



CALIFORNIA  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
JUSTICE ALLIANCE

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**Governor Newsom Omits Climate and Environmental Justice from State of the State**

**Sacramento, CA**—In today's State of the State address, Governor Newsom dedicated unprecedented attention to the crises of affordable housing and homelessness in California. As a member-led alliance whose communities confront the double burden of economic insecurity and environmental toxins on a daily basis, CEJA applauds the Governor's acknowledgment of the urgent need for safe, sustainable, and affordable housing for all Californians while also calling for action on climate justice.

***Katie Valenzuela, CEJA Policy & Political Director, responded to the Governor's address with the following statement:***

Today we cannot celebrate the Governor's commitment to the ongoing crises of housing and homelessness without recognizing the continued need for the administration to connect housing justice with climate justice. The climate crisis will only continue to exacerbate our housing challenges, while disproportionately impacting low income and housing insecure households. That is why this year's Environmental Justice Scorecard enumerated Environmental Justice Principles that call us to evaluate policy proposals in a more holistic manner and community-led; we can and must pursue policy that is both just and intersectional.

Streamlining the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will not address the underlying inequity in how and where housing is built. Numerous studies have debunked the myth that CEQA is the key barrier to development of affordable housing.<sup>1</sup> Policymakers that are committed to achieving healthy communities and protecting the rights of their constituents should not be misled into weakening CEQA for the purposes of addressing our state's housing and affordability crisis.

In 2020 CEJA looks forward to working with the Governor and housing advocates to achieve safe and affordable housing for all Californians, while ensuring that our state's most vulnerable residents are not inadvertently exposed to toxic hazards and other dangers in their own homes. Above all, CEJA hopes the Governor will lead by addressing the root of these toxic hazards by phasing out polluting industries, transitioning our energy systems to locally-produced renewable power, and meaningful and proactively consulting environmental justice communities about decisions before they are made. We look forward to working with the Administration on implementing these EJ principles this year and beyond.

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<sup>1</sup>See: the Rose Foundation (2016): *CEQA in the 21st Century*

<https://rosefdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/CEQA-in-the-21st-Century.pdf>.

UC Berkeley Law (2018): *Getting it Right*

[https://www.law.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Getting\\_It\\_Right.pdf](https://www.law.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Getting_It_Right.pdf); CEQA and Housing

Production: [https://senv.senate.ca.gov/sites/senv.senate.ca.gov/files/ceqa\\_and\\_housing\\_production\\_report.pdf](https://senv.senate.ca.gov/sites/senv.senate.ca.gov/files/ceqa_and_housing_production_report.pdf)

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[California Environmental Justice Alliance \(CEJA\)](https://caleja.org/2020/02/2019-environmental-justice-scorecard/) is a statewide, community-led alliance advancing environmental justice through policy solutions. Since 2011, CEJA has united 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. Read the recently released EJ Scorecard here:  
<https://caleja.org/2020/02/2019-environmental-justice-scorecard/>