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New Environmental Justice Legislative Scorecard Shows Urgent Need for Improvement

EJ Communities Call on Legislators to Stand With Impacted Communities

Sacramento, CA | October 18, 2018 — Today, the California Environmental Justice Alliance and CEJA Action release our 6th annual [Environmental Justice Scorecard](#) for the 2018 Legislative Session. This scorecard is the only one in the state to assess how well California's elected officials supported actions to address environmental issues that impact low-income communities and communities of color.

With environmental and climate crises worsening, the need for EJ Champions is greater than ever. To make progress on the issues that can tackle root causes, we need more decision-makers to stand with environmental justice communities. The EJ Scorecard reveals that a select group of legislators introduce, support and strengthen real solutions—while a much larger group sit on the sidelines or actively resist measures to improve public health, working conditions and climate mitigation and resilience.

Download the 2018 Environmental Justice Scorecard at www.caleja.org/scorecard2018

"With continued vicious attacks from the federal government that threaten the health and safety of communities of color, California's resistance is a bright spot in national politics. But the 2018 legislative session proves that our elected officials need to do more to rise to the challenge and must not allow the federal landscape to lower our state's bar. We need leaders who will advance transformational policies that are commensurate with our local communities' needs and the global crisis, despite industry pressure. CEJA and CEJA Action will continue educating elected officials about environmental justice issues and working to build the political will to enact the bold policies these exceptional times call for, while holding our leaders accountable when they do not."

– Gladys Limón, Executive Director, California Environmental Justice Alliance & CEJA Action

We congratulate Assemblymember Monique Limón for her second year in a row as an Environmental Justice Champion, scoring 100%. Also joining her as an EJ Champion is Assemblymember Kevin Mullin. We also recognize Assemblymember Gomez-Reyes for authoring AB 2447 and Senator Wieckowski for authoring SB 64, a bill to improve air quality in EJ communities. The high-profile environmental bill of the year, SB 100 (De León), set a 2045 target date for a carbon-free electric grid.

"It's urgent that our political leaders step up and defend public health. Leyva and Gomez Reyes understand this and it's time for our state legislators and agencies follow their lead in standing with the needs of community residents. They have both demonstrated unwavering commitment to social and environmental justice and we're proud to have their support on issues that impact low-income communities of color in the Inland Valley. Our members were glad to see both Leyva and Reyes join their them in speaking out against the rezoning in Bloomington last month, and their actions are key examples of the representatives we need who will stand with us to fight for clean air and good quality jobs."

— Allen Hernandez, Executive Director, Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice

The 2018 Environmental Justice Scorecard reveals that a solid cohort of elected officials that support EJ issues, but the number of EJ Champions is small. The voting record of most legislators leaves room for improvement on priority EJ issues. While the EJ movement has made substantial wins over the past several years and ensured that voices from our communities are included in policy debates, it is clear that elected officials need a deeper EJ commitment to take on harder issues, such as drinking water contamination, oil and gas extraction, and toxic waste management and control.

“This year we were pleased to see some great gains for environmental justice and yet the 2018 legislative session reminded us how far we still have to go. We were proud to work with Assemblymember Eloise Gomez-Reyes on AB 2447, which would have ensured residents of our state’s most pollution-burdened communities have a voice in industrial land use decisions that may impact their neighborhoods, their homes, and their health. While we were disappointed that politics prevailed over the state’s drinking water crisis, we look forward to the fight ahead for safe drinking water, as a secure, sustainable funding source for safe drinking water is no less urgent today as it was last week, and unfortunately it will be no less urgent next year.

— **Veronica Garibay, Co-Director, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability**

The 2018 legislative session closed with several major EJ issues unresolved, each of which perpetuate ongoing negative impacts in low-income communities and communities of color. No major reforms were enacted at the Department of Toxic Substances Control, and in fact all bills making changes to the broken agency were gutted.

“This administration has shown us once again that they are not willing to address a mounting crisis caused by massive funding shortfalls for toxic clean-ups and disposal of hazardous waste. The next administration must take immediate action to address the Department of Toxic Substances Control, structural deficit; the health of all Californians hangs in the balance.”

— **Ingrid Brostrom, Assistant Director, Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment**

On agricultural policy more broadly, no EJ oriented bills even made it on to the scorecard. The historical practice of exempting agriculture from climate policy from its very origins—beginning with the implementation of AB 32—continues. Even ordinary regulatory standards for clean air, clean water and safe working conditions are riddled with carve outs and exceptions.

“While California leads the nation on a number of important fronts on climate mitigation and resilience, agricultural issues have been left unaddressed. The challenges confronting agriculture aren’t just important to the residents of the San Joaquin Valley. Preserving healthy soil and water, developing sustainable methods to reduce and recycle manure from dairy farms, stopping open air burning of agricultural waste, and reducing pesticide use are critical to the well-being of all Californians. These issues need to be addressed on a comprehensive level across the state. The legislature, the new Governor and the regulatory agencies must make 2019 the year to bring environmental justice into our agricultural policy.”

— **Caroline Farrell, Executive Director, Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment**

2019 will mark the start of new terms for executive officers from the Governor down and bring in many new representatives for a fresh legislative session. We hope to see more legislators who stand with us in pushing forward the transformative policy changes that our communities and the planet truly need.

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California Environmental Justice Alliance is a statewide, community-led alliance that works to achieve environmental justice by advancing policy solutions. 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. Together, we are growing the statewide movement for environmental health and social justice.

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