June 2, 2021

The Honorable Anthony Rendon  
Speaker, California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 219  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting  
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee  
State Capitol, Room 6026  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Richard Bloom  
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 3  
State Capitol, Room 2003  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Toni Atkins  
Pro Tem, California State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 205  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Nancy Skinner  
Chair, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Committee  
State Capitol, Room 5094  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Bob Wieckowski  
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee 2  
State Capitol, Room 4085  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Funding Request for Transformative Climate Communities ($500 M) and Regional Climate Collaboratives ($35 M)

Dear Speaker Rendon, Pro Tem Atkins, Assemblymember Ting, Assemblymember Bloom, Senator Skinner, and Senator Wieckowski,
On behalf of the Greenlining Institute and the undersigned organizations, we respectfully write to urge priority funding for the Regional Climate Collaboratives program and the Transformative Climate Communities program to ensure communities hit hardest by climate change have the resources, infrastructure, capacity and leadership to cope with the cumulative climate, health and economic crises they are experiencing. In the wake of the COVID-19, the ongoing climate crisis, and increasing levels of economic inequality, we must prioritize climate equity programs that meet the needs of communities hit first and worst by these multiple threats.

The Regional Climate Collaborative (RCC) program would establish the capacity building and technical assistance infrastructure needed in California's most impacted and least resourced communities. RCC will serve as local hubs to convene local stakeholders, foster partnerships and support the development of community plans and projects to advance local climate action. The program will select collaboratives to build community-driven leadership, knowledge, skills, experience, and resources to identify and access public funding for climate change mitigation and adaptation projects.

The Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) program 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.

While the Governor’s May Budget Revise included funding for these two priorities, the Senate's May 25 Budget proposal completely zeroed out these critical climate equity programs.

We specifically urge you to consider the following requests:

- $35M to the Strategic Growth Council for the Regional Climate Collaboratives Program (SB 1072, Leyva)
- $500M to the Strategic Growth Council for the Transformative Climate Communities Program

Together, the Regional Climate Collaboratives program and the Transformative Climate Communities program builds the capacity of under-resourced communities, and then makes the catalytic investments needed in our most impacted neighborhoods.

In order for the State to meet its commitment to our most vulnerable areas and reach our climate goals, every community, small and large, must have equitable opportunity and access to the resources that lead to local transformations. Working class communities of color not only bear the brunt of climate inequities, but are also the very same communities with the least resources and capacity to compete for climate action funding. The Regional Climate Collaboratives program builds the capacity of impacted communities to make the investments necessary to transition all of California to a climate resilient future.

The Transformative Climate Communities program then offers a model for fighting climate change, building economic prosperity and redressing the historic oppression of our most under-resourced neighborhoods. The program fosters an integrative, collaborative approach to comprehensively address the needs of communities impacted by environmental pollution, and could be one of California's most effective tools in supporting climate resilience in communities throughout the state – rural and urban, incorporated and unincorporated, north and south, east and west.

We respectfully ask for your support of this budget request.

Sincerely,

Emi Wang
Greenlining Institute

Kirsten Liske
Ecology Action

Jason Barbose
Union of Concerned Scientists

Julia Hatton
Rising Sun Center For Opportunity
Maria Patiño Gutierrez
Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE)

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The Watershed Project

Ilonka Zlata
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Colin Parent
Circulate San Diego

Nancy Faulstich
Regeneracion - Pajaro Valley Climate Action

Matthew Baker
Planning and Conservation League

Katherine McNenny
Industrial District Green (a project of Community Partners)

Ector Olivares
Catholic Charities

Lauren Weston
Acterra: Action for a Healthy Planet

Agustin Cabrera
Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy