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**Oct 1, 2021 CEJA & CAUSE Comment on CEC Clean Transportation
Investment Plan Update 21-22**

Additional submitted attachment is included below.



October 1st, 2021

RE: 2021-2022 Investment Plan Update for the Clean Transportation Program

To the California Energy Commission,

The California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) is a statewide alliance of grassroots community-based organizations across California working together to advance environmental justice in state policy. Our member and partner organizations work directly with low-income communities and communities of color in some of the most polluted and socioeconomically burdened areas of our state. CEJA unites the powerful local organizing of our members to create comprehensive opportunities for change at a statewide level. Among CEJA's 10 member and partner organizations is the Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE). CAUSE works to advance social, economic, and environmental justice for working-class and immigrant communities in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, including advocacy on reducing emissions from heavy-duty transportation on the port-adjacent community of South Oxnard. Together, we offer these follow-up comments on the CEC's 2021-2022 Investment Plan Update for the Clean Transportation Program, and specifically the Revised 2021-2023 Investment Plan Update Staff Draft Report.

We greatly appreciated the direction the CEC took in the previous iteration of the Staff Draft Report to advance the state's climate, air quality, and equity goals through the transportation sector. Additional funding for workforce and economic development opportunities connected to the buildout and deployment of this infrastructure are essential components to an electrification strategy, and we appreciate the increased investment in these. However, we were disappointed to see a shift away from needed investments in medium and heavy duty ZEV infrastructure, and the continued lack of clarity around the 50% funding allocation to low-income and disadvantaged communities (DACs). We were also alarmed that serious concerns surrounding displacement and upstream pollution impacts were not addressed in this revised version.



We want to reiterate our position that investments should be made strategically to address the root causes of transportation emissions and disenfranchisement, to create transformational changes within our transportation system that make it truly sustainable and equitable for all Californians. This includes addressing local health impacts and global sustainability concerns surrounding false ‘near-zero’ solutions such as biofuels, ‘renewable natural gas’, and other sources which still release pollutants in and around the communities where they are operated. This also means placing a greater focus upon intentional investments and supportive policies in DACs that mitigate threats of gentrification and displacement. Further, transformational investments require adequate community engagement to fully consider benefits, social costs, and community priorities regarding clean transportation. Quantification of costs and benefits to communities is critical to understanding the impacts of ongoing investment, such as installation of a charging station. It is important to know the implications of such actions on public health, economic development, and overall access to such technologies in DACs, and should be informed by deep community engagement regarding needs. To align towards necessary transformational change to meet our state’s goals, we offer the below recommendations and encourage their inclusion in the final 2021-2023 Investment Plan Update for the Clean Transportation Program.

1. Invest in medium and heavy-duty electrification for the greatest benefits to DACs.

Environmental justice communities surrounding ports, including West Oakland, South Oxnard, Wilmington, and Barrio Logan, as well as many communities impacted by growing warehouse development in the Inland Empire and Central Valley, have organized to address severe health impacts of diesel exhaust from heavy-duty trucks for many years. We are concerned that critical investments in electrifying heavy-duty transportation, which will provide the greatest air quality, public health, and equity benefits from state funds, are being moved to areas which do not yield equivalent benefits to DACs. Half of the original planned heavy-duty investments in the Clean Transportation Program budget were shifted to light-duty in the most recent version. Given the challenges the state continues to experience in ensuring light-duty ZEV investments meaningfully benefit DACs, low-income, and BIPOC Californians, at the very least this increased focus on light-duty must be accompanied by much stronger efforts to ensure equitable benefits. Heavy-duty transportation infrastructure and its associated air quality impacts are greatly concentrated in DACs across the state and investments in the heavy-duty sector are relatively easily targeted to DACs. However, investments in light-duty ZEV



infrastructure require much stronger policy safeguards to ensure they do not disproportionately benefit the relatively affluent population of personal EV owners and provide economic and health benefits equitably.

2. Protect communities from upstream impacts of alternative fuels.

We continue to express concern around the investment in polluting false solutions as such investments only delay deployment of critical ZEV infrastructure, and perpetuate pollution and polluting infrastructure in DACs. We expect to see accurate accounting for the well-documented environmental and greenhouse gas emission impact of biofuels, including Indirect Land Use Changes and displacement analyses from expanding mega-dairies, leaks, and high infrastructure costs. Further, the definition of green hydrogen should be narrow and include only hydrogen produced exclusively with resources that qualify under the Renewable Portfolio Standard and that do not increase pollution burdens in either their production or use, and the CEC should require users to retire all of the associated Renewable Energy Credits. Under no circumstances should purposely grown feedstocks and biomethane be used to generate hydrogen. We further urge the CEC not to allow hydrogen to be produced using biomass facilities. Utilizing biomass for hydrogen will increase several types of toxic pollutants in communities. At minimum, the CEC must use information from this true-cost accounting to put necessary protections and mitigation measures in place to protect communities from impacts to their health and environment. Environmental justice communities have for too long borne the burden of our transportation system while reaping little of the benefits, and the investment plan should include funding to prevent this from happening under the use of these alternative technologies.

3. Ensure that all transportation infrastructure investments are coupled with strong anti-displacement and ‘do no harm’ policies that prioritize existing communities’ needs.

Given the statewide housing crisis, the CEC must be especially mindful of inadvertent gentrification in neighborhoods around fast chargers and other ZEV infrastructure. Real estate developers and landlords will increasingly see proximity to fast charging stations as an asset, which will quickly increase the price of surrounding land, likely resulting in raised rents and evictions. Further, new ZEV infrastructure must be deployed mindfully to ensure it does not encourage additional new development of warehouses and other polluting sources near chargers in DACs. We also encourage the CEC to prioritize charging investments in



neighborhoods near permanently affordable public and nonprofit housing that are more protected from the displacement risks of the private housing market. Additionally, preference should be given to investments in communities where jurisdictions have existing strong anti-displacement policies already in place that demonstrate planning efforts to protect communities from harmful facilities, including by ensuring that facilities are sited away from communities or have truck rerouting plans in place.

As environmental justice organizations, we appreciate the CEC for the direction of its Clean Transportation Investment Plan. We believe that fundamentally transforming our transportation system is one of the most important paths to advance environmental justice in California. To truly transform our transportation system into something more sustainable and equitable, we cannot focus solely on decarbonizing a system of individual vehicle ownership, but rather need to focus investments in more low-cost and free mass transit and shared mobility options, including active transportation. Eliminating the deadly emissions from freight moved through California while making clean mobility affordable and accessible to all will improve health and save lives in environmental justice communities across the state. We look forward to continued partnership in advancing clean, equitable, and healthy transportation in California.

Respectfully,

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