



USCDornsife
Equity Research Institute

A Call to Invest in Community Power

FULL REPORT

Lessons from 10 Years of California Climate
Investments for the State and the Nation



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Equity Research Institute



Lessons from 10 Years of California Climate Investments (CCI)

California Climate Policy Summit

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Questions behind our project, an equity focused analysis of CCI outcomes

- After 10 years, where have CCI dollars gone? Who have they served?
- How well has CCI centered marginalized communities in its goals, processes, and outcomes?
- What are strengths and areas for improvement?
- What lessons can be leveraged for future similar climate investments in California and beyond?



Approach

- **Quantitative analysis** of where dollars have been implemented by census tract.
- **Case studies of 10 programs** using interviews, program materials, implementation data.
- **Focus groups** with 3 communities: Eastern Coachella Valley, Oxnard, and Richmond.
- **Interviews** with environmental justice advocates and community-based organizations on CCI strengths and areas for improvement. Discussions with CARB to understand CCI implementation processes. In aggregate, we spoke with **100+** interviewees / informants.



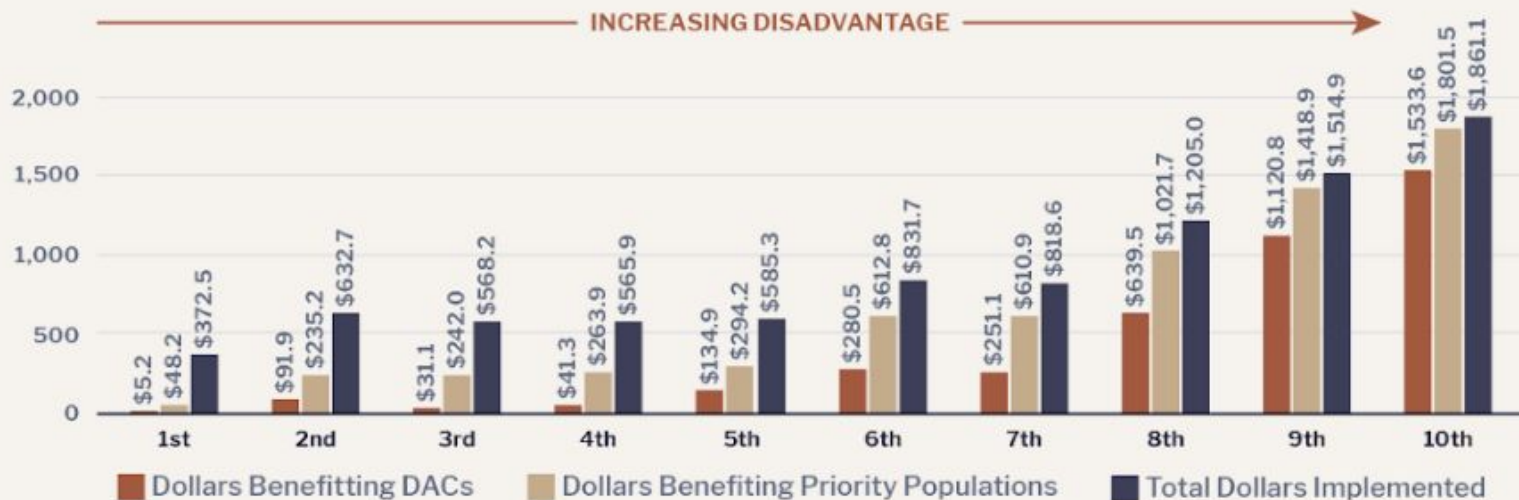
What's working and not working?

- **Across the state, projects are landing in DACs, low-income communities, and/or low-income households** (73% of implemented dollars as of November 2022)
- **There seems to be limited awareness and visibility of CCI projects in impacted communities**
- **The exception is with programs that are community-driven**, well coordinated, and/or provide direct and tangible benefits (e.g., TCC, AHSC, Community Solar, parts of Forest Health)
- **Some projects (e.g., methane digesters / alternative fuels) face continuous pushback** from local residents; some programs show mixed results or limited tangible benefits to priority communities.
- **There are opportunities to improve**, particularly around producing deeper economic benefits and flexibly supporting the climate investment needs of underserved communities (e.g., soil, water, air).

Funding from CCI is landing in priority communities— an anticipated response to SB 535 / AB 1550

FIGURE 2

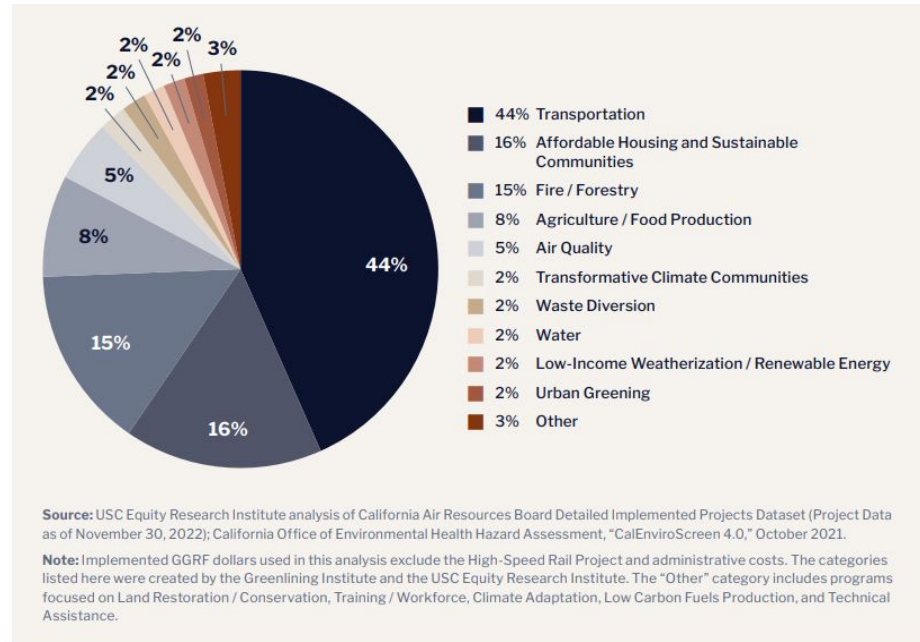
GGRF Dollars Implemented by CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Deciles as of November 2022 (\$ in Millions)



Most CCI funding is going towards investment types that were identified as being helpful and desired by interviewed EJ / community groups

- Transportation
- Housing
- Urban Greening
- Air Quality
- Water infrastructure
- Solar

CCI dollars implemented by program categories as of November 2022 (\$9.2B)



Awareness, visibility, and felt impact limited at the local level

At the local level, many interviewees were not aware of most CCI-funded projects in their communities e.g., tree planting, parks, transit projects, agricultural equipment replacements

GGRF dollars implemented in selected communities as of Nov 2022:

- Eastern Coachella Valley - \$65 million
- Richmond - \$39 million
- Oxnard - \$36 million



Reference: CCI projects implemented in the Eastern Coachella Valley as of Nov 2022

Programs Implemented in Eastern Coachella Valley	Implemented GGRF Dollars
Community Air Protection Incentives	\$25,509,677
Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program	\$14,895,908
Urban Greening Program	\$7,368,861
Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program	\$5,018,167
Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund	\$2,691,829
Food Production Investment Program	\$2,232,584
Single-Family Solar Photovoltaics (PV)	\$1,359,166
Farmworker Housing	\$1,143,557
Clean Mobility Options	\$1,043,300
Clean Truck and Bus Vouchers (HVIP)	\$936,000
Low Carbon Transit Operations Program	\$828,394
Community Air Grants	\$562,053
Single-Family Energy Efficiency and Solar PV	\$250,987
Food Waste Prevention and Rescue Grants	\$250,000
Transformative Climate Communities (Community)	\$200,000
SB 1383 Local Assistance Grant Program	\$189,573
Clean Vehicle Rebate Project	\$160,750
State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program	\$152,786
Technical Assistance Program	\$78,182
Training and Workforce Development Program	\$26,424
Clean Cars 4 All	\$12,000
Financing Assistance for Lower-Income Consumers	\$5,000
Total	\$64,915,197

Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of California Air Resource Board of Detailed Implemented Projects Dataset (Project Data as of November 30, 2022).

Note: GGRF amount refers to the \$9.2 billion that is subject to investment minimums and excludes high-speed rail and admin.

Reference: CCI projects implemented in Richmond as of Nov 2022

Programs Implemented in Richmond	Implemented GGRF Dollars
Community Air Protection Incentives	\$8,947,669
Urban Greening Program	\$8,114,025
Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program	\$5,077,558
Community Air Grants	\$2,402,550
Clean Vehicle Rebate Project	\$2,081,871
Clean Mobility Options	\$2,048,857
Multi-Family Energy Efficiency and Renewables	\$1,904,425
Low Carbon Transit Operations Program	\$1,686,678
Urban and Community Forestry	\$1,337,226
Clean Truck and Bus Vouchers (HVIP)	\$868,235
Single-Family Energy Efficiency and Solar PV	\$673,127
Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program	\$513,333
Clean Cars 4 All	\$496,981
Reuse Grant Program	\$494,800
Climate Change Adaptation and Coastal Resilience Planning	\$447,956
Clean Off Road Equipment Voucher Incentive Project	\$406,000
Food Waste Prevention and Rescue Grants	\$327,500
Financing Assistance for Lower-Income Consumers	\$315,963
Single-Family Solar Photovoltaics (PV)	\$302,675
Climate Ready Program	\$274,515
SB 1383 Local Assistance Grant Program	\$156,235
Technical Assistance Program	\$102,828
Training and Workforce Development Program	\$83,874
Total	\$39,064,881

Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of California Air Resource Board of Detailed Implemented Projects Dataset (Project Data as of November 30, 2022).

Note: GGRF amount refers to the \$9.2 billion that is subject to investment minimums and excludes high-speed rail and admin.

Reference: CCI projects implemented in Oxnard as of Nov 2022

Programs Implemented in Oxnard	Implemented GGRF Dollars
Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program	\$23,796,689
Low Carbon Transit Operations Program	\$6,245,280
Clean Vehicle Rebate Project	\$1,454,787
Urban Greening Program	\$1,200,000
Community Air Protection Incentives	\$914,290
Low-Carbon Economy Workforce	\$551,554
SB 1383 Local Assistance Grant Program	\$289,476
Urban and Community Forestry	\$276,048
Food Waste Prevention and Rescue Grants	\$249,647
Clean Truck and Bus Vouchers (HVIP)	\$219,250
Wildfire Prevention Grants Program	\$196,436
Farmworker Housing	\$194,084
Community Air Grants	\$165,641
Multi-Family Energy Efficiency and Renewables	\$162,450
Clean Mobility Options	\$49,804
Financing Assistance for Lower-Income Consumers	\$25,000
Technical Assistance Program	\$21,461
Single-Family Energy Efficiency and Solar PV	\$12,993
Single-Family Solar Photovoltaics (PV)	\$3,859
Total	\$36,028,749

Source: USC Equity Research Institute analysis of California Air Resource Board of Detailed Implemented Projects Dataset (Project Data as of November 30, 2022).

Note: GGRF amount refers to the \$9.2 billion that is subject to investment minimums and excludes high-speed rail and admin.

What is happening at the local level?

Limited awareness of investments

- "I didn't know that that was actually happening, in part because the impact is not there."
 - Richmond Our Power Coalition

Fragmented programs make it difficult for local groups to coordinate and engage

- "I feel like we [local groups] haven't really worked together. I think there are probably places where...we would have been more effective at getting money for our region [had we coordinated]"
 - Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE)

In some cases, large sums of CCI funding in a region have gone towards investments that were not identified to be priority community needs (i.e., agricultural equipment purchases in ECV)

What's working well?

Awareness, visibility, and felt impact

Felt impact seems strongest when projects are community-driven, well-coordinated, and provide tangible benefits



Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) allows communities to plan and implement a **coordinated portfolio** of climate projects using **collaborative governance structures** that center residents in decision-making

- Consistently one of the few programs that many focus group participants and interviewees were aware of and supported
- Tangible, visible benefits in DACs
- Large and difficult application, but program oversubscribed

What's working well?

Awareness, visibility, and felt impact



Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities (AHSC) funds transit-oriented affordable housing development.

- Requires a significant level of **community engagement as well as collaboration** and coordination between developers, transit agencies, and local governments.
- Funded projects have yielded **positive reception among many local residents for the comprehensive benefits and assets** provided by the program
- Has created smoother development processes as well as lasting partnerships between stakeholders for many projects

What's working well?

Awareness, visibility, and felt impact



Community Solar featured **direct participation** by Tribal members to construct the solar project. **Well-coordinated project management** (by GRID Alternatives) allowed for community to access assets and benefits while bearing minimal administrative burdens.



Forest Health has funded several projects already in place, that were being **led and implemented by tribal entities**. In some cases, trusted mediaries (e.g., regional watershed councils) played a key role in managing the administrative and financial requirements of the grant.

What's not working well or could be improved?

- **Some projects (e.g., methane digesters / alternative fuels)** face continuous pushback from local residents for perpetuating inequities and claiming benefits without proper accounting of harms
- **Some programs show mixed results to-date** (e.g., High Speed Rail, AB 617)
- **Some programs show limited tangible benefits for priority communities** (e.g., Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation)



When it comes to economic benefits for Priority Communities, the data is murky

Main economic benefits reported for CCI have been **job creation and cost savings** (e.g., on energy, transportation)

Data limitations

- Who are dollars and economic benefits reaching? (e.g., businesses (type, size), households, tribes, nonprofits, local governments)
- Jobs outcomes are modelled and difficult to verify; job quality information limited
- Limited tracking of community benefits agreements, project labor agreements, community workforce agreements

Cumulative Modeled Jobs

58,000+

directly supported jobs

21,000+

indirectly supported jobs

36,000+

induced jobs

Source:

https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/auction-proceeds/cci_annual_report_2024.pdf

When it comes to economic benefits for Priority Communities, there are opportunities for improvement

CCI program design

- More specific **targets and goals** around economic benefits, economic equity, and wealth building opportunities for low-income households
- **Stronger requirements** across CCI programs (e.g., **local and targeted hiring, procurement, community benefits or workforce agreements**, as relevant)
 - **Potential expansion of statutes like AB 680** which requires workforce standards for four particular programs

Some examples of CCI programs creating tangible economic benefits and/or wealth building opportunities



Community solar owned by tribe funded through the Community Solar Pilot Program



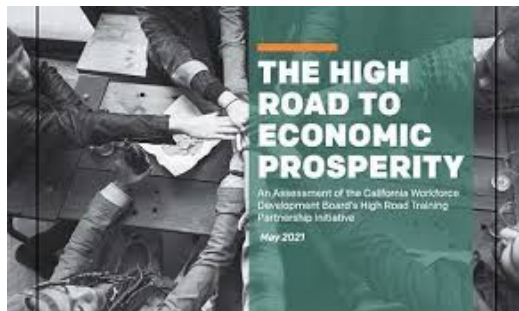
Low-income home ownership project funded by the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities program (AHSC)



Dedicated hiring of Section 3 workers for capital projects and integration of anti-displacement strategies into funding opportunity in AHSC



Pass-thru dollars to tribes for land management and cultural burns funded through Forest Health program



High Roads Training Partnership program which advanced industry-based, worker-centered partnerships and trainings to address industry and workforce needs

Needs for climate investments in EJ communities are immense, many outside strictly GHG reduction

- Land remediation (Richmond)
- Water quality (ECV)
- Air pollution (Richmond, ECV)
- Infrastructure (ECV)
- Pesticides (Oxnard, ECV)



Community members distributing masks to workers in Oxnard.
PHOTO CREDIT: CENTRAL COAST ALLIANCE UNITED FOR A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY (CAUSE).

Key lessons in the context of reauthorization

1. **Climate investments produce the most visible, felt impacts when projects are community-driven**, have significant community buy-in and involvement, and produce tangible outcomes (e.g., housing, solar).
1. **Some programs may be actively harmful to selected communities**; if there is ongoing concern and debatable benefits, funding for these programs should be carefully scrutinized.
1. **CCI can be used to produce deeper economic benefits for low-income households and communities**. Stronger goals and requirements across programs (e.g., local and targeted hiring, procurement, community benefits or workforce agreements, as relevant) could support this.
1. **In many pollution-burdened communities, the immense and wide-ranging scale of need for climate investments would be supported by funding that can flexibly address environmental priorities** (e.g., GHG as well as air pollution, water quality, toxic soil remediation).

Thank you!

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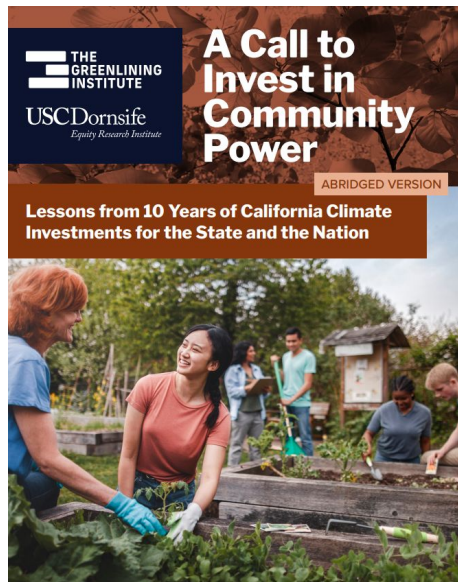


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Access report *abridged and full versions*



<https://greenlining.org/publications/a-call-to-invest-in-community-power-lessons-from-10-years-of-california-climate-investments-for-the-state-and-the-nation/>