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On 8/12/16 Workshop on Barriers of Low-Income and Disadvantaged Communities

Additional submitted attachment is included below.



Clean Energy & Climate Justice

Communities for a Better Environment (CBE) is a California-based environmental justice organization with offices in Huntington Park, Wilmington (Los Angeles), Oakland, and Richmond. CBE's mission is to achieve environmental health and justice by building people's power in low-income communities of color, preventing and reducing pollution, and creating green, healthy, and sustainable communities. CBE helps residents in disproportionately polluted industrialized areas to change the environmental policies and practices that put their health and well-being at risk. Our uniquely effective program combines community organizing, science-based advocacy, and legal intervention in a single approach.

Environmental Justice Requires a Transition to Clean Energy

California is in a transformational period of energy planning, perhaps the most important in its history. The policy wins of last decades have resulted in substantial improvements in the adoption of better technologies and practices to reduce pollution and increase efficiency. We now stand at a pivot point, where we can exponentially accelerate our ascent toward a just, carbon-free energy system. Today's policy wins, both regulatory and legislative, are triggering a complete transformation in the way we produce and consume energy. These policies will result in tremendous reductions of GHG, smog-forming pollutants, and toxic emissions. They will catalyze the switch to clean fuels everywhere, and they will deliver significant public health and economic benefits.

California's energy transformation must be built with strong equity components, and rooted in community-driven processes that will benefit all Californians, especially the most vulnerable communities. Since 1978, CBE has been an environmental justice (EJ) leader working toward this inclusive transition. We have helped create the spirit of change in this political moment; we must now take advantage of that spirit, to secure action plans and strategies under the framework of *Just Transition*: a transformation from polluting and exploitative fossil-fuel economies to more equitable economies based on clean, renewable energy, with strong civic engagement and good jobs for local residents. A Just Transition will provide the people with democratic and equitable control over their own energy, and it will spur economic growth as we plan to end our reliance on fossil fuel in California. It can avert the catastrophic exacerbation of climate change and address the severe adverse public health impacts of pollution, especially as it disproportionately impacts vulnerable communities. Success in California can serve as a model for clean energy and equity initiatives nationwide.

Toward those ends, we are embarked in pursuit of a comprehensive energy goal to tie together our **clean electricity, climate justice and clean transportation work**. We are enhancing **clean energy alternatives** while, in parallel, opposing efforts to commit California to decades of reliance fossil fuels and expanded fossil fuel infrastructure.

CBE works in vulnerable communities in Northern and Southern California in the Counties of Contra Costa, Alameda and Los Angeles.

Northern California's Contra Costa County has the one of the highest concentrations of heavy industry in the state. Located in the east side of San Francisco Bay, it is home to four major oil refineries, 12 major chemical plants, and numerous industrial operations bordering densely populated areas. The City of Richmond, located in Contra Costa County, is home to the largest oil refinery in the West Coast, and chemical "fingerprints" link Richmond's poor indoor and outdoor air quality to this refinery and nearby port operations.¹

East Oakland, located in Alameda County in Northern California, has a childhood asthma hospitalization rate 150 to 200% higher than the County as a whole, and life expectancy in East Oakland for the years 2000 to 2003 was almost 7 years lower than the County average.² East Oakland residents are heavily impacted by industrial stationary and mobile sources of air pollution located near homes, schools, recreation centers, and churches.³

In the Los Angeles region, major polluting facilities are located in neighborhoods that have lower incomes and higher concentrations of racial minorities.⁴ The region has some of the highest levels of particulate pollution and smog in the country. In Southeast Los Angeles, where CBE's main office is located, wide varieties of polluting industries such as chrome-plating, hazardous waste treatment storage and disposal facilities, and other major toxic emitters combine with a high concentration of mobile sources of pollution to create a toxic hot spot. Further south in the harbor area of Wilmington, refineries, major stationary polluting sources, tanker loading facilities and diesel transports are heavily concentrated near residential neighborhoods.⁵ Studies by the South Coast Air Quality Management District conclude that the communities of Southeast LA and Wilmington have some of the highest risks of cancer from breathing unhealthy air in this air shed.

While CBE focuses its work on the fence-line communities and regions discussed above, we also engage in statewide policies that will benefit the health of all Californians. It is alarming that

¹ Julia Green Brody, Rachel Morello-Frosch, Ami Zota, Phil Brown, Carla Pérez, and Ruthann A. Rudel. "Linking Exposure Assessment Science With Policy Objectives for Environmental Justice and Breast Cancer Advocacy: The Northern California Household Exposure Study." *American Journal of Public Health*: November 2009, Vol. 99, No. S3, pp. S600-S609.

² Alameda County Public Health Department. October 2005. Community Information Book Update: East Oakland.

³ Lee, Anna Y. September 2008. Cumulative Impacts in East Oakland: Findings from a community-based mapping study. *Communities for a Better Environment*. http://www.cbecal.org/pdf/cumulative_impacts_finalFULL.pdf

⁴ See various studies documented in the report: Building a Regional Voice for Environmental Justice. Collaborative effort of CBE, UC Santa Cruz, Occidental College, Brown University and the Liberty Hill Foundation. September 2004. This report can be viewed at: <http://www.cbecal.org/pdf/regional-voice-enviro-justice.pdf>

⁵ For a map of various pollution sources in Wilmington see http://www.arb.ca.gov/ch/Draft_WilmingtonNAP_ChERRP_11_05.pdf, and for a detailed assessment of oil industry burden in Wilmington see: Julia May's *The Increasing Burden of Oil Refineries and Fossil Fuels in Wilmington, California and How to Clean them Up!* April 2009. *Communities for a Better Environment*.

California cities dominate the country's top 25 worst cities for air pollution, and 90% of Californians live in areas not meeting the State's health standards for air pollution.⁶ These conditions result in more than 9,200 premature air pollution-related deaths each year⁷ as well as causing and/or exacerbating a number of illnesses, costing \$3.5 billion in additional health care costs. People most vulnerable to impacts from exposure to pollution, especially mobile source corridors, are predominantly members of low-income communities of color.⁸ Other socioeconomic stressors, such as lack of access to sufficient quality health care, safe housing, open space, healthy nutritional outlets and others, already burden these communities. Exacerbating the impacts of pollution, they create severe **cumulative impacts**, lowering communities' resiliency and individuals' ability to cope with and recover from the health effects of pollution.⁹

Pollution has been well documented to cause significant health threats. These include more premature and low birth weight babies,¹⁰ increased death from heart attacks and stroke,¹¹ thicker arteries,¹² and higher rates of lung cancer.¹³ Research has also established that children living near freeway traffic have lowered lung function and higher rates of asthma.¹⁴ In addition, there is a growing body of evidence that pollution also causes or exacerbates existing health conditions--for example, a greater impact for those with or at risk of diabetes.¹⁵ Additionally various studies have shown that low-income residents and minority households are more likely to live near high volume roads and are more at risk to exposure from heavy concentration of mobile sources of pollution in California.¹⁶

Tailpipe emissions are a major cause of this pollution and also the largest source of global warming pollution in California. To meet California's air quality, global warming and clean car goals, California needs to dramatically ramp up the number of zero emission vehicles on the road, which is the motivation for CBE's work on Low Carbon Transportation policies including

⁶ State of the Air 2011. American Lung Association. <http://www.stateoftheair.org/2011/assets/SOTA2011.pdf>

⁷ Estimate of Premature Deaths Associated with Fine Particle Pollution (PM_{2.5}) in California Using a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Methodology, August 31, 2010, California Air Resources Board (CARB), California Environmental Protection Agency, http://www.arb.ca.gov/research/health/pm-mort/pm-report_2010.pdf

⁸ See all the studies listed in: Cole, L. & Sheila Foster. 2001. *From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of Environmental Justice Movement*. New York University Press. And see case studies and references in CBE's report *Cumulative Impacts: Changing Regulatory Culture to Address Environmental Injustice and Environmental Racism*. Communities for a Better Environment. October 2009. http://www.cbecal.org/pdf/J3687_CBE_web.pdf

⁹ There has been a few studies on this topic in recent years; for a comprehensive look at vulnerability see: Peter L. deFur, Gary W. Evans, Elaine A. Cohen Hubal, Amy D. Kyle, Rachel A. Morello-Frosch, and David R. Williams "Vulnerability as a Function of Individual and Group Resources in Cumulative Risk Assessment" in *Environ Health Perspect*. 2007 May; 115(5): 817-824.

¹⁰ Ritz, B. et al. *Am J Epidemiology*. 2007 Nov 1;166(9):1045-52. Epub 2007 Aug 4.

¹¹ Pope CA, 3rd, Dockery DW. "Health effects of fine particulate air pollution: lines that connect." *J Air Waste Manag Assoc* 2006;56(6):709-42

¹² Kunzli N, Jerrett M, Mack WJ, et al. Ambient air pollution and atherosclerosis in Los Angeles. *Environ Health Perspective* 2005;113(2):201-6

¹³ Pope, et. al. "Lung cancer, cardiopulmonary mortality, and long-term exposure to fine particulate air pollution." *JAMA* 2002;287(9):1132-41

¹⁴ Gauderman WJ, et al. "Effect of exposure to traffic on lung development from 10 to 18 years of age: a cohort study". *The Lancet*. 369:951. 17 Feb 2007. 571-7. Web. 21 June 2010.

¹⁵ See various studies listed as references in the American Lung Association report: *State of the Air 2011*-- <http://www.stateoftheair.org/2011/assets/SOTA2011.pdf>

¹⁶ Rowangould Gregory M., A census of the US near-roadway population: Public health and environmental justice considerations; Transportation Research Part D 25 (2013) 59-67 and Houston, D., Wu, J., Ong, P., Winer, A., 2004. Structural disparities of urban traffic in Southern California: implications for vehicle-related air pollution exposure in minority and high-poverty neighborhoods. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 26, 565-592.

the Charge Ahead California Initiative, which aims to place one million electric cars on the road in the next 10 years while creating access to low-income communities of color through a number equity provisions.

While all Californians suffer from irresponsible projects and weak policies that allow for our continued reliance on fossil fuels, the impacts are much more severe in environmental justice (EJ) communities. EJ communities suffer from the impacts of pollution and the fossil fuel based economy directly and disproportionately—from a wide range of stationary and mobile sources of pollution—without receiving much benefit from that economy. High unemployment rates and high asthma hospitalization rates, higher rates of pollution-related cancers risks and high levels of socioeconomic stressors, living with political exclusion, and working in polluting job environments are the legacies of an obsolete carbon-based economic model. This is a model of growth that overwhelmingly benefits few and excludes those most in need while harming the environment and our health, especially in communities most vulnerable to impacts and least equipped to deal with the consequences.

There is an urgent need to build powerful alliances and involve larger numbers of residents in city, regional, and statewide policy and planning processes to reduce pollution from various sources in vulnerable communities. We need to significantly enhance our efforts for more widespread education about environmental health risks and engage residents with innovative policy remedies that can improve existing conditions, especially in overburdened communities. We need to tap into the rich traditions and cultures of our hard-working communities with long histories of resistance, perseverance and struggle for positive social change.

CBE's Strategy

CBE uses a powerful environmental justice triad model of community organizing, research/policy and legal capacity. We have a long record of success in working with our members, other community residents, and our allies to defeat polluting projects and win precedent-setting policies that promote clean alternatives and protect community health. CBE is engaged in a set of strategies to help achieve Governor Brown's 2030 goals: to raise the renewable portfolio standard to 50 percent and increase building energy efficiency by 50 percent while dramatically reducing petroleum use. In particular, CBE is focused on 1) Expanding access for EJ communities to clean electricity options and helping California's implementing agencies effectuate SB 350 2) Focusing on AB32 to ensure equity and effective GHG controls; 3) Increasing equity for EJ communities and tangible opportunities for labor by building alignment within a Just Transition framework.