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CPUC Boosts Clean Energy Research in Disadvantaged Communities *Adopts New Strategy to Help Disadvantaged Communities Participate in Clean Energy Transition*

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SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA – Today the California Public Utilities Commission approved a strategy for expanding clean energy research in disadvantaged communities via the [Electric Program Investment Charge](#) program. The CPUC created EPIC, which is funded by ratepayers, in 2011 to support development of clean energy technologies. EPIC research and development projects can also create local benefits like jobs, improved air quality and increased property values.

In [today's decision](#), the CPUC commits “to make the state’s clean energy programs more equitable by moving the state toward greater clean and renewable energy while increasing the participation of economically and environmentally vulnerable communities in this transition” and adopts specific strategies for doing so. [The Greenlining Institute](#) and the [California Environmental Justice Alliance](#) jointly advocated for the decision.

“The CPUC just took a big step toward making sure that no one gets left behind as California moves to a clean energy economy,” said Madeline Stano, Greenlining Institute Energy Equity legal counsel. “This vote helps ensure that the communities that breathe the dirtiest air and most need clean energy jobs will get to participate in our clean energy transition.”

“California has made significant progress in expanding renewable energy programs,” said CEJA Executive Director Gladys Limon. “The EPIC program is another critical step forward in funding clean energy projects that will improve air quality in our most overburdened communities while promoting job development across the state. We commend the leadership of the CPUC in working towards maximizing the benefits of our state’s clean energy programs to reach the communities that need it most. With increased training and technical support to identify projects for disadvantaged communities, we hope that the EPIC program can meet all intended goals of greater access and participation of environmental justice communities in California’s growing renewable energy future.”

Today's decision:

- Defines the environmental justice communities most burdened with pollution and social vulnerabilities as “disadvantaged communities.”
- Encourages utilities to design projects located in and benefitting disadvantaged communities and to incorporate disadvantaged community feedback in planning projects.
- Requires targeted community outreach and workshops in disadvantaged communities on the EPIC program and project development.
- Requires collaboration with the Disadvantaged Community Advisory Group to improve community outreach and activities in disadvantaged communities.
- Recognizes the need for technical assistance and education on EPIC for community-based organizations in disadvantaged communities.
- Commits to developing disadvantaged community-centered research goals for EPIC.
- Supports the implementation of Assembly Bill 523, which requires funding to be directed to projects located in and benefitting [disadvantaged and low-income communities](#).

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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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