



# CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Environmental Justice Legislative Agenda Promises Innovative Investments for Land Use and Climate Equity**

*Bills Will Accelerate Sustainability Plans and Help California Meet Climate Goals to  
Benefit and Protect Low-Income Communities and Communities of Color*

**Sacramento, CA | May 3, 2016** — The California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) and CEJA Action announced their [2016 Environmental Justice Legislative Agenda](#) today featuring a diverse set of bills that will address climate, land use, budget investments, power plant siting, natural gas storage, water and transit issues that impact disadvantaged communities. From promoting equitable land use to innovative climate investments, the legislative agenda advances a range of programs to alleviate pollution across California.

“Low-income communities and communities of color have borne a disproportionate burden of pollution for too long,” said Quentin Foster, Policy Advocate at the [California Environmental Justice Alliance](#), an alliance of grassroots environmental justice groups and the co-sponsor of AB 2722 and SB 1000. “We are thankful for the leadership in the Senate and Assembly who are champions on our issues and helping to advance a bold set of bills that will make environmental justice a priority for California. In 2016, we hope to see equity at the center of our state budget tied to comprehensive investments for our communities who have historically been left behind.”

CEJA is a proud co-sponsor of [SB 1000](#) by Senator Connie Leyva which 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. By creating a stand alone element that addresses environmental justice, local planning policies will promote a healthier community for all by mitigating existing conditions and prohibiting new development from adversely impacting vulnerable populations.

“SB 1000 would ensure that local cities and counties specifically analyze potential environmental justice impacts on communities in California,” said Senator Leyva, author of SB 1000. “I firmly believe that state and local leaders have a clear responsibility to do all they can to protect vulnerable residents from pollution and other environmental hazards. I thank CCAEJ, CEJA and the dozens of other supporters for standing in strong support of SB 1000 and the residents in disadvantaged communities most affected by potentially serious environmental impacts.”

“SB 1000 is a shining example of how equity can shape and guide policy so all Californians can enjoy the myriad benefits of equitable land use and planning decisions,” says Michele Hasson, Policy Advocate at [Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice](#) (CCAIEJ), co-sponsor of SB 1000. “Environmental justice communities are unsung experts of land use and planning decisions who can identify where investments should be prioritized. The EJ element enables planners to use their code of ethics on the ground and plan for low-income communities that need it the most. Since the EJ Element was adopted into

Jurupa Valley's General Plan in 2014, the city has been able to identify effective mitigation measures that alleviate pollution burdens. Residents were actively engaged in the planning process and now have a sense of ownership over the land use decisions that shape their lives."

CEJA is also a co-sponsor of [AB 2722](#) by Assemblymember Autumn Burke that will create the Transformative Climate Communities program, a comprehensive approach to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by investing \$250 million 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

"Through AB 2722, targeted and strategic funding will leverage new and existing assets in communities throughout the state - both rural and urban - that local, regional and statewide actors, including public and private interests have historically ignored," said Phoebe Seaton, Co-Director of [Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability](#). The Transformative Climate Communities program will convert disadvantaged communities into areas of opportunity, and will turn vulnerable neighborhoods within and beyond the San Joaquin and the Coachella Valleys into healthy and thriving places able to confront the climate crisis that hits low-income communities of color first and worst."

Along with SB 1000 and AB 2722, CEJA's other priority bills include:

- **SUPPORT:** [Budget Ask, Environmental Justice Small Grant Program](#), will require the Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to expand up to \$5 million per year upon appropriation from the legislature and would also require each Board, Department, and Office within the CalEPA to allocate appropriated funds from special funds, settlements, and penalties to implement the EJ Small Grants Program.
- **SUPPORT:** [SB 1387](#) by Senate President pro tem Kevin de Leon will add three environmental justice seats to the South Coast Air Quality Management District Board to strengthen and expedite the process for Air Resources Board to review and approve air quality plans. This bill is a direct response to a disturbing trend of Big Oil taking control and reflects the even stronger need for environmental justice advocates at the highest levels of decision making.
- **OPPOSE:** [AB 2292](#) by Assemblymember Richard Gordon will direct the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment to include poverty rates, rent burden, and high cost of living in CalEnviroScreen 2.0. CEJA believes this is an unnecessarily redundant legislative overreach since it is OEHHA that is charged with protecting public health through scientific evaluation.

[Read CEJA's full Environmental Justice Legislative Agenda here.](#)

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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.

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