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New Environmental Justice Legislative Scorecard Shows Urgent Need for Improvement

EJ Communities Call on Legislators to Stand With Impacted Communities

Sacramento, CA | February 1, 2018 — Today, the California Environmental Justice Alliance and CEJA Action release our 5th annual [Environmental Justice Scorecard](#) for the 2017 Legislative Session. This scorecard is the only one in the state to assess how well California's elected officials supported actions to address environmental issues that impact low-income communities and communities of color.

"With continued vicious attacks from the federal government that threaten the health and safety of communities of color, California's resistance is a bright spot in national politics. But the 2017 legislative session proves that our elected officials need to do more to rise to the challenge and cannot allow the federal context to lower our state's bar. We need leaders who will advance the real transformational policies that are commensurate with our local communities' needs and the global crisis, despite industry pressure. CEJA and CEJA Action will continue educating elected officials about environmental justice issues and working to build the political will to enact the bold policies these exceptional times call for, while holding our leaders accountable when they do not."

– Gladys Limon, Executive Director, California Environmental Justice Alliance & CEJA Action

In 2017, there were many high profile pieces of legislation signed into law, many of which included tough compromises resulting in significant impacts on environmental justice communities. The year revealed the pervasive influence of industry in California politics, as well as ongoing gaps in environmental justice legislative leadership, even in a state that is heralded as an environmental leader. After several years of steadily increasing scores in the EJ Scorecard, there was a sharp decline in the scores of Governor Brown, legislators, as well as cumulatively across the API, Latino, and Black Caucuses and regions across the state.

- 2 perfect scores (100%): Assemblymembers Monique Limón & Mark Stone
- 6 Assembly high scores (92%): Weber, Gomez Reyes, Kalra, Gloria, Chiu, Bonta
- 1 Senate high score (93%): Allen
- These numbers are in stark contrast to 2016, when 38 Assemblymembers and 22 Senators scored in the 90-100 % range.
- The Governor scored a 70%, a sharp decline from his 100% score in 2016.

There were still bright spots in the session such as AB 523 by Assemblymember Eloise Gomez Reyes, which will bring approximately \$60 million dollars for renewable energy in disadvantaged and low-income neighborhoods.

"California must live up to our environmental values and ensure that time and resources are dedicated to disadvantaged communities. Environmental quality and equity can only be achieved if we ensure that all communities are able to benefit from green technology and innovation. I was proud to work with the California Environmental Justice Alliance to pass AB 523 to ensure a sustained investment in regions of our state that can benefit the most from renewable energy projects."

– Assemblymember Eloise Gomez Reyes, AD-47

Given the sustained and significant impacts of environment health hazards among communities of color, legislators of color have a particular responsibility to represent the needs of California's increasingly diverse population, with many of these legislators from highly impacted districts themselves. We analyzed scores for the Asian Pacific Islander, Latino, and Black Caucuses, as well as cumulative scores by major regions in California. In 2017, we saw the highest scores from San Diego (87%), with Bay Area (77%) and Los Angeles (70%) following with room for improvement. The San Joaquin Valley (35%) consistently shows the lowest scores, even with some of the highest pollution in the state.

In 2018, we are building on the victories of the past year to fight for more environmental and health improvements in our communities. Legislators will have an opportunity to demonstrate their leadership on several key issues that were not resolved in 2017 including advancing 100% clean energy, reforming the Department of Toxic Substances Control, and securing a Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund.

"It is impossible to overstate the importance of eliminating fossil fuels from our energy system. We need an electricity system that is fueled entirely by renewable energy sources, and a schedule for the transition that looks to decarbonizing and removing natural gas from our electricity sector by retiring gas-fired power plants; creating good jobs in renewable energy; and prioritizing clean air gains in the communities that need them the most."

– Shana Lazerow, Legal Director, Communities for a Better Environment

"DTSC is failing to protect its residents from exposure to dangerous toxics. Too many contaminated sites are falling through the cracks and too many polluters are avoiding liability. Communities living in close proximity to these toxic sites want to ensure that the decisions on how to regulate and remediate hazardous waste are transparent and actually reduce toxic threats."

– Ingrid Brostrom, Assistant Director, Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment

"Every Californian deserves safe and affordable drinking water. Today, more than 1 million Californians cannot drink or cook with water from their taps. California has declared access to safe and affordable drinking water a human right. We urge the legislature to fulfill this promise to all Californians by taking swift action to create the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund."

– Pedro Hernandez, Policy Advocate, Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability

Read the full 2017 Environmental Justice Scorecard: www.caleja.org/scorecard2017

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[California Environmental Justice Alliance](http://www.caleja.org) is a statewide, community-led alliance that works to achieve environmental justice by advancing policy solutions. We unite the powerful local organizing of our members in the communities most impacted by environmental hazards – low-income communities and communities of color – to create comprehensive opportunities for change at a statewide level. We build the power of communities across California to create policies that will alleviate poverty and pollution. Together, we are growing the statewide movement for environmental health and social justice. www.caleja.org

[California Environmental Justice Alliance Action](http://www.ceja-action.org) (CEJA Action) builds the political power of communities of color to advance environmentally and socially just policies in California. We accomplish this by engaging voters in communities of color, organizing and training grassroots leaders to engage in civic and electoral politics, and advocacy to advance critical policies that will improve the health and quality of life in communities of color. We believe California's communities of color are a powerful force for equitable environmental policies and a more participatory, inclusive democracy. www.ceja-action.org