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Historic Environmental Justice Bills Advance in 2016 Legislative Session

Environmental Justice Advocates Applaud Passage of 5 Bills

Sacramento, CA | September 1, 2016 — The California Assembly and Senate passed 5 bills this week that advance a range of important measures to address the disproportionate burden of pollution and climate change on communities of color in California. The [California Environmental Justice Alliance](#) (CEJA), an alliance of grassroots environmental justice groups, was a key supporter for many of the bills. From promoting equitable land use to innovative climate investments, these measures take bold steps for environmental justice in statewide policy and continue California's leadership on cutting edge solutions to climate change. CEJA and members of the alliance worked on 5 ground-breaking bills: SB 1000 (Leyva), AB 2722 (Burke), SB 32 (Pavley), AB 197 (E. Garcia), and AB 1550 (Gomez).

"SB 1000 will help to ensure that cities and counties analyze and address the potential environmental justice impacts on communities across California. We must continue to do all we can to protect vulnerable residents and their families from pollution and other hazards that disproportionately affect residents in disadvantaged communities," said Senator Connie Leyva, author of SB 1000. "I thank CEJA and all of the other committed coalition partners for fighting hard this year to get this bill to the finish line. I look forward to making our case to the Governor in the days ahead that SB 1000 deserves his signature so that we can help to protect the health and safety of cities and counties in California."

"We applaud the legislature's leadership in passing a comprehensive climate package. These bills are critical to California's communities of color and represent a down payment on the state's commitment to equitable solutions to the climate crisis. Low-income, Asian immigrants and refugees across the state, from Richmond to Los Angeles to Coachella, have long endured pollution in the places where we live, work, and play," said Miya Yoshitani, Executive Director of [Asian Pacific Environmental Network](#). Now, our families will benefit from solutions that reduce fossil fuel pollution, improve the air our children breathe, and secure critical investments for our most deeply impacted neighborhoods. These legislative wins are landmark victories for environmental justice and will serve as a model for states across the country."

SB 32 (Pavley) and AB 197 (E. Garcia) are historic climate bills. SB 32 sets some of the most ambitious greenhouse gas emission goals in the nation, and AB 197 helps ensure the California Air Resources Board will take critical steps towards reducing emissions from local pollution sources that harm health and air quality, while making the Board more accountable to stakeholders.

The bills were accompanied by several measures to increase investments in environmental justice communities, including AB 1550 by Assemblymember E Garcia and AB 2722 by Assemblymember Burke. AB 2722 creates the Transformative Climate Communities program, which received \$140 million in funding from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.

"AB 2722 will create an innovative new Transformative Climate Communities program in California that will entail deep investments in our most overburdened communities. It will fund large-scale climate projects that have public health, social and economic benefits. This is the future of all planning in California, and we have started it today with AB 2722," said Amy Vanderwarker, Co-Director of CEJA.

“We also applaud the Senate pro Tem, the Speaker of the Assembly and other members of the budget committee for assembling a Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund spending plan that not only funds the Transformative Climate Communities program, but also includes many line items that invest existing climate revenues immediately in projects that will help stop climate change and directly benefit low-income communities and communities of color,” continued Vanderwarker.

The California legislature passed AB 1613, which outlines a one year spending plan for the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. The bill authorized the expenditure of \$900 million in cap and trade revenues. In addition to the \$140 million for Transformative Climate Communities, the bill included funding for electrification of heavy duty vehicles and programs to increase access of low-income communities to electric vehicles, urban greening, and outreach to environmental justice communities.

Overview of environmental justice bills passed by the California legislature in the 2016 session:

- **SB 1000 (Leyva)** - Will improve local planning efforts to reduce disproportionate environmental and health impacts on California’s most vulnerable residents by ensuring that local governments include an EJ element in General Plans when they are updated.
 - *SB 1000 passed the Senate with a 25-13 vote and the Assembly 47-28.*
- **AB 2722 (Burke)** - Will create a comprehensive approach to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by creating a new Transformative Climate Communities program in disadvantaged communities that are most burdened by, and vulnerable to, high levels of pollution. This program will help cities, local jurisdictions, and communities accelerate sustainability plans and help California meet its ambitious climate change goals.
 - *AB 2722 passed the Senate with a 25-12 vote and the Assembly 49-27.*
- **SB 32 (Pavley)** - Requires Air Resources Board to approve a statewide greenhouse gas emissions limit that is equivalent to 40% below the 1990 level to be achieved by 2030.
 - *SB 32 passed the Senate with a 25-13 vote and the Assembly 48-31.*
- **AB 197 (E. Garcia)** - Initiates changes in terms and governance on the Air Resources Board, including setting six year terms for board members, and requires the Board to consider adopting measures that result in direct reductions from major stationary source polluters and from tailpipes, which account for almost 40% of all GHG emissions.
 - *AB 197 passed the Senate with a 23-13 and the Assembly 45-30.*
- **AB 1550 (Gomez)** - Requires allocation of a minimum of 25% of the available moneys in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to projects located within, and benefitting individuals living in, disadvantaged communities and a separate and additional unspecified percentage to projects that benefit low-income households, with a fair share of those moneys targeting households with incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.
 - *AB 1550 passed the Senate with a 26-12 vote and the Assembly 53-22.*

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California Environmental Justice Alliance is a statewide, community-led alliance that works to achieve environmental justice by advancing policy solutions. We unite the powerful local organizing of our members in the communities most impacted by environmental hazards – low-income communities and communities of color - to create comprehensive opportunities for change at a statewide level. We build the power of communities across California to create policies that will alleviate poverty and pollution. Together, we are growing the statewide movement for environmental health and social justice.

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