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Government  
Commission**

Leaders for Livable Communities

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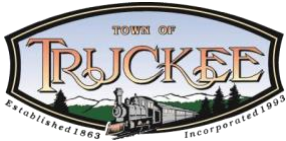
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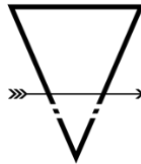


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August 20, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
State Capitol, First Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting  
Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget  
State Capitol, Room 6026  
Sacramento, CA 95814

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

Assemblymember Richard Bloom  
Assembly Budget Subcommittee 3  
State Capitol Building, Room 4085  
Sacramento, CA 95814

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

Senator Bob Wieckowski  
Chair, Subcommittee 2  
State Capitol Building, Room 2003  
Sacramento, CA 95814

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

## **RE: Recommended Climate Resilience Budget Funding Allocations**

Dear State Leadership:

**We urge the legislature in this session to fully commit the entire \$3.7 billion into legislative and administrative priorities for the next several years. We also urge that the \$440M, authorized for FY 21/22, focus on strategic planning, capacity building, technical assistance, and project implementation. We recommend that the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, in coordination with the California Natural Resources Agency, be assigned the role of developing the interagency approach to deploying these resources in a timely and effective manner. This will create a platform for the efficient and effective expenditure of the remaining \$3.26B during the following years.**

On behalf of the **103** undersigned agencies and organizations, representing a diverse coalition of climate adaptation and resilience practitioners and organizations across the state, we offer a set of recommendations on how to allocate the \$3.7 billion "Climate Resilience Package," in the FY21-22 state budget. We urge actions to achieve the highest use and most equitable outcomes of this once-in-a-generation investment.

These recommendations emerged from extensive dialogue and engagement with hundreds of local, regional, and state climate resilience leaders throughout California's government, NGO, civic, and business communities. The process was convened by the Local Government Commission, San Francisco Estuary Institute, Resilient Cities Catalyst, and Farallon Strategies with network support provided by the Alliance of Regional Collaboratives for Climate Adaptation and the California Adaptation Forum (see *Attachment 1*).

We recognize that the magnitude, pace, and catastrophic impacts of climate change in California are extraordinary and devastating. The combined effects of extreme heat, wildfires, drought, and sea level rise are rapidly accelerating, affecting public health and safety, and the economy of most every community in the state. Historically underserved communities are facing the greatest hardships.

Most climate adaptation occurs at the local and regional level. Fortunately, local, regional, and state leaders have been working to establish a framework for multi-agency and community-based efforts to plan and implement equitable, cost-effective, and scalable adaptation actions.

This letter presents an alignment of needed resilience actions and funding levels to empower communities to implement solutions to climate challenges. We thank you in advance for your consideration of our proposal and stand by to answer questions.

There are no “one-size-fits-all” climate resilience solutions for each California community or region. We urge State leaders to allocate the \$3.7B climate resilience package around the following criteria and priorities. This will facilitate resilience efforts that respond most effectively at the local and regional level and prepare communities for the more difficult adaptation challenges ahead.

**Criteria:** We recommend specific funding allocations across fourteen areas of resilience planning and implementation. Our recommendations emphasize the following principles:

- Integrate equity in funding distribution processes. Consider need-based allocations that integrate climate exposure and community sensitivity;
- Elevate the capacity of local and regional leadership to respond and adapt;
- Distribute funding equitably among urban, suburban, and rural areas; and
- Funding should primarily target local jurisdictions, regional authorities and collaboratives, and local community-based organizations (CBOs).

**Priorities:** These priorities reflect the aligned needs of hundreds of urban and rural practitioners across all the conveners’ diverse, statewide engagement forums.

1. **Community Capacity Building** - Fund capacity-building activities and engagement, including training and support to empower local leaders to engage in development and implementation of adaptation plans as well as specific resilience projects. This will directly address climate-related inequalities with under-resourced, marginalized, and low-income communities.
2. **Local and Regional Adaptation Planning** - Fund tribes, cities, and counties to complete and begin implementing adaptation plans and policies (per SB-379). Provide funding incentives to encourage collaboration with adjacent jurisdictions and to create regional adaptation plans that meet the landscape scale of climate challenges. Fund regional governance bodies (e.g., Coastal Zone Management Agencies, regional boards, and COGs/MPOs) to facilitate and support regional adaptation planning and to advise and support grant distribution and administration in their regions, utilizing trusted local and regional science and technical knowledge to provide climate services to support these planning efforts.
3. **Pilot Project Implementation** - Fund climate adaptation implementation projects, concurrent with completion of regional adaptation plans to jumpstart key pilot projects. This will enable the acceleration of scalable adaptation solutions by testing innovative approaches, learning, and sharing best practices, and expanding effective projects.
4. **Community Resilience Centers** - Fund the construction and rehabilitation of neighborhood-based community facilities, with programming delivered in partnership with trusted community-based organizations. These centers can provide integrated delivery of emergency response services including clean backup power, clean air, cooling, food storage and distribution, shelter, telecommunications and broadband services, economic assistance, and other public health measures. They also have the potential to deliver additional co-benefits, with centralized services and programming that fosters greater social cohesion and thriving neighborhoods.
5. **Extreme Heat** - Fund programs and projects that address the human health impacts of extreme heat. These should include both physical investments (such as cool or green roofs and pavements, greening, or cooling centers) and social resilience programs that prepare the most vulnerable communities, like seniors, low-income Californians, or farmworkers, for the disparate impacts of extreme heat.



**Specific Recommendations:** We recommend funding fourteen specific categories as listed below. **Attachment A** outlines the process to compile these aligned recommendations and highlights from two public workshops.

Category	Proposed Climate Resilience Budget Allocations	Funds (In Millions)
<b>CAPACITY BUILDING, SCIENCE, AND PLANNING</b>		
<b>State Climate Assessments, Research &amp; Tools</b>	Fund the Fifth Statewide Climate Change Assessment and support regionally trusted entities with proven experience to provide scientific and technical support to local jurisdictions on common data and analysis.	<b>\$100</b>
<b>State Policy Guidance &amp; Technical Assistance</b>	Fund and staff OPR to provide guidelines and technical support for regional adaptation planning (per AB-897) and community energy resilience planning (per SB-99), as well as to play a key role in the overall grant administration to California's 500+ tribes, cities, counties, and other local agencies.	<b>\$50</b>
<b>Community Capacity Building &amp; Regional Climate Collaboratives</b>	Provide forums for networking and coordination among local planners, regional agencies, and community leaders. Fund established regional collaboratives focused on adaptation (e.g., the seven collaboratives of the Alliance for Regional Collaboratives for Climate Adaptation) and the formation of additional regional collaboratives. Support the integration of SB-1072 collaboratives into these existing structures to engage and involve under-resourced, marginalized, low-income, and rural communities in local/regional adaptation planning and implementation.	<b>\$200</b>
<b>Regional Adaptation Planning</b>	Fund regional governance bodies (e.g., CZM agencies, delta agencies, regional boards, and COGs/MPOs), and assign regional organization leads where there are no formalized regional agencies, to support regional adaptation planning and to advise/support grant distribution and administration in their region.	<b>\$100</b>
<b>Local Adaptation Planning</b>	Fund cities, counties, and tribes to complete and begin implementing adaptation policies in their general plans (per SB-379). Link this funding to incentives and support for collaboration with adjacent jurisdictions to create regional adaptation plans.	<b>\$350</b>
<b>Regional Science &amp; Technical Assistance</b>	Provide science and technical support and local knowledge on key data and resources issues from trusted local and regional sources and institutions (e.g., academic, NGO public and private entities).	<b>\$50</b>
<b>TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>		
<b>Community Resilience Centers</b>	Fund the construction and rehabilitation of neighborhood-based community facilities to establish community resilience centers that provide integrated 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.	<b>\$350</b>
<b>Transformative Climate Communities</b>	Fund SGC's Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) program to create whole community multi-benefit pilot projects to support equitable and transformative climate resilience. TCC advances community-led decision making to achieve local transformation in underserved communities.	<b>\$400</b>
<b>Pilot Project Implementation</b>	Fund climate adaptation implementation projects, subject to completion of General Plan Safety Element updates. This will jumpstart key pilot projects where planning has occurred. It also provides an incentive to cities/counties to update their General Plans.	<b>\$400</b>
<b>Extreme Heat</b>	Fund programs and projects that address the human health impacts of extreme heat.	<b>\$400</b>
<b>Wildfire Health Impacts</b>	Fund programs and projects that mitigate health impacts in communities affected by wildfire smoke.	<b>\$100</b>
<b>Urban Greening and Forestry</b>	Fund Urban Greening and Forestry programs including CNRA's Urban Greening Program and CAL FIRE's Urban and Community Forestry Program.	<b>\$400</b>
<b>Wetlands Restoration</b>	Fund the Ocean Protection Council, Coastal Conservancy, and regional conservancies for coastal, inland, and upland wetlands restoration.	<b>\$300</b>
<b>Low Income Weatherization</b>	Fund the Low-Income Weatherization Program (LIWP). LIWP is a model program for providing energy efficiency and solar installation to low-income renter households.	<b>\$200</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$3.4B</b>

Thank you for your time in considering these recommendations. *Attachment A* provides additional details on our stakeholder engagement process and the funding recommendations that emerged from the dialogues. We welcome further discussion on these recommendations in ways that assist your decision-making processes. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of these recommendations further, please contact Julia Kim of the Local Government Commission at [jkim@lgc.org](mailto:jkim@lgc.org).

Respectfully,

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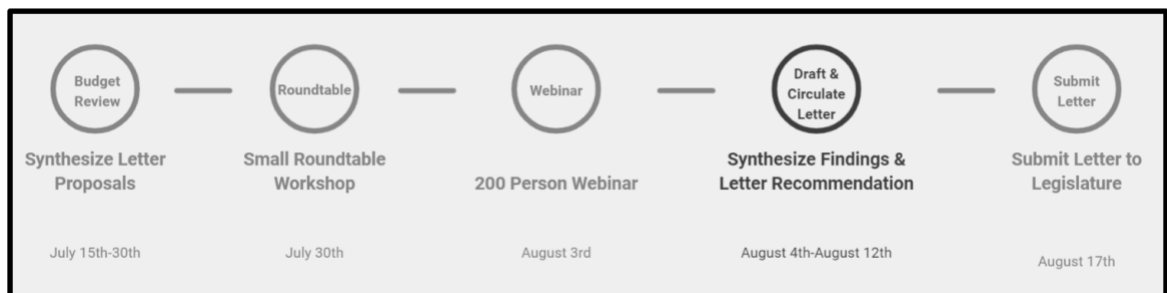
## Attachment A

### Methodology

The conveners included the Local Government Commission, San Francisco Estuary Institute, Resilient Cities Catalyst, and Farallon Strategies, with network support provided by the Alliance of Regional Collaboratives for Climate Adaptation. The conveners utilized a multi-pronged approach (Figure 1) across multiple formats and audiences to consolidate these recommendations. This included:

- **Individual Interviews** – During this process, the conveners also interviewed various local and regional climate resilience leaders across the state as well as state agency officials.
- **Review** – The conveners reviewed and synthesized several previous letter proposals submitted to the legislature by the Local Government Commission, Just Recovery Network, AB585 (Extreme Heat and Community Resilience) Support Group, and the Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability.
- **Survey** – The conveners distributed a Climate Resilience budget survey completed by nearly 400 participants.
- **Workshops** – The conveners facilitated two statewide (Zoom) workshops with key stakeholders. The first workshop convened 35 local and regional experts and practitioners from various regions. They ranked the priorities for their regions and advised the conveners on criteria for adaptation programs. This helped to inform a second statewide workshop with 250 participants.
- **Consolidated recommendations** – The conveners incorporated all of the above input and their experience with multiple resilience projects and adaptation planning efforts to produce the recommended funding allocations.

Figure 1



### A Comprehensive Climate Resilience Strategy

The stakeholders emphasize the need to develop and implement both community-focused efforts and multi-jurisdiction, landscape scale solutions that mitigate impacts from across the spectrum of climate impacts – heat, drought, wildfire, sea level rise, etc. Taken together, the recommended funding categories form a cohesive counterattack to current and likely future challenges. The recommendations are not just about infrastructure or disaster. They address health of Californians. They stand up the economy, the resilience of communities and promote the integration of nature and human wellbeing, which is proven cost effective. They work together to support a comprehensive climate resilience strategy.

### Stakeholder Workshop Highlights and Takeaways

In addition to poll results, the two workshops produced the following highlights and takeaways regarding funding priorities:

## **1. Community Capacity Building**

- Capacity building of historically underfunded grassroots organizations is a key priority to establish education, training, and tools for those communities hardest hit by climate change.
- Community capacity building must be prioritized in the first year's \$440 M allocation to build capacity of organizations to scale their efforts and plan for program design and implementation in subsequent years, allowing them to take advantage of greater investment for greater impact and equity.
- Capacity building will increase the cost effectiveness and improve the potential for long-term success of adaptation and resilience implementation efforts.

## **2. Local and Regional Adaptation Planning**

- Local and regional planning must also be prioritized in the first year \$440 M allocation. This will ensure data and community resources are organized to ensure efficient community engagement and multi-jurisdiction collaboration.

## **3. Pilot Project Implementation**

- Diverse pilot projects should incorporate metrics to measure results and to ensure future scalability. Possible projects might include:
  - Wildfire and extreme heat risk adaptations, including forest thinning, controlled or prescribed burns, strategic retreat, and improved forest buffers
  - Sea level rise adaptation projects, especially nature-based solutions
  - The conversion of public landscape to drought-tolerant landscape and irrigation
  - Protection of existing wetlands and restoration of degraded wetlands
  - Urban greening and forestry, cooler streets and roofs to address extreme heat and shade inequity
  - Microgrid implementation, housing electrification, and the expansion of low-carbon transportation

## **4. Community Resilience Centers**

- Stakeholders overwhelmingly prioritized Community Resilience Centers, to provide critical support during extreme heat and wildfire events and other emergencies.
- There was strong support to prioritize disadvantaged, underserved vulnerable communities for the location of these centers.
- There was also strong support for engaging community-based organizations in the design and governance of these facilities.

## **5. Extreme Heat**

- Participants emphasized that many communities across the state are behind on preparedness for extreme heat events, and heat mitigation strategies have inadequate integration with public health approaches.
- AB 585 (L Rivas) was cited as a source of possible extreme heat policies and programs.