



2014 Highlights // 2015 Outlook

CEJA is a statewide coalition of grassroots, environmental justice organizations. We work to achieve environmental justice by organizing in low-income communities and communities of color – those most impacted by environmental hazards – and pushing for policies at the federal and state levels that protect public health and the environment. We represent approximately 15,000 residents in communities of color highly impacted by pollution. CEJA unites the powerful local organizing efforts of members to create opportunities for change at a statewide level. We combine grassroots organizing with strategic policy advocacy.

Our members are: Asian Pacific Environmental Network; Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice, Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment; Communities for a Better Environment; Environmental Health Coalition; and People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights. These groups span the geographic, racial and ethnic diversity of California.

2014 was a year of creating big, bold visions and strategizing to achieve our goals. Read on for highlights from the year, and a brief synopsis of what we have planned for 2015.

Connecting the grassroots with state policy to build our EJ power

CEJA believes in policy from the ground up. We continue to find ways to engage community leaders in the decision-making process, while building the overall profile of environmental justice in state policy. We have a range of strategies to accomplish these goals, which we expand and refine every year.



Youth from the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition and the CEJA team on 2015 Community Day of Action for Environmental Health and Justice in the Capitol

In 2014, we:

- **Hosted our annual Spring Lobby day**, where we trained over 30 CEJA members on our priority bills and educated key decision-makers.
- **Convened the Community Day of Action for Environmental Health and Justice.** CEJA partnered with Californians for a Healthy and Green Economy (CHANGE) and the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition to bring together 100 community leaders, organizers and advocates from across the state to engage in movement building and learning exchanges. Participants educated over 80 legislative offices on key environmental health and justice policies.
- **Produced our 2nd Environmental Justice Legislative Agenda and Scorecard.** Our scorecards are the only comprehensive reports on how California's elected officials are addressing environmental issues that impact low-income communities and communities of color. The scorecard builds off our annual Environmental Justice Legislative Agenda, where we track and analyze over 15 key, statewide environmental justice policy issues that reflect our broad vision of environmental justice. Using this agenda, we score legislators on whether they stand with environmental justice on these measures. CEJA's 2nd Environmental Justice Scorecard showed overall improvement in the legislature, a testament to our hard work over the past several years.

Green Zones Initiative

From engaging new leaders on-the-ground to building new champions in the legislature, the Green Zones Initiative is gaining the momentum we need to win new resources and programs to transform overburdened toxic hotspots into thriving communities. In 2014, we:

- **Developed a comprehensive set of "Green Zone" policy proposals and worked with legislative leadership to develop support for them.**
- **Engaged 183 community residents from across the state in developing and advocating for our Green Zones Initiative.** Together with our members, we organized trainings with community leaders across the state and a rally to highlight the need for action to support community-led environmental justice solutions.
- **Advanced tools to identify environmental justice communities in state policy.** CEJA has been working for years on "CalEnviroScreen2.0," a cumulative-impact screening tool developed by the California Environmental Protection Agency that identifies communities



suffering the heaviest burden of pollution, public health challenges, and socioeconomic stressors. The tool is a national model – no other state agency in the country has one as robust, and even the federal government looks to CalEnviroScreen as a model. As a direct result of CEJA’s efforts, CalEPA released an updated 2nd version of the CalEnviroScreen in 2014, which is being used in several policy venues.

Equitable Clean Energy and Climate Justice Program

Over the past year, we have developed a new vision for our Equitable Clean Energy work: achieving 100 percent equitable, renewable energy by 2050. From the bureaucratic proceedings of the California Public Utilities Commission to fighting new power plants in communities of color, CEJA continues to be one of the only voices engaging highly impacted residents directly in energy decision-making. In 2014, we:

- **Worked to ensure communities of color get their share of shared renewables.** Last year, the California Public Utilities Companies (CPUC) began implementing a program that includes ground-breaking language requiring the build-out of 100 megawatts of renewable energy in disadvantaged communities, a direct result of our advocacy. CEJA has been working to ensure the CPUC designs a program that successfully fulfills this mandate.
- **Engaged 150 highly impacted residents in fighting dirty fossil fuels and advocating for equitable renewable energy.** Through workshops, trainings, hearings, and meetings with CPUC Commissioners, our member organizations are bringing their deep community base to CEJA’s work, building a movement of educated, engaged directly impacts residents across the state.
- **Pushed back on the tide of new dirty gas-fired power plants that big utilities are pushing.** CEJA has been a loud voice demanding utilities focus on meeting California’s energy needs through efficiency and renewables, rather than building more dirty natural gas power plants.
- **Continued building alliances across environmental organizations and clean tech businesses.** We can’t win our vision for 100% renewable energy alone, so we are developing bridges across different sectors to create shared analysis and consensus on key renewable energy issues. We co-convene an “Energy Stakeholder Group,” which includes 24 groups and meets several times a year to discuss renewable energy issues and advocacy.
- **Launched a dedicated Climate Justice program.** California policymakers are developing the “next generation” of climate policies in 2015. Thanks to our years of hard work, we have big opportunities to ensure critical elements, such direct reduction of climate-related



CBE Youth Member Alejandra Ruiz

emissions and protections for highly impacted communities, are included in these policies.

Building a strong team, alliance and infrastructure

It takes a dedicated group of highly skilled individuals and strong systems to implement a strategy to win the changes we want to see. In 2014, we:

- **Expanded the number of coalition members engaged in our program work.** Our members are the heart of our alliance, and we have continued to grow the number of staff from members directly engaged in our program development and implementation.
- **Hired a Fund development and Program Associate and our first Capitol-based Policy Advocate.** These new staff positions will greatly expand CEJA's capacity and enable us to take advantage of the many opportunities to advance environmental justice.
- **Launched a new website** and will be hiring a dedicated communications person in 2015.
- **Launched a c4, CEJA Action!** We are extremely excited to have CEJA Action up and running, which will allow us too expand our legislative work and increase the efficacy of our electoral program, to be launched in 2016 (see below).

Developing a bold, long-term vision for change

In January of 2014, CEJA started a year-long strategic planning process to identify our priorities for the next 3-5 years. The process reaffirmed our member organizations' dedication to the alliance and established exciting, visionary goals for what CEJA can achieve together. We achieved the following outcomes from our Strategic Planning process:

- **Developed 3-5 year program goals** for our already existing program areas, Green Zones and Local Clean Energy. We also launched a new program focused on advancing environmental justice in statewide climate policy.
- **Agreed to expand our membership for the first time in six years!** We developed a revised membership structure with different levels of affiliation that will enable us to work with a broader range of groups.
- **Agreed to launch a statewide, Environmental Justice electoral program in 2016!** Building our electoral power is a critical strategy to advancing our vision for environmentally just policy, and many of our members already have deep expertise we can build from. Our program will focus on organizing voters of color to support equitable environmental



The CEJA team at our final Strategic Planning retreat.

policies that protect community health and well-being.

2015 Outlook

We have a busy year ahead for CEJA. Here are just some of the things we are planning:

- **CEJA's 2015 Congreso is coming this Summer!** CEJA will bring together 250 community leaders from across the state to cross-train each other, share stories of struggle and success, and take action to support environmental justice. This will be CEJA's biggest Congreso to date, so stay tuned for more details!
- Our Green Zones Initiative is focusing on developing **innovative new policies to increase resources into highly impacted communities**, while continuing to refine and improve statewide tools to identify neighborhoods overburdened by pollution.
- Our Equitable Clean Energy program will be working to ensure new statewide policies to **expand California's commitment to renewable energy include environmental justice principles**, including watchdogging as industry tries to create loopholes for dirty natural gas.
- Our new Climate program will focus on **winning environmental justice in California climate policies**. We will be releasing a Climate and Environmental Justice Policy Platform in Spring 2015.
- We will engage in **intensive planning for our 2016 electoral launch**. We will spend 2015 analyzing the electoral landscape and developing a strategic plan, which we will release in Fall 2015.
- We are excited to build our alliance! In 2015, we will be **expanding our coalition membership** through active recruitment, developing a full member handbook and orientation process.
- We will focus on bringing all the pieces together by **writing our Strategic Plan and developing our program-wide Policy Platform** to form a cohesive vision for moving environmental justice in state policy.

