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Cimate Impacts on Disadvantaged Communities: Role of Energy Sector

Community Perspectives: Best Practices and Remaining Needs

Amee Raval
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Asian Pacific Environmental Network
APEN CORE STRATEGIES

COMMUNITY BASED LEADERSHIP

APEN Academy – Leadership Steering Committee – Leaders Retreat
Chevron Campaign – Solar Demonstration Projects – Transit Oriented Development – Richmond Our Power Convening
APEN CORE STRATEGIES
BUILDING POLITICAL POWER STATEWIDE
API Voter Registration – Candidates Forums – Voter Engagement Program
AAPIs for Civic Empowerment – API Progressive Base
APEN CORE STRATEGIES
COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS IN STATE POLICY

SB 350 Barriers Study
AB 693: Multifamily Affordable Housing Solar Program
AB 2722: Transformative Climate Communities
AB 523: Equity in Clean Energy Funds
Three Key Trends

- Economic Inequality
- Environmental and Climate Crisis
- Emerging Innovations in Clean Energy

In understanding their interconnectedness, we can use the opportunities from clean energy technologies to spur a new kind of economy that is both based on low carbon energy and addresses the widening gap
Energy Needs in EJ Communities

• Low-Income Californians:
  - 70% Renters
  - 47% Multifamily Affordable Housing
  - 54% Linguistically Isolated

• Energy Burden & Insecurity

• Vulnerable to Utility Disconnections

• High Need Communities
  - Homeless
  - Dependent on Medical Equipment
  - Large Families
  - Proximity to Risky Energy Infrastructure
Low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately impacted by climate polluters.

Communities within 2.5 miles of a greenhouse gas facility have:

- 22% higher proportion of people of color
- 21% higher proportion of low-income people

The more emitting facilities, the higher % people of color:

![Bar chart showing percentage of people of color and white in different numbers of GHG facilities within 2.5 miles.]

Climate solutions must start with most impacted communities!
Climate Justice & Resilience

**Adaptation** is the process of responding to the impending or inevitable consequences of the climate disruption already set in motion that cannot be avoided or reversed.

- Physical Threats and Infrastructure

**Resilience** describes the capacity of a system (whether a community or an economy) to maintain an intact core identity in the face of change

- Land Use & Community Development
- Social Cohesion
- Public Health
Climate Resilience & Energy

- Distinct vulnerability of EJ communities to surges and power outages
- Risks posed by proximity to fossil fuel infrastructure
- Rising costs of utility bills and other economic impacts
RICHMOND JUST TRANSITION STRATEGIES

THE EXTRACTIVE ECONOMY

ORGANIZE TO END THE BAD

- Stop crude-by-rail
- Stop tar sands & cut refinery emissions
- Stop health care cuts
- Stop pet coke and coal-by-rail

CHANGE THE RULES

City Initiatives
- Establish a city renewable energy & efficiency standard
- Create municipal clean energy bonds
- Develop MCE target of locally generated renewable energy
- Create procurement agreements prioritize cooperatives & just transition projects
- Require local sourcing of food
- Community ownership of public lands
- Support job training programs
- Connect to state & national policy and advocacy

CHANGE THE STORY

- Host annual Our Power Solutions Festival
- Develop leadership & provide political education
- Community-led media and storytelling

DRAW DOWN MONEY AND POWER

ORGANIZE A MOVEMENT OF MOVEMENTS

- Reach voters in every election
- Educate people about just transition
- Strengthen the REJC
- Partner with c4s

BUILD THE NEW

- Develop local just transition projects (e.g. energy coop, regional food hub)
- Establish Green Zones
- Develop Richmond Cooperative Incubator
- Ensure community governance & local jobs in MCE’s Chevron Solar Project
- Create community-owned infrastructure

STARVE AND STOP

DIVEST FROM THEIR POWER

MOVE MONEY & RESOURCES

- Connect UC Divestment Campaign with Richmond work
- Implement SB 535 GHG Reduction Fund
- Create national reinvestment cooperative
- Support Richmond’s Revolving Loan Fund

FEED AND GROW

INVEST IN OUR POWER
Building Resilience: Emergency Management

- Laotian Organizing Project (LOP) in Richmond
- Historic Campaign: Multilingual Warning System (2001)
Building Resilience: Emergency Management

• Key Lessons
  – Development of emergency warning systems
  – Targeted outreach to vulnerable communities
  – Identify threats from energy infrastructure in light of extreme weather events
Building Resilience: Energy Efficiency

- EJ communities live in older buildings and use inefficient appliances
- Contributes to higher energy use
- High-performance buildings more likely to maintain temperatures
- Vulnerable communities include elderly and those with medical conditions
- Energy efficient buildings can:
  - Allows residents/tenants to shelter in place longer
  - Reduces annual energy spending
  - Reduces overall net emissions
Building Resilience: Microgrids

- Bridging ‘green divide’
- Prioritize critical facilities that serve vulnerable communities
- Allows communities to disconnect from grid during power outage and maintain power supply
- Allows facilities receiving backup power to double as shelter for displaced residents
- Increases cost savings
Remaining Needs

- Analyze economic and health impacts of changes in the energy sector from climate change
- Build the evidence base to connect climate resilience:
  - High energy burden, energy insecurity, and utility disconnections
  - Access to energy upgrades, clean energy technologies, and workforce opportunities
- Strengthen metrics to track multiple benefits i.e. energy affordability, reliability, health and safety
- Improve coordination and leveraged funding for energy upgrades and climate resilience efforts
- Continue to strengthen community engagement
Guidance for State Agencies

- Support EJ community needs through data, research, and accessible information
- Extend participation to all stages of decision-making
- Prioritize the protection of essential facilities that provide health care, food, and emergency shelter
- Center anti-displacement and housing affordability
- Ensure climate and energy projects promote health and avoid harms
Thank You!