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**COMMENTS ON THE CAP & TRADE PROCEEDS INVESTMENT PLAN BY**

**CALIFORNA BLACK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

While the Investment Strategy Plan does an outstanding job on identifying programs to lower green house gases (GHGs) in disadvantaged communities, it does not have any provisions for the citizens and community leaders to get actively engaged in GHG reductions. Afterall, the people in these communities are the greatest asset in reducing GHGs in their communities. Organizations like the California Black Chamber of Commerce (CBCC) and its partners not only have access to the disadvantaged communities, they live in the disadvantaged and have garnered trust from the community leaders and citizens.

Below identifies programs that the CBCC and its partners through its Green initiative are currently engaged to reduce GHGs:

**URBAN AGRICULTURE/GREENING**

Community gardens have been identified as a means to lower GHG locally. Block grants through organizations through CBCC partners like Keep California Beautiful (KCB) and their local affiliates would allow the community to site; start and maintain community gardens that would supply fresh fruits and vegetables to the community while reducing /eliminating the need the motorized import/export for these groceries. In addition, converting blighted alley and fields in disadvantaged communities to green spaces would be anesthetically pleasing and lower crime rates. This would create jobs in disadvantaged communities especially for the youth which statistically represent the largest unemployment sectors.

**GREEN JOBS TRAINING/CREATION**

One of the commonalities of Environmental Justice is unemployment. Including targeted green jobs training in these areas related to GHG reduction. With the introduction and installation of new age GHG reduction technology that include: solar panels; photovoltaic cells; smart meters; hybrid/alternative fuel cars and trucks; there remains the old age issue of repair and maintenance of this technology. Working with community colleges in disadvantaged communities, the training opportunities include: energy auditing; solar panel installation and maintenance; hybrid/alternative fuel vehicle maintenance and repair; urban agriculture/forestry. An experienced workforce is arriving daily in the form of Persian Gulf Veterans. They come to disadvantaged communities with both stationary and vehicular mechanical skills easily converted to GHG reduction technology installation and maintenance. CBCC partner GreenTech Education and Employment are rolling out this type of green jobs training opportunities.

**HEALTH STUDIES**

The links between health effects and the environment are being studied and documented. For example, lead in consumer products has been identified as a contributor of autism. Weather and climate play a significant role in people's health. Changes in climate affect the average weather conditions that we are accustomed to. Warmer average temperatures will likely lead to hotter days and more frequent and longer heat waves. This could increase the number of heat-related illnesses and deaths. Increases in the frequency or severity of extreme weather events such as storms could increase the risk of dangerous flooding, high winds, and other direct threats to people and property. Warmer temperatures could increase the concentrations of unhealthy air and water pollutants. Changes in temperature, precipitation patterns, and extreme events could enhance the spread of some diseases. The impacts of climate change on health will depend on many factors. These factors include the effectiveness of a community's public health and safety systems to address or prepare for the risk and the behavior, age, gender, and economic status of individuals affected. Impacts will likely vary by region, the sensitivity of populations, the extent and length of exposure to climate change impacts, and society's ability to adapt to change. CBCC partner California Black Health Network is preparing a white paper on the “Health Effect of Climate Change on Underserved Communities”. Not only will the paper focus on the effects of weather, it will explore the fact where there are GHGs there is some type of combustion that is emitting NOx; SOx and other toxic air contaminants.

**MEASUREMENT OF GHGs**

There is an expression that goes “if it can’t be measured, it cannot be managed”. This is so true for GHGs in disadvantaged communities. The installation of smart meters in disadvantaged communities is a great start. These will not only give data for energy usage, the meters could be calibrated to provide real time GHGs data to residents; schools; faith-based organizations; community centers; etc.. In turn, this empowers the people of the disadvantaged communities to engage in GHG reduction. Another good tool is the smart phone and tablet apps calibrated for disadvantaged communities, which would measure the GHG of activities giving data to the users.

**OUTREACH/EDUCATION**

Another tool to empower the disadvantaged communities is outreach and education. For a lot of communities, terms like Climate Change; Global Warming; GHGs do not have enough cultural relevance to make communities want to take action. People tend to associate Global Warming the polar bear on a shrinking iceberg – or – diapering rain forests in countries around the equator. Not that these are not important issues, however not relevant enough to make the community want to take action. With its limited resources, the CBCC and its partners through their radio station and Green Initiative, are working to make the connection. Partnering with CARB; the CEC; Cal/EPA and PUC would allow the outreach and education to expand exponentially in disadvantaged communities. CBCC partner California Power & Light are working with Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) in disadvantaged communities to education about issues such as the effects of Climate Change. FBOs are not only full of worshippers, they are full of consumers and voters. This presents a great opportunity to engage the FBOs in disadvantaged communities in GHGs education and reduction.

In summary, the CBCC and its partners stand ready to partner with CARB; Cal/EPA et al in the goals of reducing GHGs in disadvantaged communities.