

California Environmental Justice Alliance

2012 Year in Review

CEJA is a statewide coalition of grassroots, environmental justice organizations. We are working to achieve environmental justice by organizing in low-income communities and communities of color – those most impacted by environmental hazards – and by pushing for policies at the federal and state levels that protect public health and the environment. CEJA unites the powerful local organizing efforts of members to create comprehensive opportunities for change at a statewide level. We combine grassroots organizing and movement-building with strategic policy advocacy.

The California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) is comprised of six grassroots, leading environmental justice organizations throughout California: Asian Pacific Environmental Network; Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice; Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment; Communities for a Better Environment; Environmental Health Coalition; and People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights. Our mission is to strengthen the progressive environmental justice movement in California by building on the local organizing efforts and advocacy successes of our member organizations to achieve state policy change.

We organize in low-income communities and communities of color to push for policies at the local, state and national levels that protect the environment and public health. CEJA represents approximately 15,000

Latino, Asian Pacific American, and African American residents in the San Francisco Bay Area, San Joaquin Valley, Los Angeles area, Inland Valley and San Diego/Tijuana area.

2012 was a year of inspiration and growth for us. Throughout the course of the year, we battled big utility companies, engaged new community leaders who live with the day-to-day impacts of environmental inequalities, navigated the complex world of California politics and policy, and built our organizational infrastructure.

2013 is full of exciting opportunities for CEJA, and we will build off our hard work of the past year to continue growing a strong movement for environmental justice in California and beyond!



CEJA shines at the Capitol during our 2012 Member Congresso

Climate Justice and Local Clean Energy

CEJA is working to bridge the “green divide,” putting clean energy directly in communities of color who are currently left out of the environmental and economic benefits of clean energy production. A strong clean energy infrastructure is critical to stopping climate change, and we have launched a major push to build small-scale, decentralized clean energy systems that create highly efficient, localized power generation in environmental justice communities. These projects can generate hundreds of thousands of green jobs, starting with those communities who are most in need, and fuel a new economy and workforce in California. Small-scale projects can directly address the historical legacy of dirty energy production in environmental justice communities by ensuring that those who have paid the highest price for fossil fuel production get clean energy and see their highly impacted neighborhoods improve.

CEJA brings the voice of equity and health to clean energy policy. For too long, energy policy has been dominated by large utilities. We approach clean energy from a place that speaks to the needs of low-income communities and communities of color. It is this unique perspective that will ensure that everyone benefits environmentally and economically from California’s growing green economy.

In 2012, with an amazing group of talented staff from CEJA member organizations, we ran our first piece of legislation. AB 1990, or “Solar for All,” authored by Assemblymember Paul Fong, was the first piece of legislation ever that would have created a small-scale renewable energy program targeting low-income communities and communities of color. While it did not make it past its final hurdle to the Governor’s desk, it made it farther than many first-year bills. It got through some of the toughest policy committees – like the Senate Utilities Committee – until it was killed by an all-out attack from large utility companies.

Despite this outcome, our 2012 Solar for All campaign was a huge suc-



cess. From our entry into renewable energy advocacy three years ago, we have faced an uphill battle. Decision-makers did not understand how clean energy development often leaves out those communities who need it the most. We did the hard work of educating public officials, from the California Energy Commission, to the legislature to the Governor’s office, on the need for small-scale clean energy in low-income communities.

And we were compelling: through the hard work of our community and coalition members, we have secured champions in the legislature and key agencies who are now working with CEJA to ensure small-scale clean energy is developed equitably in California.

The number of allies who joined the Solar For All campaign showed how exciting our vision for decentralized, community-scale, democratized clean energy can be. We secured over 100 letters of support for the bill, from large environmental organizations to small community-based organizations. We built a new bridge between environmental justice groups and environmental groups, who have for years struggled to find common ground. We developed unprecedented relationships with progressive business groups and solar companies. From organizations like the LA Business Council, an influential voice for forward-thinking economic development, to solar companies like Sungevity, our policy proposal had a win-win potential that was able to galvanize businesses that hold our values for sustainable, bottom-up development.

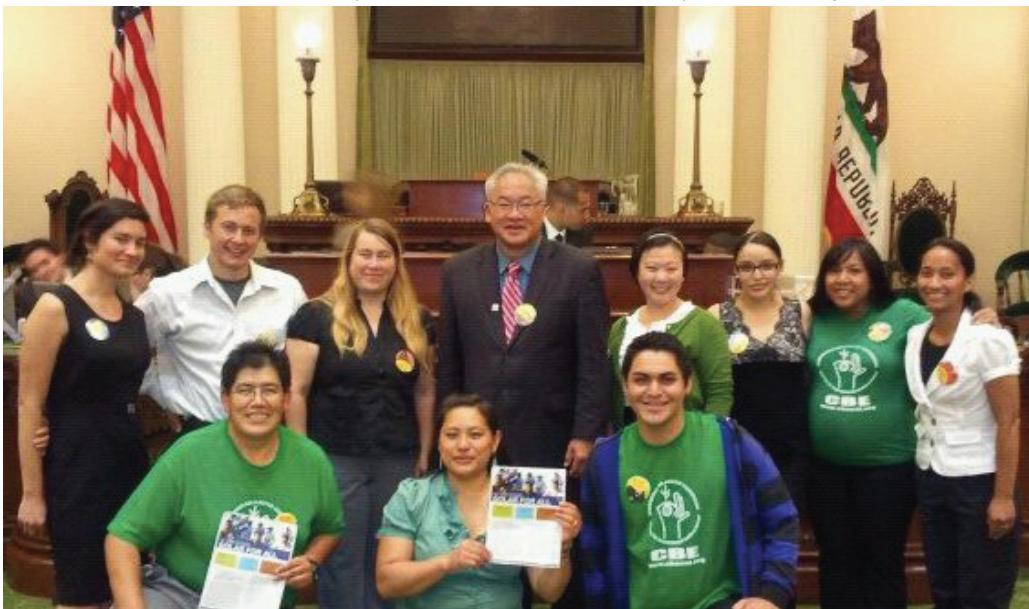
Most importantly, our campaign continued building the environmental constituency of the future: communities of color who are some of California’s strongest environmental supporters. We engaged an unprecedented number of residents in communities of color on grassroots advocacy for clean energy, hosting popular-education style workshops in environmental justice communities across California. From local offices, to hearing rooms, to the halls of the Capitol building, we organized

highly impacted residents across California to “speak for themselves” and share, from the heart, why clean energy is needed to help us get dirty energy out of our communities.

CEJA battled dirty energy in more places than just the legislature in 2012. As a result of our work, the California Energy Commission now has critical guidelines to address the needs of low-income communities and communities of color in their renewable energy planning documents. The CEC is an influential power in energy development in the state.

We have also taken on the big utilities at the California Public Utility Commission. Despite the fact that the Commission has a policy on

The AB 1990 team after a successful Assembly floor vote with AB 1990 author Assemblymember Paul Fong



the books to prioritize renewable energy and energy efficiency as the solutions to California's power needs, San Diego Gas & Electric company is attempting to get approval for three new natural gas power plants in San Diego, under the guise of "clean energy." If the plants are approved, it could pave the way for more natural gas plants throughout California and set back the growth of renewable energy. Our work at the Public Utilities Commission is helping to hold back new dirty energy developments in California.

Our work in 2012 set us up to make big wins on clean energy and climate justice in 2013, so stay tuned for more updates!

The Green Zones Initiative

Imagine a state made up of thriving communities. Each urban neighborhood and every rural community across California has the means to generate healthy jobs, reduce and prevent industrial pollution, provide open space and organic food, develop affordable housing, preserve local culture, and conduct community-led planning to sustain this vibrant future.

CEJA is working to make this vision a reality through the Green Zones Initiative. Green Zones is transforming toxic hotspots into healthy, thriving communities. We believe that by improving conditions for those most impacted by pollution, poor planning and development, we can improve conditions for all of California. With overburdened communities leading the way, communities, government, and businesses can collaborate to transition toxic hotspots into thriving Green Zones. The Green Zones Initiative coordinates work on two levels: supporting local Green Zone campaigns, and advancing visionary policies at both the state and federal level that embody the core elements of the Green Zones Initiative. CEJA members organize residents and implement local campaigns, while CEJA links Green Zones through training opportunities, statewide coordination, and policy advocacy. Together, we can cultivate dozens of vibrant communities, and make Green Zones a model for strengthen-

ing local economies, environments, and democracies across California.

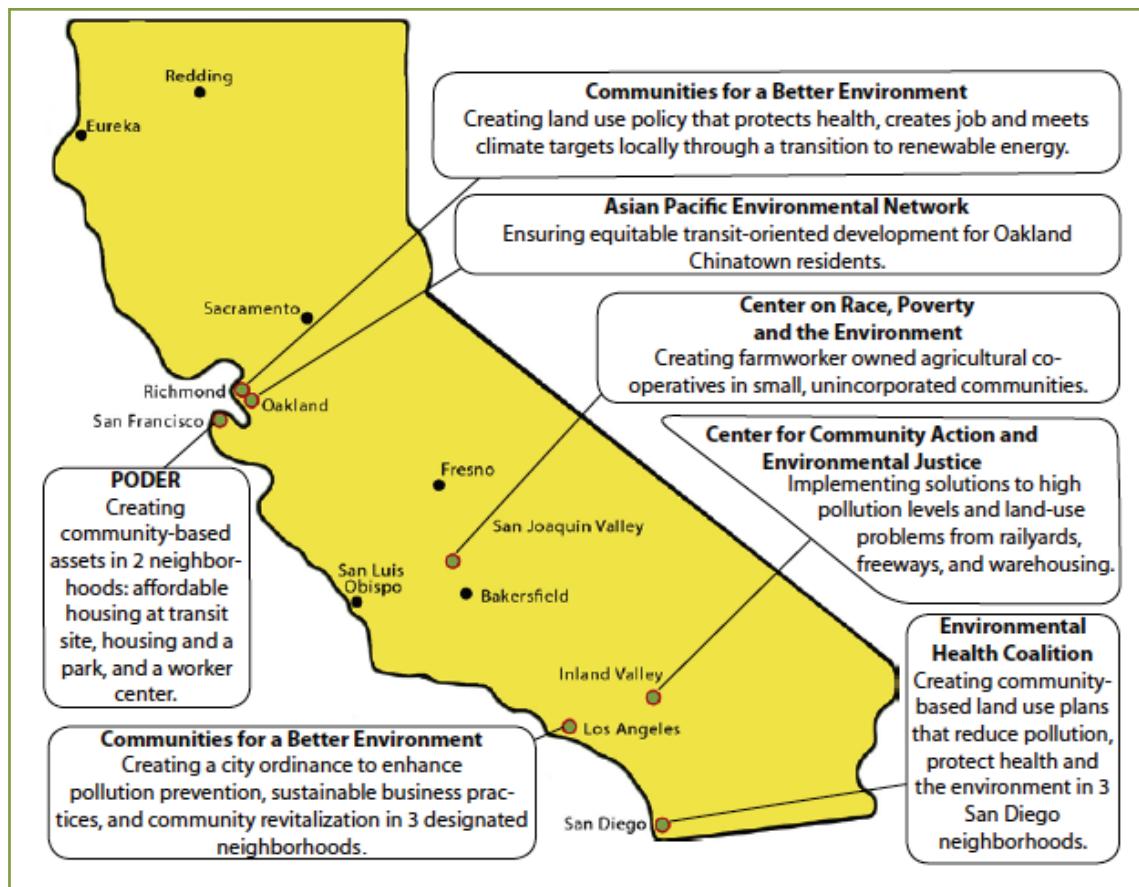
Green Zones on-the-ground: local anchor campaigns

A Green Zone is a community undergoing an organized transition from a toxic hotspot to a vibrant and healthy place to live, work and play. CEJA members have pinpointed seven overburdened areas to serve as the local campaign anchors for the statewide Green Zones Initiative. From San Diego to the Inland and Central Valleys and from Los Angeles to San Francisco, these seven campaigns will show that toxic hotspots can be transformed into thriving communities

through a unique, place-based combination of community leadership, government investment, and green business cultivation. Each local campaign has their own focus, tailored to the community planning process in each area, but uses the Green Zones framework. CEJA connects these communities through capacity building, leadership development, common messaging, and collective action. The local anchors are critical ways for CEJA to work with a wide range of allies on-the-ground and engage community residents directly in the Green Zones Initiative. Each CEJA member works with a range of community-based groups and agencies to advance local priorities within the Green Zones framework.

Advancing comprehensive policy solutions

CEJA's Green Zones Initiative is working to find innovative policies to empower community-led solutions like those in our anchor campaigns. In 2012, we realized a long-held goal: ensure the California Environmental Protection Agency develops their own Cumulative Impact tool. Since 2010, CEJA has worked with leading researchers Rachel Morello-Frosch (UC Berkeley), Jim Sadd (Occidental College), and Manuel Pastor (University of Southern California) on developing a methodology to identify communities that face high cumulative impacts, called the Environmental Justice Screening Methodology. Cumulative impact tools look at a range of socioeconomic, environmental, land-use and public health indicators and develop a score for how many stressors, or "cumulative impacts," a particular neighborhood faces. After letting the issue languish for years, our work has helped push the California Environmental Protection Agency to move forward with an official methodology that can be used across statewide agencies. A cumulative impact tool will lay the foundation for huge wins for our communities, ranging from targeted enforcement to increased funding in environmental justice communities.



Green Zone local anchor campaigns across California

CEJA members help pass Proposition 39

In November, 60 percent of Californians overwhelmingly passed Proposition 39, the Clean Energy and Jobs Act. Proposition 39 tackles two big issues for environmental justice communities: bringing in desperately needed revenue by ensuring corporations pay their fair share, and opening up opportunities to create thousands of clean energy jobs in low-income communities that need them the most. By closing a tax loophole for multistate corporation, the initiative is expected to raise \$1 billion per year. Half the money will go to California's General Fund, and half will fund energy efficiency and clean energy projects in schools and other public buildings. It is expected to create 40,000 new green jobs.

CEJA members worked hard to pass Proposition 39. Working together on the proposition was a way to create a statewide, coordinated voice reaching communities of color on clean energy issues and to leverage the shared expertise of member organizations through cross-training to build electoral infrastructure and skills. For some groups, that meant simply putting in place the structure and building skills of our members to do electoral work. For others, it meant building off strong field programs to create more complicated political action committees.

Overall, CEJA members reached 27,000 voters of color across the state. Prop 39 passed in every area in which a CEJA member worked. CEJA members used the same tactics that proved so successful in our highly successful 2010 No on 23 campaign: created culturally relevant and language appropriate messages to show how clean energy is important

to low-income communities of color. They ran multi-lingual field programs filled with volunteer community members who did precinct walking and phone banking, contacting people one-on-one through groups that are known and trusted. Members identified new contacts to engage in campaigns outside the electoral cycle, using the field programs as critical organizing opportunities.

Ultimately, the hard work of our member organizations on-the-ground in communities of color will help CEJA as a coalition move our statewide policy agenda. Field programs increased voter turnout from communities of color, which helped win a new majority of Democratic elected officials in the California legislature and creating a new "Supermajority" that opens up new legislative opportunities for us.

And most importantly, CEJA members

continued the important work of mobilizing and building the voice of California's new majority – people of color – on critical environmental issues.

Building a strong coalition

2012 was also a year of growth for CEJA as an organization. Our budget has doubled, which means that we are bringing on new staff. In early 2013, we expect to complete the hiring process for a third staff position dedicated to fund development.

Over the course of the year, we expanded the number of staff from member organizations engaged in our work. We had the first-ever CEJA Women's Policy Institute cohort, which trained a new generation of fierce grassroots leaders who can take on the legislative process. We now have twenty staff members working on CEJA-related programs, creating an incredibly skilled, statewide team!

Movement-building: the 2012 Member Congreso

In August, CEJA members, community residents and allies shined in the Capitol. Over the course of our two-day Congreso, CEJA members brought community delegations to share success stories and challenges from the frontlines of environmental inequality. With over 150 people, simultaneous interpretation in five languages (Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Laotian, Mien), we connected the work and struggles of communities across California to a larger, statewide movement for environmental justice.



The two days included trainings on CEJA's core issues and how to advocate with decision-makers. We hosted the first-ever cultural event featuring CEJA performers, helping us to grow a strong movement that extends beyond our daily program work together. We held a plenary session on the future of clean energy in California with movement leaders such as Tom Steyer, Chairperson of the recently-passed California Clean Energy and Jobs Act, or Proposition 39.

The Congreso was also a chance for CEJA to turn our statewide strength into collective action: joined by fifteen of our close allies, our members flooded the halls of Sacramento in support of Solar For All. In offices throughout the building, member-leaders shared their powerful stories of why clean energy is so important in communities of color. The action showed decision-makers that the environmental justice voice in California's Capitol is a growing force. We concluded with a spirited rally on the Capitol steps with Assemblymember Paul Fong, organizers and community member leaders speaking on why energy and climate justice matters to low-income communities and communities of color. You can read the inspirational testimony from one member-leader at the end of this document.

The 2012 Congreso was an opportunity for us all to see our beauty and power when united, and that spirit will carry us into 2013!

Arriba Barrio Logan!

Testimony from Environmental Health Coalition member-leader Maria Contreras, resident of Barrio Logan, San Diego, at the 2012 CEJA Rally for AB 1990

It is very important for me that my children see solar energy in our community, this way they know that there are alternatives in energy production – that dirty energy is not the only alternative. Our communities also need the opportunities that solar energy production will bring for us.

In the Barrio Logan community we have a high percentage of unemployment, and those who do have a job earn minimum wages; bringing solar energy to our communities will create a path towards PROSPERITY for everyone.

The residents from Barrio Logan, just like me, see the solar energy projects as a good investment in the infrastructure in order to improve our community which is always forgotten when it comes to resources that benefit the residents

The residents of Barrio Logan are used to seeing the freeways that run across the community, the dirty energy plants just a few steps from their homes and schools, the shipyards, the never ending traffic of diesel trucks that drive around the community, the sidewalks and streets in bad conditions, the lack of street lighting and the lack of safety

The time has come for the residents of Logan to see something positive, but more importantly, that the residents can see that there are possibilities for improvement. We want to take back our communities and rebuild them in a more clean, green, healthy and sustainable way. To bring solar energy into our communities will help start the process to turn our community dream into a reality.

Our children, we, all of us deserve the opportunity for a better future, one where we can live in healthy communities with clean air, and with access to well-paying jobs, green jobs. SOLAR FOR ALL will put us on the right path towards a better future for all our communities – Si se puede!

More information on CEJA

Visit our website:

www.caleja.org

Contact our Co-Coordinators:

Strela Cervas, scervas@caleja.org

Amy Vanderwarker, avanderwarker@caleja.org