



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE

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Senate Passes Historic Climate Bill to Increase Renewable Energy in California *SB 350 (De León and Leno) Promises Benefits to Low-Income Communities of Color*

Sacramento, CA | June 4, 2015 — The California Senate passed a robust climate bill yesterday that will advance climate justice and energy equity in California by directly improving air quality and public health in our state's most polluted communities. SB 350 by Senate President pro Tempore Kevin de León (D-Los Angeles) and Senator Mark Leno (D-San Francisco) would increase our state's renewable energy by 50%, reduce petroleum use by 50%, and double energy efficiency in buildings by 2030. SB 350 was part of a historic package of bills aimed at strengthening our state's leadership on climate and passed the Senate on Wednesday, June 3rd, with a 24-14 vote.

"A majority of low-income and immigrant Asian Americans in California think that climate change is a serious threat to their quality of life," said Miya Yoshitani, Executive Director at the [Asian Pacific Environmental Network](#). "Under Senator de León's leadership, environmental justice communities are beginning and will continue to see tangible benefits: cleaner air for our children, more economic opportunities for our neighborhoods, and a healthier climate for our planet. SB 350 will make all of these real."

SB 350 prioritizes disadvantaged communities to benefit from the policy and will ensure that low-income communities and communities of color can access and directly benefit from increased renewable energy in our state. The bill will help us transition away from fossil fuels by setting a new Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) that will help California meet its goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It also has broad inclusion of local distributed generation to direct small-scale renewable energy into communities that need it the most and will create local green jobs. SB 350 will significantly reduce petroleum use in motor vehicles which will help alleviate the high rate of vehicle emissions in communities of color. The bill's focus on energy efficiency will also provide improved indoor air quality to low-income communities who tend to live in older buildings and save all Californians money over the long run.

"Low-income communities and communities of color have borne a disproportionate burden of pollution for too long," said Strela Cervas, Co-Coordinator of the [California Environmental Justice Alliance](#), an alliance of grassroots environmental justice groups and one of several strong supporters of SB 350. "We applaud the Senate leadership and the Senate on passing a bold climate and energy policy that will equitably reduce emissions in all communities while bringing good jobs to communities that most need them. SB 350 works towards achieving the robust renewable energy goals of Governor Brown. Now we look to the Assembly to ensure that California sets a clear roadmap to transition California off of fossil fuels by passing SB 350."

Two other important bills for environmental justice also passed the Senate. SB 185 by Senator de León passed the Senate with a 22-14 vote which will mandate public pension funds to divest from coal. SB 398 by Senator Connie Leyva (D-Chino) which passed with a 29-7 vote will create a Green Assistance Program to provide technical assistance to small businesses, nonprofits, and disadvantaged communities to access funding for energy efficiency upgrades that will lessen the negative health impacts of poor air quality. The passing of these bills in the Senate comes at a critical moment in which new clean energy policies will help steer California's path toward a more healthy, sustainable, and economically viable future.

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California Environmental Justice Alliance is a statewide coalition of grassroots, environmental justice organizations building a movement among low-income communities and communities of color most impacted by environmental issues to demand change. 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.

All together, we represent approximately 20,000 Latino, Asian Pacific American, and African American residents. Our members and partners are:

Asian Pacific Environmental Network
Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice
Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment
Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy
Communities for a Better Environment
Environmental Health Coalition
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
Pacoima Beautiful
People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights
Physicians for Social Responsibility, Los Angeles

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