

Reducing Poverty and Pollution in California

Everyone deserves to have a good quality of life, including a healthy environment, but the fact is, lower-income families and people of color are more likely to live in polluted areas. This is especially true in California – where working families suffer from our state’s high levels of air pollution, traffic congestion, and other hazards. Thanks to the tireless efforts and fair minded thinking of environmental justice advocates and policy makers, the state’s pioneering clean energy and climate laws, AB 32, and SB 535, are knocking down barriers to a better quality of life and making California more equitable. Together, these laws are delivering cleaner air, reducing contributions to climate change, lowering energy costs and growing job opportunities across the state.

AB 32 helps to address the disproportionate impacts pollution has on disadvantaged and low-income communities with SB 535, which guarantees that **at least 25% of the billions of dollars** generated through AB 32 are earmarked specifically for **climate investments benefitting disadvantaged communities.**

Climate investments support programs building healthy communities, such as:

- The development of **affordable housing close to transit stations**, facilitating construction jobs across the state.
- Enhanced **transportation options**, like better public transit and free transit passes, more frequent bus services and EV car-sharing programs and purchase incentives for low-income families.
- Clean energy programs providing **access to low-cost renewable energy, energy efficiency retrofits and weatherization assistance** to reduce energy costs for the households that need it most.
- Urban forestry programs to plant **trees and other vegetation** in urban areas, as well as programs that support and **enhance access to fresh foods.**
- Increased **recycling and composting facilities that create jobs and reduce pollution.**

Climate Investments for CA

- 2014-15 = \$832 million
- 2015-16 = \$1.7 billion+
- Min. 25% to disadvantaged communities

Supports good jobs in the clean energy economy

- SB 535 advances the burgeoning clean energy economy in neighborhoods and communities historically bypassed by the California dream, **creating new job and business opportunities where they are needed most.**
 - When clean energy jobs are supported by comprehensive training and large investments in construction or building retrofits, they provide an opportunity for workers to learn a craft and build new careers.
 - Many renewable energy and energy efficiency providers working on projects supported by climate investments also incorporate job-training programs – providing hands-on job training in the clean economy, creating pathways to a middle-class living for workers in every corner of the state.

AB 32 is addressing California’s air pollution problem

- Toxic air pollutants have a detrimental impact on community health. **These pollutants often come from the production of dirty power and cars and trucks driving on freeways that cut across low-income communities.**
- Many Californians live in areas that are impacted by multiple sources of air pollution – **the state is home to the six cities with the dirtiest air in the nation and eight of the ten most polluted metro areas in the nation for ozone and particle pollution.** ⁱ

“There are communities in California that face staggering environmental health and justice problems, severe enough to limit people’s life span. By setting and meeting clean air standards and addressing climate change, AB 32 must meet its promise to protect environmental justice communities who need relief from the burden of pollution.”

Martha Arguello, Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles

When it comes to pollution, **location matters.** More than **two-thirds** of California’s **low-income African Americans** and **60%** of **low-income Latinos and Asian/Pacific Islanders** live within **six miles of a large emitter**, while living near major roadways may be **especially dangerous** due to high levels of vehicle emissions.

- In addition to slashing emissions from the transportation sector, reducing greenhouse gas pollution on-site at stationary pollution sources can have a big impact on the amount of co-pollutants, like fine particulate matter and air toxics, that reach the surrounding community.^{ii iii iv}
- A growing body of evidence links air pollution and vehicle exhaust to **low birth weight** and **impaired fetal brain development** with lasting health and cognitive impacts^v as well as **risk of illness and premature death**.^{vi} Black children have the **highest rate of asthma** in the nation and **an infant mortality rate nearly double the national rate**.^{vii}
- From asthma to contaminated neighborhoods, the impacts of dirty air and polluting industries can harm low-income communities in many ways and individuals have limited or no ability to fight back.

“It’s time that we prioritize the public good. AB 32 is a step toward ensuring every family in California can live, work and thrive in a clean, safe and healthy environment.”

Miya Yoshitani, Asian Pacific Environmental Network

“It’s important that California’s efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions bring real benefits to underserved communities. Because of SB 535, innovative programs like electric vehicle car sharing can become more accessible to the neighborhoods that need it most.”

Bahram Fazeli, Communities for a Better Environment

Providing steady improvements to community health...

- Though air pollution has long been linked to reduced lung capacity and compromised breathing in children, a steep decline in pollution has led to more robust lung development in school-aged California kids – and **the percentage of children with significantly impaired lung function has been cut in half**.^{viii}
- Most Californians would like a job closer to home, an easier commute and lower housing costs. One AB 32-related law, SB 375, links local land use planning and regional investments to **reduce transportation-related pollution by creating walkable neighborhoods and mixed-use communities** designed around transit options, walking and biking.
- Walkable communities offer extensive health benefits – including a **35% lower risk of obesity**. Residents also are able to breathe clean air and get more physical activity, which combats rates of cancer, asthma, lung and heart disease, and diabetes.^{ix}

Despite oil being the most profitable industry in the world, **for decades oil companies have been spending huge amounts of money to destroy and avoid California’s clean air standards** that protect the health of communities most at-risk from pollution.

...and reducing our dependence on petroleum

- California’s **dependence on petroleum fuels** generates nearly **half of our climate pollution, 80% of smog-forming NOx emissions and 95% of cancer causing diesel particulates**.^x
- Living close to major truck routes is especially damaging for health yet **approximately 40% of Californians live close enough to major roadways to experience higher health risks** caused by traffic pollution.^{xi}
- AB 32 is helping break the stranglehold oil companies have over our health by **reducing California’s dependence on petroleum** and bringing **cleaner alternatives to communities** through zero emission vehicle technology standards, heavy-duty diesel truck and bus rules and clean fuels programs that help reduce health and climate consequences from the transportation sector.^{xii}

California Delivers is supported by the following equity and environmental justice organizations:

Asian Pacific Environmental Network
 BlueGreen Alliance
 Catholic Charities, Diocese of Stockton
 Coalition for Clean Air
 Communities for a Better Environment
 Environmental Health Coalition
 Green For All
 The Greenlining Institute
 Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability
 Lutheran Office of Public Policy – California

Pacoima Beautiful
 Physicians for Social Responsibility – Los Angeles Presente
 Public Advocates Inc.
 SCOPE | Strategic Concepts in Organizing & Policy Education
 Social Justice Learning Institute
 Valley Improvement Projects
 Valley LEAP

For a complete list of California Delivers supporters, go [here](#).

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- ⁱ “January countdown: Fuel policy good for health – and wallet”, Tim O’Connor and Bonnie Homes-Gen, Capital Weekly, May 27, 2014, <http://capitolweekly.net/january-countdown-fuel-policy-good-health-wallet/>
- ⁱⁱ Manuel Pastor, et. al, Minding the Climate Gap: What’s at Stake if California’s Climate Law Isn’t Done Right and Right Away, U.S.C. Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (2010), 9, Figure 2 available at <http://dornsife.usc.edu/pere/documents/mindingthegap.pdf>
- ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.lung.org/associations/states/california/advocacy/fight-for-air-quality/sota-2015/sota-2015-fact-sheets/sota-2015-fact-sheet-statewide.pdf>
- ^{iv} <http://www.stateoftheair.org/2013/health-risks/health-risks-disparities.html#highways>
- ^v 62. Bell ML, Ebisu K, Belanger K. Ambient Air Pollution and low birth weight in Connecticut and Massachusetts. Environ Health Perspect. 2007; 115: 118-24; Ritz B, Wilhelm M, Zhao Y. Air pollution and infant death in southern California, 1989-2000. Pediatrics. 2006; 118: 493-502; Woodruff TJ, Parker JD, Schoendorf KC. Fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) air pollution and selected causes of postneonatal infant mortality in California. Environ Health Perspect. 2006; 114: 785-790. “Air pollution takes a double toll on babies’ brains”, Geoffrey Mohan, March 25, 2015, LA Times, April 29, 2014. <http://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-air-pollution-baby-brains-20150324-story.html>
- ^{vi} Disparities in the Impact of Air Pollution, State of the Air 2015, American Lung Association. <http://www.stateoftheair.org/2015/health-risks/health-risks-disparities.html>
- ^{vii} http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_10/sr10_258.pdf
- ^{viii} “Cleaner air is linked to stronger lungs in Southern California children”, Tony Barboza, LA Times, March 4, 2014, <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-clean-air-lungs-children-20150304-story.html#page=1>
- ^{ix} http://www.climateplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/SB375_fact_sheet_for_League.pdf
- ^x California Air Resources Board, LCFS ISOR. P.ES-1
- ^{xi} Rowangould, G. (2013). A Census of the United States Near-Roadway Population: Public Health and Environmental Justice Considerations. Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment. 25: 59-67.
- ^{xii} <http://www.lung.org/associations/states/california/advocacy/fight-for-air-quality/sota-2015/sota-2015-fact-sheets/sota-2015-fact-sheet-statewide.pdf>