



***“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”
- African proverb***

August 5, 2022

*Updated August 12 and 17 2022 with additional signatories

Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Toni Atkins
President pro Tempore, California State Senate
1021 O Street, Room 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Anthony Rendon
Speaker, California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Room 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Environmental justice and environmental priorities for climate legislation package

Dear Governor Newsom, Pro Tem Atkins, and Speaker Rendon,

On behalf of the undersigned environmental justice and environmental organizations, we appreciate your call for bold climate action, and we stand ready to assist you in the remaining weeks of this legislative session to meet the moment by enacting ambitious and equitable climate legislation. *How* we accelerate that action is of greatest importance. With intention, we can act swiftly and decisively to solve big problems inclusively, centering the voices and needs of frontline communities.

Our organizations have deep expertise and experience with the issues recently highlighted by the Governor as priorities to act on before August 31st. The Governor's commitments should not replace or negate existing legislative and budget priorities that individual environmental justice and environmental organizations have advanced this year.

Using the Governor's stated priorities as a foundation, for an ambitious and equitable climate package, we offer the following priorities:

1. We generally support codifying the goal to achieve carbon neutrality no later than 2045. However, it is imperative that this goal be paired with a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 90% below the 1990 level in the same timeframe. This ensures that California is maximizing its direct emission reductions and not over-relying on engineered carbon removal strategies. A goal of 90% reductions is in line with 2020 carbon neutrality modeling commissioned by the California Air Resources Board.¹
2. We support accelerating the 2030 target to achieve at least a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below the 1990 level. This would put California among the world's leaders in near-term climate ambition. More importantly, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has found that the world could exceed the 1.5 degree Celsius threshold of dangerous warming as early as 2030²; maximizing emission reductions this decade is imperative for California to do its part to address global climate change.
3. We support setting an ambitious 2030 goal for carbon removal and sequestration in natural and working lands (NWL). These actions will enable the State to both reach its

¹ https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2020-10/e3_cn_final_report_oct2020_0.pdf

² Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2018, Global warming of 1.5°C: An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty, pp. 6, 17. https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2018/07/SR15_SPM_version_stand_alone_LR.pdf.

climate goals while reaping the many co-benefits for resilience, biodiversity, community health, and water and food security. Strengthening and aligning our NWL goals with rural and community development pathways will also open economic and job opportunities.

4. We can only support a carbon capture and storage (CCS) policy framework that protects communities and the climate. CCS would only be appropriate to consider for processes and end uses that cannot be feasibly served by non-emitting alternatives and do not extend the life of California's fossil fuel infrastructure. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to:
 - a. A full and permanent ban on the use of captured or removed carbon dioxide for enhanced oil recovery;
 - b. Elimination of carbon capture as strategy to reduce emissions at California's refineries as it would prolong adverse health impacts of refinery pollution, and introduces other hazardous conditions;
 - c. Ensuring that, at a minimum, the installation of carbon capture technology does not increase local air pollution and that each project seeks to improve air quality in the surrounding community;
 - d. Ongoing monitoring to ensure no water or air contamination near carbon dioxide transportation routes and storage sites, and that measures are taken to prevent air and other pollution caused by the construction and re-use of injection wells and transportation of carbon dioxide to storage sites;
 - e. Robust assessment of potential seismic impacts around storage sites as well as ongoing monitoring for seismic activity and any gas leaks that may result;
 - f. Demonstration that all carbon dioxide storage sites must be capable of 1000 years of storage and ensuring that project developers provide for 100 years of monitoring and financial responsibility;
 - g. Ensuring free, prior, and informed consent from communities around the installation of carbon capture technology and those around carbon dioxide storage sites;
 - h. Preventing long-term liability and costs from falling to taxpayers and communities by ensuring that project proponents pay into a forward bond to ensure that incidents are paid for by the project proponents.
5. Engineered carbon dioxide removal (CDR) of past, excess climate pollution from the atmosphere is a separate and distinct climate strategy from carbon capture. However, the same guardrails listed above for carbon capture should apply to sites where carbon removal technology is installed, the transportation of removed carbon dioxide, and the carbon dioxide storage sites.
6. We support an ambitious transition away from dependence on fossil fuels, coupled with meaningful engagement with and support for communities historically most impacted by or economically dependent on the fossil fuel industry. This should include:

- a. Sustained high road employment opportunities for impacted workers and communities and assistance for displaced workers;
 - b. Requiring transportation funding programs overseen by the Transportation Commission to incorporate strategies outlined in the California Transportation Plan and Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure in their guidelines and plans;
 - c. Ensuring that clean transportation fuels programs include accurate analyses of full lifecycle greenhouse gas and air quality emissions and don't result in disproportionate air and water pollution in lower income communities or communities of color;
 - d. Advancing zero emission vehicle standards to curb tailpipe emissions;
 - e. Identifying and sealing methane leaks from oil and gas infrastructure, prioritizing those in and near already overburdened communities;
 - f. Investing in community-scale and community-owned energy infrastructure, including community solar and storage, to strengthen grid reliability and provide economic savings to low-income families;
 - g. Ensuring low-income families are safe in their homes and do not bear the burden of the transition to clean energy and emissions reductions.
7. We support codifying a 3200' setback between oil and gas wells and sensitive receptors, including a process to shut down existing wells within the setback zone.
8. We support the acceleration of clean electricity targets and establishing interim targets to ensure California is on track to meet its power sector decarbonization goals. However, our full coalition can only collectively support accelerating clean energy targets if *truly* clean energy is eligible to meet these targets and that any electricity generation technologies and feedstocks that create local and regional pollution are excluded from definitions of clean, zero carbon, and/or renewable energy. Relying on truly clean, renewable, and non-polluting electricity, including using clean distributed energy resources, is essential because decarbonizing the entire economy means electrifying as much as possible, as quickly as possible. Broadly, this acceleration framework should achieve at least:
- a. 90% renewable and zero-carbon electricity by 2035;
 - b. 95% renewable and zero-carbon electricity by 2040; and,
 - c. 100% renewable and zero-carbon electricity by 2045.

We are excited to partner with you all to double down on California's status as a global leader in the fight against climate change. Our organizations represent a significant number of Californians and working together, we can achieve significant policy goals commensurate with the rapidly worsening crisis. We urge you to continue and strengthen our partnership in advancing these priorities. Our organizations, stakeholders, and communities have been engaged on these issues for years to ensure climate policy is effective, equitable, and impactful.

We look forward to meaningful and ongoing partnership with each of you and your teams as we together move California toward a more equitable and more climate-safe future.

Let's do this. Let's go far. By going together.

Sincerely,

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