



August 5th, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting
Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Toni Atkins
Senate President pro Tempore
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assemblymember Richard Bloom,
Assembly Budget Subcommittee 3 Chair, Senate
Budget and Fiscal Review
State Capitol Building, Room 4085
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony Rendon
Speaker of the Assembly
State Capitol, Room 219
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Bob Wieckowski
Chair, Subcommittee 2
State Capitol Building, Room 2003
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Committee on Budget
State Capitol, Room 5094
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Recommendations for an Equitable Climate Resilience Package to Build Community Resilience

There is no part of California left unscathed by the impacts of a growing climate crisis: extreme heat, drought, wildfires, and power outages are threatening public health, worsening air pollution, and dramatically impacting quality of life for overburdened communities. Working class communities of color are experiencing the cumulative impacts of converging public health, racial, economic, and climate crises. And in California, we are directly witnessing the ways that historic disinvestment in impacted communities has manifested into disproportionate harms across a range of intensifying and frequently occurring climate disasters. Our communities are also least prepared to respond during disasters due to a lack of resources. ***It is time to dramatically change course: California must be proactive by scaling and resourcing community-driven solutions for climate resilience.***

The Legislature must expand its definition of “climate resilience” to go beyond investments in natural resources and physical infrastructure. The State is presented with an enormous opportunity from an unexpected and historic budget surplus. This is an opportunity we must seize by ***prioritizing investments that bolster community resilience to climate change - that is the investments to prepare people and neighborhoods to cope and respond to worsening impacts.***

Importantly, these investments cannot be viewed in siloes nor as in competition with one another. We see the following investments as complementary in nature and, therefore, requiring simultaneous and immediate funding to meet the multiple and distinct needs of communities that are disproportionately impacted by climate change.

- **Community Resilience Centers** offer immediate-term respite and relief at trusted buildings and shared facilities during climate disasters alongside crisis preparedness and recovery
- The **Transformative Climate Communities** program focuses on long-term catalytic investments at the neighborhood-scale through multiple emissions-reducing strategies
- The **Regional Climate Collaboratives** program supports capacity-building to prepare communities to apply for state climate grant programs
- The **Low-Income Weatherization Program** delivers household clean energy and health upgrades to protect residents indoors where they live
- The **Urban Greening** and **Urban & Community Forestry** programs collectively enable local access to shade trees, parks, and outdoor green spaces

Climate Resilience Package (\$3.7B approved over three years, 440M for FY 21-22)						
Category	Department	Program	FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	TOTAL
Building Resilience to Extreme Heat	Strategic Growth Council	[NEW] Community Resilience Centers	\$100M	\$125M	\$125M	\$350M
	Community Services & Development	Low-Income Weatherization Program	\$75M	\$75M	\$75M	\$225M
	Natural Resources Agency	Urban Greening	\$100M	\$100M	-	\$200M
Local & Regional Investments	Strategic Growth Council	Transformative Climate Communities	\$167M	\$167M	\$167M	\$500M
	Strategic Growth Council	Regional Climate Collaboratives	\$12M	\$12M	\$12M	\$35M

Wildfire Package (\$1B approved)			
Category	Department	Program	TOTAL

<i>Resilient Forests & Landscapes</i>	CALFIRE	Urban & Community Forestry	\$200M ¹
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[NEW PROGRAM] SGC Community Resilience Centers -- \$350M

Community resilience centers are spaces where communities gather, organize, and access social services not only during disasters, but on a daily basis. We urge the creation of a new SGC grant program to enable the rehabilitation or construction of community-based facilities (e.g., libraries, places of worship, health clinics) in order to provide integrated delivery of a multitude of services including clean backup power, clean air respite, cooling, food storage and distribution, shelter, internet access, economic assistance, training and preparedness, and other public health measures.² In order to be effective, resilience centers must be community-driven, meaning that community-based organizations and/or community residents are involved in governance and decision-making in the design, planning, and development of facilities. This funding should be directed to disadvantaged and vulnerable communities.

SGC Transformative Climate Communities -- \$500M

The Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) program advances community-led decision-making to address the needs of residents and achieve local transformation. Multiple emission-reducing services delivered in a coordinated way – like affordable solar-powered housing with access to public transit and active transportation -- can transform long-neglected neighborhoods into models of economic and environmental sustainability. TCC must provide grants to both rural and urban communities, incorporated and unincorporated alike.

SGC Regional Climate Collaboratives -- \$35M

Implementation of SB 1072 (Leyva, 2018) to create the Regional Climate Collaboratives program will build the capacity of local communities to make the investments necessary to transition all of California to a climate resilient future. The collaboratives will assist in building community-driven leadership, knowledge, skills, technical assistance and resources to identify and access public funding for climate mitigation and adaptation projects.

CSD Low-Income Weatherization Program - \$225M

This program enables a wide range of clean energy measures, including energy efficiency and solar, for low-income households and building owners leading to affordable housing preservation, utility bill reduction, job creation, and improvement of resident health, safety, resilience and comfort. Streamlining delivery of energy upgrades through LIWP and home health remediation efforts is also being undertaken

¹CAL FIRE’s Urban and Community Forestry Program directly addresses community resiliency and extreme heat, but is included here as a suggested augmentation to the Senate’s proposed Resilient Forests and Landscapes package which allocated funds evenly over a five-year period for these purposes.

² It is important to note that community resilience centers go far beyond what narrowly-defined “cooling centers” can provide by offering a broad range of clean energy, health, and resilience services -- all located within community buildings people trust and already gather. Cooling centers are often implemented last-minute without addressing barriers that local communities face when accessing them — like [last year’s cooling centers in Los Angeles](#), which resulted in the underutilization of these facilities by those who need them most.

with the implementation of AB 1232 (Gloria, 2019), which will ensure that priority populations can access and maximize these integrated benefits quickly.

CalFIRE Urban & Community Forestry - \$200M

There have already been several record-breaking heat waves in 2021. In urban areas, where 90% of Californians live, extreme heat impacts are not felt equally. The Californians most impacted are people living in disadvantaged and low-income communities who lack tree canopy. Trees are not only the primary mechanism to sequester carbon but also reduce ambient temperatures. CAL FIRE's Urban & Community Forestry Program can help address these inequities in addition to supporting jobs and workforce development, meet our climate goals, and make our cities livable.

CNRA Urban Greening - \$200M

Vulnerable populations generally cannot access parks and green spaces within walking distance of their homes. CNRA's Urban Greening Program helps mitigate these inequalities by increasing access to cool, quiet places to breathe fresh air, exercise, and experience shade and outdoor solitude in disadvantaged and underserved communities. This popular and multi-faceted program can support converting existing built environments into parks; and reduce commute vehicle miles traveled by constructing bicycle paths, bicycle lanes or pedestrian facilities that provide safe routes for travel between residences, workplaces, commercial centers, and schools.

Dairy Digesters & Dairy Biogas Production - NO FUNDING

We oppose all funding that directly or indirectly supports dairy digesters or dairy biogas production in the state's budget. Dairy biomethane is not a "clean" fuel and it is sourced from operations that have negative air, water, odor, and other impacts on local communities. We are disappointed to see \$60 million proposed in the Governor's May Revise for the Dairy Digester Research & Development Program (DDRDP), which only supports the development of a false solution that further harms environmental justice communities. Similarly, we are concerned to see biogas and dairy digesters in the Climate Catalyst Revolving Loan Fund and ask that this be removed as an eligible project. The state has thus far dumped nearly \$650 million of taxpayer and ratepayer money into these unproven, expensive technologies that at once perpetuate the heavily-polluting large-scale industrial dairy and natural gas industries.

CONCLUSION

The urgency of the climate crisis requires dramatic and unprecedented investments: we urge the State to distribute as much funding as possible through this year's climate resilience package in order to protect the State's most vulnerable communities. To that end, APEN, Greenlining Institute, the California Environmental Justice Alliance, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, and CA Releaf strongly urge the State to fully fund programs that can maximize climate equity benefits and build community resilience.

The programs outlined above will help protect California from climate impacts, improve health in the most polluted communities, and build community resilience. With the significant budget surplus forecasted for this year, California has a critical opportunity to fully fund these programs at a level commensurate with their demand. We respectfully ask for your support of this budget request.

Sincerely,

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