

**Comments of California Environmental Justice Alliance on 2011 IEPR:
Committee Workshop on the California Clean Energy Future**

Docket # 11-IEP-1A

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Subject: Job Creation, Health and Environmental Justice Metrics

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the metrics involved in the development of the *California Clean Energy Future Overview* document. We support the project overall and support the goal of integrating all agency efforts focused on energy and climate change policy. We encourage staff to add three additional metrics for measuring progress on the initiatives essential to meeting California's energy and climate change goals: job creation, public health and environmental justice.

Environmental Health Coalition is a member of the California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA), a coalition of six grassroots environmental justice organizations representing different regions of California. We are all dedicated to improving the quality of life in the low-income, communities of color we serve and empowering our community members to have a voice in decisions that affect their lives.

Our low-income communities have suffered the most under the fossil-fuel energy economy. These are the communities that sit adjacent to freeways, diesel operations, oil refineries, power plants, industrial facilities and other polluting sources. The resulting respiratory impacts and other health ailments from these pollution sources, as well as the large amount of dirty energy infrastructure have burdened these communities for too long and exacerbated their diminishing economic and social opportunities.

Metrics for evaluating the success of our energy and climate change laws must expand to track and account for these inequities. We must ensure that all Californians, regardless of race, class, income, age, gender, education level or place of living, benefit from the transition to a green energy future and the burgeoning green energy economy.

Specifically, we recommend the following metrics:

1) Green-Collar Job Creation. Many hopes and aspirations of the underemployed in vulnerable communities are tied to the creation of new green-collar jobs. These are jobs in green construction, home energy upgrades, solar installation and maintenance, alternative fuel vehicle maintenance, sales and

office administration, and more. While there are many training opportunities for low-income community members in these fields, there is not a lot of demand to hire these trained workers. It is critical that the CEC/CPUC create green-collar job creation goals out to 2020 and beyond for disadvantaged communities in California, and create metrics to assess our success in reaching those goals.

Suggested methodologies are working in tandem with state Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and developing a process to evaluate the number of green job hires from low-income community members trained in green jobs. This can be through a variety of methods including zip code data maintained by all WIBs, a pre-and post-survey of employees, sampling people in region-based training programs, etc. Working in partnership with state green job training centers and the WIB should yield an effective methodology for all parties.

2) Public Health. Unfortunately, where we live is highly influential in shaping our health and longevity. Where we live determines our exposure to air pollution, toxic chemicals, green space and recreational opportunities, presence or absence of fast food, alcohol, tobacco and healthy food, income and education levels – among other things. One study found that people living in communities with the highest levels of poverty in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area were expected to live an average of ten years less than those living in more affluent areas (*Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative*, <http://bit.ly/aaqVe9>).

Climate change may be the greatest threat to public health this century. The spread of infectious diseases, increases in injuries and fatalities caused by extreme weather events, rising rates of respiratory and cardiovascular disease related to worsening air pollution, and nutritional shortages may cause unprecedented social upheaval and political conflict. These health risks are of particular concern for vulnerable populations, since they already struggle to adapt to existing conditions. Thus, it is critical that another metric to be measured and tracked is public health.

One methodology for measuring that is to set goals to reduce criteria air pollution. Another methodology is to look at the health impact assessments being conducted by the CA Dept of Public Health and CARB to examine the health implications of the proposed cap-and-trade regulatory program. Specifically, the Dept of Public Health is focusing on the potential health effects of economic factors – such as changes to household energy costs, shifts in employment and the potential health cobenefits that could accrue through carbon reduction policies like SB 375, reducing the communities vehicle miles traveled, reducing sprawl, increasing the percentage of residents who walk or bike, etc. With some innovative thinking, a methodology can be created to ensure our energy policies are protecting and improving public health for all populations.

3) Environmental Justice. While it is clear that the new clean energy policies will lead to billions of dollars of investments in California's electric power and transportation infrastructure, it is not clear who benefits from this massive investment. Investment in communities who have shouldered the burden of the dirty energy economy is imperative. Not only must this new green energy economy create new job opportunities for underemployed communities, but it must also generate wealth, revitalize neighborhoods, and lead to the installation of this new clean infrastructure in those underserved communities. Tracking and measuring where new energy infrastructure is placed and who has benefitted economically is another invaluable metric to be measured.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments and we look forward to working with the CEC and CPUC staff on the final *California Clean Energy Future* document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Capretz', written in a cursive style.

Nicole Capretz
Associate Director
Environmental Health Coalition