

May 19, 2014

Re: Support for the AB32 Environmental Justice Advisory Committee Recommendations

Dear Governor Brown, Air Resources Board Chairman Nichols and Air Resources Board Members,

We write on behalf of the thousands of Californians we represent in support of the recommendations to the AB32 Scoping Plan Update that the Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (EJAC) put forward to keep our state at the forefront in achieving reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Integrating environmental justice into the fabric of the State's climate program strengthens the original environmental intent, addresses the needs of communities most impacted by climate pollution and enables shared prosperity for more Californians.

California's emerging majorities are people of color, many of which live in environmental justice communities who are deeply concerned with climate change and air quality. This concern propelled voters of color to defend AB 32 on the 2010 ballot, with the hope that AB 32 could be an engine for improved health and opportunities for a new green economy. Furthermore, SB 535 (de Leon) is poised to invest greenhouse gas reduction funds in the communities hardest hit by these toxics, and is energizing new constituencies. The EJAC members' lived experience with pollution illustrate how current climate strategies affect the most vulnerable in our state, as well as new paths forward for climate stabilization for 2020 and beyond.

We are encouraged to see a number of EJAC recommendations incorporated in the first drafts of the new Scoping Plan, and support the priority recommendations from their last deliberations. The State and ARB have an obligation to accurately assess both the positive and negative impacts of AB 32 on environmental justice communities. For too long environmental justice communities have been ignored and overburdened with health disparities like asthma. Setting aggressive midterm targets for emissions reduction is good for both stemming climate impacts globally and health impacts for Californians with no choice but to live downwind from polluters.

Clean energy solutions can be expanded without economic damage to low-income communities. More investment in public transit ridership, for example, offers simultaneous environmental and economic benefits to those who most need them. All Californians can benefit from our climate programs and energy choices.

A long-standing concern of the global environmental justice community is addressing the weaknesses and potential negative consequences of California's Cap and Trade program. Improving data collection and reporting measures is essential to our ability to ensure that we are meeting all the mandates of AB 32.

AB 32 is our promise to California and the world. We must charge forward with a stronger set of climate strategies that are imbued with a strong social equity framework. We can stabilize the climate, improve air quality and health while protecting California's growing communities of color. This way we mobilize more supporters for this vital cause. We urge you to incorporate the EJAC recommendations into the final Scoping Plan and work with the EJAC to ensure we achieve the multiple goals of AB 32.

Sincerely,

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350 Bay Area

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