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Governor Newsom’s May Budget Commits to Protecting Californians, Falls Short on Just Recovery

Sacramento, California May 18, 2020—On Friday, Governor Newsom released a May revision of the January budget proposal that reflects his commitment to bringing those most impacted by this crisis to the forefront.

As a statewide alliance representing communities with the least financial capital and healthcare access to navigate the COVID-19 crisis, CEJA believes that we must prioritize measures that provide direct relief to households while also providing meaningful employment opportunities and improving resilience against future crises or climate impacts. We understand that difficult budget decisions have to be made during this unprecedented crisis. This is why, in order to alleviate pressures placed on the general fund and fully protect the health and wellbeing of all Californians, we must require industries that harm our communities to be held responsible for their actions.

“In communities like South and East Los Angeles, community members continue to shelter in place next to toxic oil wells even as the Newsom administration announces relaxed fees and regulations for the oil and gas industry. This budget needs to reflect our commitment to holding polluters accountable and ensuring that they clean up their mess. A just recovery will depend on holding polluters accountable.”

—Martha Dina Arguello, Physicians for Social Responsibility Los Angeles (PSR-LA)

"To make it through this crisis together, we need a safety net for all of us, but 1 in 10 workers in California are excluded from unemployment aid due to immigration status. The state budget must include ongoing support for immigrant families who have lost jobs to survive the duration of this pandemic."

—Maricela Morales, Executive Director of the Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE).

“Moving forward from the May Revise, Gov. Gavin Newsom’s actions must match his words and sentiment. He is right to prioritize public health, public safety and the families hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic, but in the long term, what form does this take? In the short term, the budget must prioritize living wages and benefits, protective gear and the general health of essential workers; address the threat of eviction that families feel as bills mount; and, ensure access to health care, which is incredibly unequal.”

—Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability.

“We appreciate the attention Governor Newsom is giving the critical issue of DTSC reform. Newsom understands the dire situation that gave rise to this need: After years of warning, DTSC is now insolvent. Without funding for clean-ups, enforcement, and toxic facility inspections, vulnerable populations are at even higher risk of toxic exposures. We need a fee mechanism



moving forward that ensures waste generators pay for the safe disposal of California’s hazardous waste. A board provides an opportunity for democratic deliberation with communities and accountability from the department. We look forward to working with the Governor and the state legislature to create a department that is solvent and functional for years to come.”

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

“In order to respond to the public health crisis and safe November elections process, we must fully fund and uphold current in-person voting opportunities required by law. CEJA is an Alliance of grassroots organizations living and working in environmental justice urban, suburban, rural and unincorporated communities that have been devastatingly impacted by COVID-19 and its aftershocks caused by decades of polluting industries, racism and regulatory negligence. Voting is a core component for our democratic public participation and can not be suppressed. All options must be made available, in every county, for mail ballots, dropboxes and in-person voting locations for voters who historically have been disenfranchised by language, physical ability, age, race, income level, digital and information divide, geography, and housing insecurity.”

—Mabel Tsang, CEJA Civic Engagement Manager

“CEJA calls on the Congress and the President to immediately pass a \$1 trillion relief package for our state and local governments. It is time for Washington to accept their responsibility and pass state relief now, and it should be done without stimulations or conditions.”

—Diana Vazquez, CEJA Policy Manager

“We thank Governor Newsom and the state agencies for some of the steps they've taken to provide some relief. We urge the state to move towards canceling all late fees, debts, and high usage charges from energy, water, and broadband use that might be accrued by our state’s most vulnerable communities during this pandemic. Without debt and late-fee forgiveness, struggling workers and families will be burdened with even greater, and perhaps unmanageable utility fees. We need debt and late-fee forgiveness for the good of all Californians.”

—Jose Torres, CEJA Energy Equity Program Manager

As an alliance representing California’s environmentally disadvantaged members, CEJA hopes to engage with the Governor’s Office and the Legislature in robust discussions about potential funding mechanisms that will do no further harm to impacted communities, while helping to generate the revenue to achieve a more resilient and equitable economy.

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The California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) 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. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).