March 20, 2019

The Honorable Holly Mitchell, Chair
Senate Budget Committee
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting, Chair
Assembly Budget Committee
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: 2019-2020 Proposed Budget: $140 Million for Transformative Climate Communities

Dear Chairs Mitchell and Ting:

...
On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are writing to express our strong support for restoring funding out of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund for the Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) program to at least $140 million this year.

TCC delivers multiple emission-reducing strategies – like affordable solar-powered housing with access to clean public transit and active transportation – in a coordinated way that can transform communities into models of economic and environmental sustainability. Moreover, TCC directly connects investments to residents impacted by multiple sources of pollution and vulnerable to the anticipated impacts of climate change, and requires robust community engagement in all phases of project development and implementation. The program fosters an integrative, collaborative approach to comprehensively address the needs of communities impacted by environmental pollution, and could be one of the state's most effective tools in supporting climate resilience in communities throughout the state – both rural and urban, both incorporated and unincorporated, both north and south, east and west.

While the Cap and Trade Expenditure Plan in the Governor’s January Budget of 2019-2020 calls for $40 million to fund TCC, we believe that the state should dedicate at least $140 million in this year’s Expenditure Plan. $40 million might be enough to fund a single catalytic award, but it is simply not enough for multiple large-scale investments. By comparison, the TCC program awarded $140 million for three Implementation Grants in its first round of funding. Combined the projects will reduce GHGs by 117,412 MTCO2e and deliver local environmental, health and economic benefits through projects ranging from expanding green space to improving public transportation to the development of a new community college campus.

Moreover, 14 Planning Grants have also been awarded so that communities can undertake planning activities to increase readiness for future TCC Implementation Grants, with some of those planning grants awarded to unincorporated communities. These 14 Planning Grants represent months of work on the ground to bring communities together, build stakeholder support and envision more sustainable and resilient futures. This planning work will be wasted if there is not adequate funding to support multiple Implementation Grants in the future. An allocation of at least $140 million is critical to funding as many competitive Planning Grants as possible.

We strongly urge the Senate and Assembly leadership to support at least $140 million request for TCC and bring catalytic change to the communities most impacted by poverty and pollution.

Sincerely,

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The Greenlining Institute

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California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA)

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Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment (CRPE)

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cc:  
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