

October 19, 2016

Mary D. Nichols
Chair, California Air Resources Board
1001 "I" Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: California Air Resources Board FY2017/18 Funding Plan: One-Stop Shop

Dear Chair Nichols and Air Resources Board Members:

Liberty Hill Foundation is a Los Angeles-based public foundation with over four decades worth of experience funding grassroots community-based organizations that build capacity in low-income communities of color to create social change. We appreciate the opportunity to make public comment on ARB's proposed One-Stop-Shop outreach pilot. It is our hope that our comments can help this important pilot reach its potential to advance access to low-carbon vehicles and sustainable energy technologies in California's most disadvantaged communities.

1) Create two separate One-Stop Shop funding streams—one for development of a web-based portal, and a second for multiple community outreach pilots across California.

Currently the Funding Plan calls for a single grant to fund a centrally administered One-Stop-Shop that relies on coordination with Air Districts and the contracted service providers of CVRP, EFMP and EV financing programs. While this centralized focus may make sense for the creation of the web portal which will process the information gathered through outreach efforts, subjecting outreach programs to this same centralized model makes little sense.

A better approach would be to create a separate funding stream that awards funding for multiple regional outreach pilots across the state. Because of the intent to coordinate CVRP, EFMP and EV financing incentives in ARB's Low Carbon Transportation program, this funding should be at least initially concentrated in areas where all of these programs are active. Diluting outreach statewide to areas without EFMP and EV financing will not show the potential for cross-qualification of programs at a single point of contact.

2) Increase uptake of low-carbon vehicle incentives by allowing other energy efficiency and renewable energy (EE/RE) programs to be promoted as part of outreach efforts.

While it is understandable that the web portal will initially provide input only for ARB's EV Equity Pilots, efforts to raise awareness of California GHG reduction incentives should not be limited to those programs. Not only does omitting EE/RE programs miss a significant opportunity to advance the larger goals of AB/SB 32 and the SB 350 Barriers reports, but by excluding these resources and others such as energy bill-saving assistance to reduce the cost of

living for low-income households, the ability of these households to adopt low carbon vehicle technologies will be significantly constrained.

Additionally, we would strongly recommend that ARB develop a plan and timeline in conjunction with the CEC, CPUC, and SGC, on combining One-Stop-Shop efforts and expansion of programs that may be concurrently qualified and applied for through a singular web-based interface. This should be a transparent process and developed in consultation with advocacy and community-based organizations to maximize the available knowledge and experience of groups whose missions have been to increase access to these resources in California's most vulnerable communities.

3) Prioritize funding for door-to-door outreach conducted by grassroots community-based organizations

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there is a great need to ensure that funding is prioritized for community-based organizations to conduct these outreach efforts. This requires, first and foremost, that we draw a distinction between community-based and community-focused organizations.

Community-based organizations in their most powerful sense, are grassroots community organizing efforts with historical ties to the communities they serve and whose missions are driven by their members. They are overwhelmingly staffed by local residents, and dedicate time and resources to build capacity through leadership development and education programs.¹ Trusted organizations knocking on their neighbors' doors is an essential element of cutting through the overwhelming number of often predatory private companies offering services that might not be in consumers' best interest.

Community-focused groups, by contrast, may have strong advocacy and equity mandates at their core, but are not representatives for, nor have visions driven by, any one community. Commonly, these organizations have issue-specific policy agendas based on the needs of low-income and environmental communities over a broader region and—while lacking the necessary organizational infrastructure for community outreach—can play an important role increasing grassroots organizational capacities through technical assistance and administrative support.²

These technical/community-based partnerships have the capacity to produce extremely promising One-Stop-Shop models in the form of Regional Outreach Hubs that maximize the role of grassroots CBOs and the value of door-to-door outreach in direct-to-consumer clean vehicle and sustainable energy incentives. Liberty Hill is finalizing the details on such a pilot in the coming weeks that will bring in grassroots partners, a local utility, and technical service

¹ Examples of grassroots community-based organizations are Communities for a Better Environment, Pacoima Beautiful, East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice, SCOPE-LA and T.R.U.S.T. South LA.

² Examples of community-focused or advocacy-based organizations include Physicians for Social Responsibility, The Greenlining Institute, Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy, and our own Liberty Hill Foundation.

providers and designate 78% of all funding to the grassroots organizations and door-to-door outreach in their communities. This pilot will ensure that the maximum number of reduced cost-of-living resources are explored to make the transition to clean fuel and sustainable energy sources financially feasible for low-income households. As this program is rolled out we would be happy to share its structure and progress with ARB Staff and Board Members and hope that it may be used as a model to better inform the valuable efforts of ARB and its creation of the important One-Stop-Shop outreach pilot.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Russak". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ben" being more prominent and the last name "Russak" following in a similar style.

Ben Russak
Senior Policy Analyst and Program Manager
Liberty Hill Foundation

