



Our mission

Deliver rapid greenhouse gas reductions at scale, starting in California.

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April 13, 2022

The Honorable Senator Lena Gonzalez
Chair, Senate Transportation Chair
State Capitol, 1020 N Street, Room 405

RE: SB 1251 (Gonzalez) SUPPORT

Dear Chair Gonzalez:

The Climate Center is a climate and energy policy nonprofit working to rapidly reduce climate pollution at scale, starting in California. On behalf of The Climate Center and its thousands of supporters throughout the State, I am pleased to support your bill SB 1251, which will create the Office of the Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Equity Advocate within the Governor's office to ensure that California is advancing equitable and efficient policies as the State moves toward its ambitious ZEV and related infrastructure deployment goals.

California is a world leader in the ZEV market: in 2020, ZEVs were California's number one export¹, and California accounted for half of all plug-in cars purchased in the United States².

However, low-income households of color are far less likely to own ZEVs than white, higher-income households. As of 2019, fewer than six percent of California ZEVs were registered in the upper 80th percentile of CalEnviroScreen score census tracts.³ On top of inequitable access to ZEVs, emissions from heavily polluting diesel trucks disproportionately impact black and brown communities. A study from the Union of Concerned Scientists found that on average, African American, Latino, and Asian Californians are exposed to dangerous particulate matter exhaust from cars and trucks at levels 21 to 43 percent higher than for white Californians.⁴

SB 1251 will address the current inequity in ZEV deployment by creating the Office of the ZEV Equity Advocate that will:

- Facilitate connection between community groups and agencies regarding ZEV equity;
- Help to align equity definitions, planning, and metrics across agencies and programs;
- Make recommendations on new funding and programs to promote a truly equitable ZEV deployment; and
- Evaluate progress toward equitably achieving the State's ZEV goals.

¹ <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/state/data/ca.html>

² <https://afdc.energy.gov/data/10962>

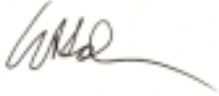
³ <https://innovation.luskin.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/An-Agenda-for-Equity-Centered-Clean-Transportation.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.uclusa.org/resources/inequitable-exposure-air-pollution-vehicles-california-2019>

Through these actions, SB 1251 will ensure that the State is moving toward effective community and equity-centered ZEV goals in the most efficient manner possible.

For all of these reasons, we are pleased to support SB 1251 and thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ellie Cohen', with a long, sweeping underline.

Ellie Cohen, Chief Executive Officer
The Climate Center