

# Green Zones for Economic and Environmental Sustainability: *A new framework for community transformation*

The Green Zones for Economic and Environmental Sustainability Initiative is creating a comprehensive, place-based approach to transforming communities overburdened with environmental hazards and lacking economic opportunity into healthy, thriving neighborhoods.

## What are Green Zones?

**Green Zones** are places that face a deadly combination of public health burdens, environmental degradation, and socioeconomic stressors. They are neighborhoods struggling to address the cumulative impacts of long-standing economic recession, chronic and socially-determined negative health outcomes, environmental degradation, and inequitable land-use development.

We seek to transform these areas into healthy, thriving “Green Zones” by creating proactive, solution-oriented, community and interagency partnerships. The partnerships will help target, coordinate and leverage public and private resources and programs into Green Zone areas. These resources will support implementation of community-based solutions developed through intensive resident engagement and leadership. CEJA and our partners are implementing the Green Zone model in 7 sites across California.

## Green Zones uses 4 key strategies to achieve change:

- Reduce existing environmental pollution;
- Improve land-use decisions;
- Invest in sustainable, community-based economic development;
- Increase community capacity and power.

## How do you identify Green Zones?

We use an innovative tool called the Environmental Justice Screening Methodology (EJSM) to identify Green Zones areas. The EJSM has been developed by Rachel Morello-Frosch (UC Berkeley), Manuel Pastor (University of Southern CA), and Jim Sadd (Occidental College). The EJSM creates and maps a “cumulative impact” score for census tracts. To create the score, the methodology combines indicators from publicly-available data on public health and air quality, land use data, the number of hazardous facilities and sensitive receptors in an area, and socioeconomic vulnerabilities. The scores range from 3 - 15, with 15 being “highly impacted.” All CEJA Green Zone sites are “highly impacted.”

Photos courtesy of PODER



**California Environmental Justice Alliance**

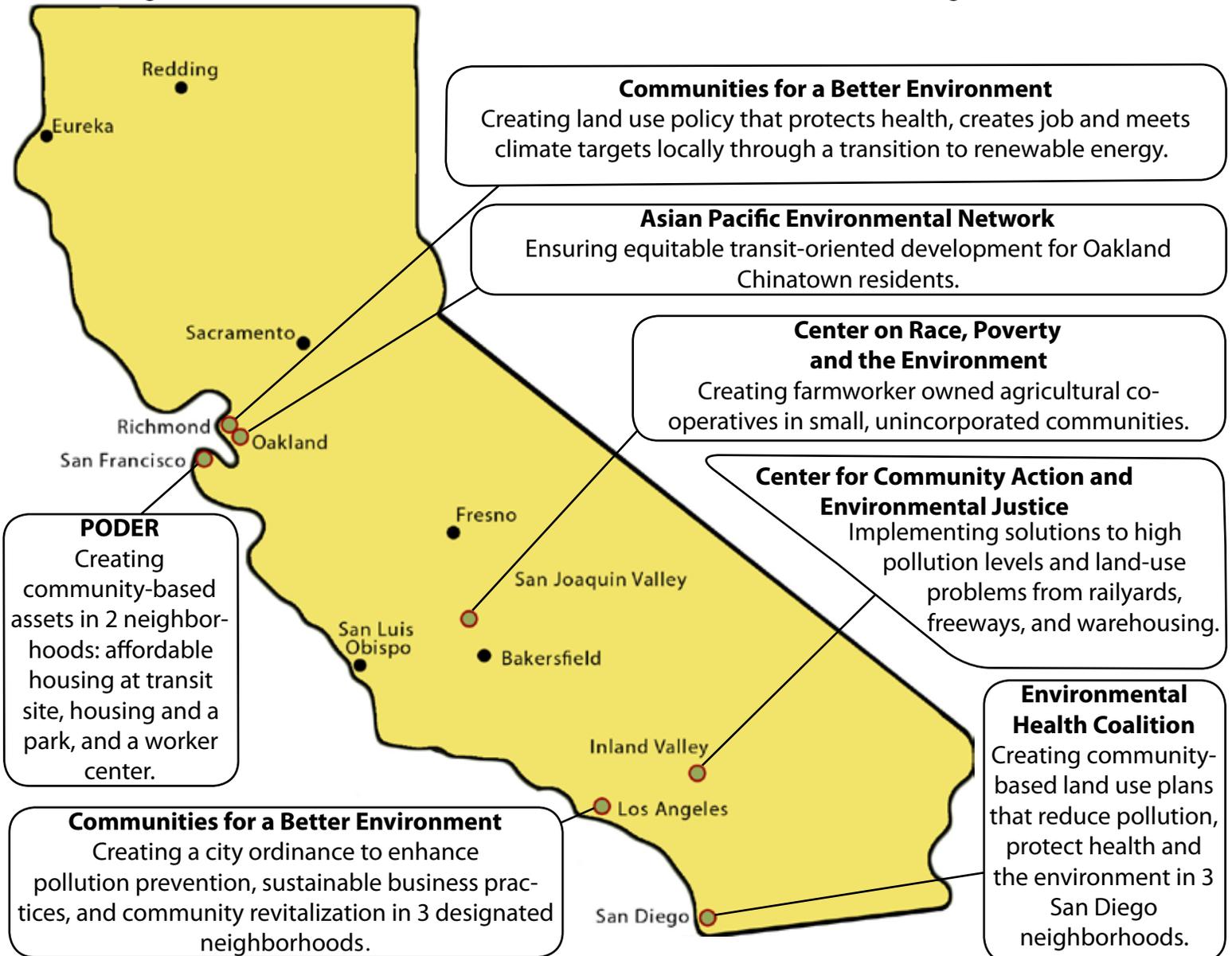
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# California Green Zones Initiative

The California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) is a statewide coalition of community-based organizations dedicated to building upon the local organizing and advocacy successes of members to create statewide policies that protect the public health and the environment. Together, we have launched the California Green Zones Initiative, with 7 sites. Each site is anchored by one of our members, all of whom have a long history of organizing in environmental justice communities.

## Green Zone anchor groups and CEJA members:

- Asian Pacific Environmental Network: focuses on the Asian Pacific American and Asian Pacific Islander communities in Oakland and Richmond. APEN has approximately 800 members, with a core membership of 70 – 80.
- Communities for a Better Environment: focuses on low-income Latino and African-American communities in Oakland, Richmond, Wilmington and Huntington Beach. CBE has approximately 4000 members.
- Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice: focuses on Latino residents in the Inland Valleys of Riverside and San Bernardino, including unincorporated areas. CCAEJ has 5400 members.
- Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment: focuses on Latino and immigrant communities in the San Joaquin Valley, including unincorporated, rural areas. Approximately 500 members, with 12 Comités throughout San Joaquin Valley.
- Environmental Health Coalition: focuses on Latino and immigrant communities in the Barrio Logan area of San Diego, National City, City Heights and Tijuana. EHC has approximately 4000 members.
- People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights (PODER): focuses on low-income, Latino and immigrant communities in San Francisco's Mission, Excelsior and southeastern neighborhoods.



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