



State Senator Kevin de León  
Chair, Senate Appropriations  
State Capitol, Room 5108  
Sacramento, CA 95814

February 26, 2013

**Re: SB 39 (de León -Steinberg), Clean Energy Employment and Student Advancement Act of 2013 - SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Kevin de León and Senate Appropriations Committee,

On behalf of the California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA), we thank you for your strong leadership on implementing Proposition 39 through the Clean Energy Employment and Student Advancement Act of 2013. CEJA's member organizations led one of the only grassroots statewide campaigns on Proposition 39 and mobilized our members to get Proposition 39 passed so that low-income communities and communities of color can gain access to more clean energy programs and jobs.

We support your focus on energy efficiency upgrades in disadvantaged communities. Environmental justice communities most in need are often the ones that rarely benefit from clean energy programs, creating a "green divide". CEJA is leading an effort to ensure that disadvantaged communities who are often left out of green programs become the first ones to benefit from clean energy. Energy efficiency upgrades in the state's most disadvantaged communities is one strong step forward to closing this green divide and creating green jobs in these communities.

As expressed to your offices, CEJA would also like to see the following in SB 39:

**1. Expand Prop 39 funding to upgrade public buildings in disadvantaged communities**

CEJA supports energy efficiency upgrades in K-12 schools in disadvantaged communities. Low-income communities and communities of color across the state are overburdened with the highest rates of poverty, pollution, and unemployment. These communities are often locked out of resources and infrastructure that allow them to thrive. Children in EJ neighborhoods suffer from health impacts from poor indoor air quality, inadequate ventilation, heat, and other hazards. We support the goal to build energy efficiency programs in the most dilapidated schools to address these long-standing health concerns.

CEJA also supports expanding the funds to upgrade other public buildings in disadvantaged communities as outlined in the Prop 39 text. In order to maximize the job creation and infrastructure development opportunities, Prop 39 funds should also cover affordable housing, community colleges, libraries, senior centers, and other public buildings. We can learn from successful programs such as the Los Angeles Green Retrofit program where workers are

deployed to upgrade city-owned buildings. Such models save money, save energy, and create quality jobs.

## **2. Invest Prop 39 funding in both energy efficiency and solar**

CEJA supports following the state's Energy Loading Ordering, placing energy efficiency in existing buildings as the top priority for Prop 39 funds. As articulated in Prop 39 language, CEJA supports Prop 39 funding to also cover renewable energy projects, such as local rooftop solar in disadvantaged communities. Used in combination, a strong energy efficiency and solar program in our most vulnerable communities will not only clean the air, it will also lead to local economic and jobs development.

In particular, empowering disadvantaged communities to own their own energy source with solar is key for sustained economic development and independence. We also see this as part of the next era of energy generation, where we will shift away from top-down centralized energy systems to smaller, regional energy networks—microgrids— that seamlessly integrate demand-side management strategies, local clean energy, and storage in an intelligent grid that can be removed from the larger grid when necessary.

When considering where to spend the Prop 39 funds, it is important to look at how all of the pieces fit into the long-term picture—how we're preparing California for that next generation of energy management with efficiency, solar, and grid modernization; where we can realize the biggest energy savings; and how we can ensure jobs and economic benefits for our communities most in need.

## **3. Require local hire from disadvantaged communities**

EJ communities are ready and eager to get to work building this clean energy economy. California has numerous green jobs training programs where community members graduate with the promise of a green job. Unfortunately, these community members are “all dressed up and nowhere to go” because of the lack of green jobs opportunities in local neighborhoods. The opportunities did not materialize because we did not create sustainable markets for these jobs. SB 39 should ensure that communities most impacted by fossil fuel with the highest rates of unemployment and underemployment are first in line to access clean energy jobs. SB 39 should require that entities receiving the funds should hire local workers from these disadvantaged areas, and pay livable wages and benefits. Additionally, we should ensure that workforce training programs are funded and that these programs result in regular placement of workers in energy efficiency and clean energy jobs.

We recommend hiring models such as the LA Green Retrofit Program where paid apprenticeships are offered, good wages are offered to workers, and pathways for long-term careers are created for local low-income communities of color. In the LA Green Retrofit program, public buildings such as libraries, senior centers, and fire stations were upgraded resulting in reducing energy use and over one hundred thousand work hours for LA workers.

#### **4. Utilize established methodologies to identify disadvantaged communities and local hire areas**

The state should utilize the same methodology, the “CalEnviroScreen”, that is being considered for implementation of your bill, SB 535, to identify the “most impacted and disadvantaged communities”. CalEPA has developed the CalEnviroScreen that has a list of communities with the most environmental impacts and demographic challenges. CalEnviroScreen was created specifically for the purpose of focusing resources into areas with the greatest need for projects such as energy efficiency and clean energy. The tool can also be used to identify disadvantaged areas with the highest rates of unemployment and underemployment so that local workers are hired from these areas. This methodology is readily available, and the implementing agency does not need to reinvent the wheel to create an identification tool.

CEJA applauds your leadership to hold public hearings on SB 39. Community is often left out of critical state policy and we appreciate your efforts to ensure that community’s voice is heard. We thank you again for your strong leadership on this issue and we look forward to continued dialogue with your office.

Sincerely,

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California Environmental Justice Alliance

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Caroline Farrell  
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cc: Senators Mimi Walters, Ted Gaines, Jerry Hill, Ricardo Lara, Alex Padilla, Darrell Steinberg