



May 4, 2023

*Sent via email*

The Honorable Toni Atkins  
Senate President pro Tempore  
Capitol Office, 1021 O Street, Suite 8518  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Nancy Skinner  
Chair, Senate Committee on Budget  
Capitol Office, 1021 O Street, Suite 8360  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Josh Becker  
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee #2  
Capitol Office, 1021 O Street, Suite 7250  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Response to the Senate Budget Proposal**

Dear Pro Tem Atkins, Senator Skinner, and Senator Becker,

Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability works alongside lower income communities of color and vulnerable populations in the San Joaquin Valley and Eastern Coachella Valley. We appreciate the Senate Budget Proposal's objective of protecting progress and investing in programs that address the impacts of the climate crisis. However, we believe that more must be done to protect investments and build resilience in disadvantaged communities.

**Summary of Responses to Senate Budget Proposal**

- 1. Support restoration of \$370M for Equitable Building Decarbonization Program in FY 23/24 and avoid any cuts to the program.**
- 2. Remove the addition of \$35M to the California Department of Food and Agriculture for "Agriculture Related Methane Reduction Programs."**
- 3. Invest in programs that bolster climate and water resilience in disadvantaged communities in California, including Transformative Climate Communities, Community Resilience Centers, and drinking water protection.**
- 4. Ensure that \$5M for research on methane reduction programs considers the full scope of environmental impacts and implications.**

Below is a more detailed discussion of the above Summary.

**1. Support restoration of \$370M for Equitable Building Decarbonization Program in FY 23/24 and request the full restoration of committed funds.**

We appreciate the Senate’s proposal to maintain \$370M for the Equitable Building Decarbonization (EBD) program in Fiscal Year 2023-2024. Investment in this program is a critical step towards meeting California’s climate goals while providing important climate resilience benefits to lower income households and disadvantaged communities such as lower energy bills, healthier indoor air temperatures and better indoor air quality. As such, we support the \$370M investment proposed for FY 23/24 and urge a full restoration of the Governor’s proposed cut of \$87M, thus restoring the full \$665M for FY 23/24.

**2. Remove the addition of \$35M to the California Department of Food and Agriculture for “Agriculture Related Methane Reduction Programs.”**

We were concerned to see the Senate’s proposed \$35M to the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) for “agriculture related methane reduction programs,” especially to the extent that these funds would be available to the Dairy Digester Research and Development Program (DDRDP) or other programs that subsidize or incentivize the production and deployment of factory farm gas. The installation and expansion of dairy digesters entrenches polluting practices and can even increase pollution in already overburdened communities. California should invest in other programs that build resilience in disadvantaged communities and do not exacerbate environmental injustices. Relatedly, we recommend that the budget redirect funding that was appropriated to CDFA for the current budget year but has not been spent for its methane reduction programs (DDRDP and Alternative Manure Management Program). We recommend that the funding be directed to programs that promote sustainable agriculture and away from DDRDP. The production of and reliance on factory farm gas pollutes communities and, thus, it must not be funded or receive favorable treatment as a low-carbon fuel or a clean fuel. Additionally, we must not further invest in infrastructure that will necessarily become “stranded assets” as California moves away from combustion fuels.

**3. Invest in programs that bolster climate and water resilience in disadvantaged communities in California, including Transformative Climate Communities, Community Resilience Centers, and drinking water protection.**

We were disappointed in the lack of inclusion of the other [priorities identified by inland California communities](#), including relief funds for disadvantaged communities affected by the recent floods, investment in the Strategic Growth Council’s Community Resilience Center and Transformative Climate Communities programs, investment in safe and affordable drinking water and wastewater and drought resilience, SGMA implementation

that prioritizes small water systems and domestic wells, investment in energy burden relief, and investment in multi-benefit community projects in the Salton Sea. We also urge investment of \$20M in relief funds for the community of Planada, outlined in detail in this [letter](#).

**4. Ensure that \$5M for research on methane reduction programs considers the full scope of environmental impacts and implications.**

The Senate Budget Proposal also includes \$5M to CDFA for “Research in GHG reductions” related to methane. We recommend that any funded research on this matter include research on the full environmental impacts and implications of methane reduction programs, including on air, water, and quality of life pollution for surrounding communities. We urge the Senate to ensure that if this funding is included in the final budget, there is language that requires CDFA to do so as the implementing agency.

Bold and transformative investments made in the last few years, especially investment in DACs, should be protected through this deficit. Thank you for your consideration and we respectfully urge your support for one just California. We welcome the opportunity to speak further on the importance of these budget investments and on our response to the Senate Budget Proposal.

Respectfully,



Olivia Seidman  
Climate Policy Coordinator  
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability

CC:

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor  
State of California

The Honorable Anthony Rendon  
Speaker of the Assembly  
California State Assembly

The Honorable Phil Ting  
Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget  
California State Assembly

The Honorable Steve Bennett  
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #3  
California State Assembly