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CONTACT:**

Caroline Farrell, 661-474-9698
Kay Cuajunco, 619-889-7865

Environmental Justice Groups Disappointed by the Speakers' Actions to Replace CARB Member *Call for Transparency in the EJ CARB Appointment Process*

Oakland, CA | June 15, 2018 —The California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) is deeply disappointed by the Speaker of the Assembly's removal of Diane Takvorian from the California Air Resources Board. This abrupt decision undermines the goals and intent of the EJ seats on the California Air Resources Board (CARB).

Diane Takvorian was appointed to ARB in 2016 and is the executive director of Environmental Health Coalition and a co-founder and steering committee member of the California Environmental Justice Alliance, who helped usher AB 1288 into law. AB 1288, passed in 2015 by then Speaker Atkins, requires the appointment of two members to CARB who "works directly with communities in the state that are most significantly burdened by, and vulnerable to, high levels of pollution, including, but not limited to, communities with diverse racial and ethnic populations and communities with low-income populations."

Ms. Takvorian has been a tireless and effective environmental justice (EJ) advocate in the past two years since she was appointed to CARB. She has worked diligently to respond to concerns raised by a wide range of environmental justice groups, and consistently and courageously raised these issues from the dias. The role of these seats is to represent community interests over political pressures, and Ms. Takvorian has faithfully fulfilled this role in a respectful and productive capacity.

When the first two appointments for these EJ seats were made, CEJA wrote to the Speaker of the Assembly and the Senate pro Tem that "we hope to see people appointed who are authentically connected to environmental justice communities, and committed to working with communities to ensure their voices are included at the Air Resources Board." We remain steadfast and adamant that this criteria must guide any EJ seat appointments.

'We speak for ourselves' is a basic principle of the Environmental Justice movement, and to uphold this, EJ representatives simply must be connected to communities who are most impacted and vulnerable to pollution. The two EJ seats on CARB were intended to bring a perspective that is sorely lacking in decision-making: that of communities most impacted by pollution, who are systematically locked out of decision-making.

Moving forward, we urge both the Senate pro Tem and the Speaker of the Assembly to reconsider how the appointment processes are handled to ensure that the EJ seats at CARB are fulfilling the mandate of AB 1288 and uphold the spirit and values of the EJ movement - they are unique seats that warrant this consideration. We also welcome and encourage proactive collaboration with the EJ community in future EJ seat reappointment processes.

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California Environmental Justice Alliance 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.

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