vulnerable to climate change impacts.

For more info: Ameer Raval ([amee@apen4ej.org](mailto:amee@apen4ej.org))

## CONCLUSION

The programs outlined above will help protect California from climate impacts, reduce pollution in the most polluted communities and build community resilience. With the significant budget surplus forecasted for this year, California has a critical opportunity to fully fund these programs at a level commensurate with their demand, while funding other essential climate and equity programs.

Sincerely,

Sona Mohnot  
The Greenlining Institute

Ameer Raval  
Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN)

Chuck Mills  
California ReLeaf

Darryl Molina Sarmiento  
Communities for a Better Environment

Dillon Delvo  
Little Manila Rising

Jan Mignone  
Richmond Trees

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Markos Major  
Climate Action Now!

Katherine McNenny  
Industrial District Green  
(a project of Community Partners)

Lil Milagro Henriquez  
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