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ST. VINCENT'S HILL NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION



JUSTONETREE



RUFF<sup>1</sup>





Industrial District Green



Carbon Cycle Institute



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

The Honorable Richard Bloom  
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 3  
Subcommittee 2  
State Capitol, Room 2003  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Bob Wieckowski  
Chair, Senate Budget  
State Capitol, Room 4085  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Recommendations for an Equitable Climate Budget to Build Community Resilience**

Date: June 28, 2021

Dear Speaker Rendon, Pro Tem Atkins, Assemblymember Ting, Assemblymember Bloom, Senator Skinner, Senator Wieckowski, and members of Governor Newsom’s Administration,

On behalf of the Just Recovery Network, led by the Asian Pacific Environmental Network, The Greenlining Institute, and California Releaf, and the 60+ undersigned organizations, we strongly urge the Governor’s administration and the legislature to fully fund programs that maximize climate equity benefits and build *community resilience* in the most impacted communities. Many of the programs outlined below were zeroed out and/or were not allocated adequate funding in the Senate’s budget proposal or Governor’s May Revise. The State must expand its definition of “climate resilience” to go beyond investments in natural resources and support critical community resilience initiatives that can help ensure communities hit hardest by climate change have the resources, infrastructure, capacity and leadership needed to cope with the cumulative climate, health and economic crises they are experiencing. Especially in the wake of the COVID-19, the ongoing climate crisis, and increasing levels of economic inequality, we must prioritize climate equity programs that meet the multiple environmental, health, energy, transportation, social, and economic needs of communities hit first and worst by these multiple threats. Moreover, given the historic state budget surplus, resources must be invested in all equity areas in order to promote a truly just recovery for communities most impacted by poverty and pollution.

We specifically urge you to consider the following requests:

- **SGC Community Resilience Centers --\$350M to SGC Grants for the Construction and Rehabilitation of Neighborhood-Based Community Facilities**

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 current approach by directing 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 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 ([ameer@apen4ej.org](mailto:ameer@apen4ej.org))

- **SGC Transformative Climate Communities -- \$500 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))

- **CalFIRE Urban and Community Forestry -- \$200 M**

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))

- **CSD Low-Income Weatherization Program -- \$225 M**

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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.”

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 ([ameer@apen4ej.org](mailto:ameer@apen4ej.org))

- **Low Carbon Transportation Equity Programs -- \$500 M<sup>2</sup>**

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 --\$35 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, 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 -- \$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 -- \$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 ([ameer@apen4ej.org](mailto:ameer@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.

We respectfully ask for your support of this budget request.

Sincerely,

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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.

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