



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kay Cuajunco, (510) 808-5898 ext. 102

Governor Brown Announces New Report to Analyze Climate Impacts in Environmental Justice Communities

Sacramento, CA | December 4, 2015 — Governor Brown released a directive today which requires the California Environmental Protection Agency to analyze how California's climate policies are impacting communities that face a disproportionate burden of pollution. This new report will fill the gap in understanding how our current regulatory structure is acting on climate change.

"I am directing that the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) prepare by December 1, 2016, a report analyzing the benefits and impacts of the greenhouse gas emissions limits adopted by the State Air Resources Board within disadvantaged communities," Governor Brown stated in a memo on Friday, December 4th.

As our state creates the next generation of climate policies, it is critical that agencies take the measures required to fill this gap. We need to know if the regulations enacted to meet greenhouse gas emission reductions are benefitting or harming low-income communities and communities of color. It is long overdue to take a hard look at how policies like cap-and-trade, transportation plans set out in SB 375, and freight plans - all part of our state's policies to achieve GHG reductions - are impacting low-income communities and communities of color. With innovative tools like CalEPA's CalEnviroScreen 2.0, we can more accurately map pollution levels in overburdened areas.

A memo released by the Office of the Governor directs OEHHA to, at a minimum, track and evaluate greenhouse gas emissions, criteria air pollutants, toxic air contaminants, short-lived climate pollutants, and other pollutant emission levels in disadvantaged communities, as well as public health and other environmental health exposure indicators related to air pollutants in disadvantaged communities.

Across California, low-income communities and communities of color are on the frontlines of climate change, living on the fenceline of fossil fuel production and in the shadows of transportation corridors. From the Laotian and Mien refugee communities surrounding the Richmond Chevron refinery, to Latino immigrants in rural areas of Kern County where there are fracking sites next door to playgrounds, to urban residents living in the midst of massive refinery complexes in Long Beach and Wilmington, to homes located right next to our state's massive goods movement corridors -- these communities are facing an environmental health epidemic from toxic air emissions associated with greenhouse gases.

"Governor Brown's directive is a reflection of the decades that environmental justice advocates and community residents have been working on climate change, and raising critical concerns about regulatory strategies," says Quentin Foster, Policy Advocate at the [California Environmental Justice Alliance](#). "Over a year ago, the California Air Resources Board's Environmental Justice Advisory Committee made this exact recommendation to the agency, and the legislature considered the idea in end of session amendments to Senator Pavley's SB 32. We are pleased to see the Governor finally working with environmental justice groups across the state to move this much-needed analysis forward. We look forward to seeing how the analysis produced helps chart a course for achieving these goals."

California needs aggressive greenhouse gas reduction targets to tackle climate change. We need to prioritize policies that directly benefit disadvantaged communities by improving their health and air quality, while reducing emissions and helping our state transition off dirty fossil fuels.

In 2016, the California Air Resources Board will be updating the AB 32 scoping plan, which outlines our state's strategies to meeting greenhouse gas emission reductions established by law. The information provided by this report will be a key component to outlining necessary changes for AB 32 implementation.

"Equity should be a cornerstone for all of California's climate policies," says Caroline Farrell, Executive Director of the [Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment](#). "For years frontline communities have asked the State to analyze the impacts that the pollution trading system has on low income communities and communities of color. We applaud the Governor for calling for this investigation and believe this is a necessary step to determine the best way forward for all Californians to benefit from pollution reductions."

###

[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 over 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

www.caleja.org