



S T R A T E G I C P L A N

This Strategic Plan is a living tool to keep CEJA staff, the Board of Directors, and member organizations aligned about CEJA's foundational identity, approach, and strategic direction.

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Who is CEJA?

VISION

CEJA envisions a future where all Californians, particularly those most historically impacted by environmental injustice, co-govern local regenerative economies that ensure collective prosperity and harmony with the natural world. We practice self-determination through the democratization of land, labor, and resources in ways that repair and reverse the long course of environmental racism, the climate crisis, and colonialism. We steward clean air, sweet water, and vibrant lands where our communities thrive with rewarding work, clean transportation, homes, and renewable energy.

MISSION

The California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA) 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.

VALUES

● **We value justice for low-income communities and communities of color:**

low-income communities and communities of color bear a disproportionate burden of pollution, environmental hazards, and climate impacts. We uphold the basic environmental justice tenet that all communities have the right to healthy places to live, work, and play.

● **We value community voices and leadership:**

the people most impacted by pollution and economic disparities – most often, communities of color and working class communities – can and must speak for themselves. We build the capacity of residents in communities that have long been left out of the current political structure so they can shape the policies that impact their health and quality of life.

● **We value base-building:**

CEJA's members and partners are base-building organizations. An active base of empowered leaders that can credibly represent a large section of their communities is critical to building the future we want and to ensuring long-term success.

● **We value diversity of people:**

we embody a commitment to diversity – internally and externally – with regard to race, class, gender, and sexuality.

● **We value building power in communities most impacted:**

working class communities and communities of color have been systematically shut out of power structures, from the economy to politics. We believe that building the power of these communities is essential to creating – and maintaining – the world we want.

● **We value policy change from the bottom-up:**

we believe that statewide policy is an important venue to contest power and realize change for our communities. Our goal is to shift the policy paradigm to a grassroots model that empowers the many community members who are fighting for livable and sustainable neighborhoods.

● **We value systemic change:**

CEJA believes that entire paradigms need to shift in order to achieve the world we envision. We need massive changes in our economic and political structures to eradicate environmental and social harm.

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How Does CEJA Achieve Impact?

CEJA'S THEORY OF POWER

CEJA identifies **Organizing Power** and **United Front Power** as the most important ways to build power in the near future. CEJA will deepen its collective power by regrounding its agenda in grassroots base-building and strengthening the organizing lens of CEJA's policy work. We will boldly move CEJA's agenda in united front spaces with a vision for collaborating with labor over the long term toward a Just Transition.

CEJA BUILDS SIX KINDS OF POWER



Organizing power:

power to increase the numbers of people who are supportive of CEJA's vision and platform and are active participants in moving the coalition forward. Organizing power includes the capacity to expand our base of support, develop leaders, and grow the base's ability to compel those in power to meet its demands. Organizing power includes both base-building and mobilizing.



Legislative power:

power to pass at least majority-vote legislation on our issues. It also includes the power to co-govern with elected officials. This means advancing our agenda with elected officials through strategic negotiations, and defining the roles of electeds versus the roles of community organizations.



Administrative power:

power to shape the rules and implementation of legislation and electoral directives.



United front power:

expand CEJA's power by exerting influence on and leadership of a larger set of actors that are not completely aligned on values or long-term goals. CEJA can create or leverage existing united front vehicles to move an environmental justice agenda. CEJA operates as a strategic alliance that functions as a coordinated team with a high level of trust and accountability and a strategic division of labor, and can operate as a block in a broader united front.



Electoral power:

power to shape the electorate, take positions on ballot initiatives, meet candidates, and build strong relationships with legislative champions to advance our environmental justice agenda.



Narrative power:

power to align organizations and constituencies around shared ideas, beliefs, and values through shifting public opinion and scope of discussion.

PRIORITIES AND PHASING

Environmental justice touches every aspect of our lives. As a result, there are countless issues on which an environmental justice organization could focus. CEJA's members and partners have come together and agreed that the Alliance can most effectively build power and materially improve the lives of the environmental justice communities we represent by prioritizing two key bodies of work over the next two years: **Fossil Fuel Phaseout** and **Building Resilient Communities**.

While CEJA members and partners will and should continue to engage in other issue areas, these two umbrellas are the highest priority for the Alliance to pursue collectively.

Priorities and Strategic Direction

FOSSIL FUEL PHASEOUT

❑ Roadblocks to Dirty Hydrogen

- **Stop the Bad:** halt and/or limit funding for Fossil Hydrogen projects, create regulatory/legislative roadblocks/guardrails to prevent such projects, and strengthen local organizing
- **Narrative Influence:** activate communications strategy to frame hydrogen as toxic, not clean
- **Build Legislative Power:** identify and cultivate champions in the legislature against Fossil Hydrogen

❑ Retire Gas Plants via Regenerate CA Campaign

- **Gas Plant Shutdown:** engage in long-term planning to ensure retirements and move agencies toward environmental justice
- **Explore Big Alternatives:** explore how to responsibly increase utility-scale clean energy resources to fulfill demand that cannot be realistically met by the maximization of clean distributed energy resources (DERs)
- **Build Local Alternatives:** maximize clean distributed energy resources (DERs)
- **Engage:** engage our base through communications materials, energy tours, and education

❑ Oil and Gas Setbacks Ballot Campaign (SB 1137 Referendum)

- **Build Capacity:** alliance-wide voter education capacity building in voter outreach, communications, and political education
- **Test Narrative:** develop environmental and climate justice voter outreach messaging
- **Increase Outreach:** identify and reach voter contact goal
- **Build Relationships:** test collaborating with Million Voters Project in voter education programs and build relationship with funder partners

❑ Clean Transportation

- **Analysis and Capacity Building:** develop landscape analysis, scope out stepping stone fights and pathways to win, and build capacity on Clean Transportation with a focus on clean freight and mass transit

BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

❑ Equitable Investments

- **Develop Investments:** proactively leverage, influence, and locally develop scalable models for investments (state and federal) in environmental justice communities
- **CEJA Leadership:** lead on Clean Energy investments including Solar on Multifamily Affordable Housing (SOMAH), Community Solar and Storage, Community Microgrids, and Brownfield Redevelopment

❑ Green Zones

- **Green Social Housing:** lead on grounding (Green) Social Housing in environmental justice leadership, politics, and values within the California Green New Deal Coalition and Million Voters Project

❑ Equitable Land Use

- **Support:** support efforts led in other spaces relating to investments in Community Resilience Centers, Transformative Climate Communities, and Clean Energy Grid
- **Build Legislative Power:** sharpen strategy through a deeper legislative landscape assessment
- **Build a Stronger CEQA:** increase the California Environmental Quality Act's protections and environmental justice in land use planning
- **Defend Existing CEQA Protections:** stop or amend bills that prohibit important uses of CEQA

Future Work

Going forward into 2026 and beyond, CEJA's plans remain very high-level. Goals and strategies will be fleshed out by key staff and Alliance members as we analyze learnings from 2024-2025. The current best thinking about how the various work streams might feed into a long-term agenda planning process include:

Fossil Fuel Phase Out

CEJA will craft a multi-year strategic plan with an assessment of stepping stone fights, pathways to win, and capacity needs. This multi-year plan will include work that continues or emerges from **Roadblocks to Dirty Hydrogen, Retire Gas Plants via Regenerate**, and **Clean Transportation**.

Resilient Communities

We assume that further work in **Equitable Investments** and **Green Zones** will emerge from the near-term work and more engagement in a long-term agenda development process. For **Equitable Land Use**, CEJA will spend more time and capacity doing research and campaign planning on land use solutions (beyond the coalition-led housing work) that will reduce community exposure to toxics and pollution and protect health, continue to exert strategic leadership in united front spaces, and synergize with other campaign areas.

CEJA's Civic Engagement Strategy

CEJA builds electoral power by (1) cultivating legislative champions and (2) increasing capacity to meaningfully engage on ballot measures.

Approach	Purpose	Goals 2024 - 2026
Cultivating legislative champions	Create more favorable political terrain on which to advance CEJA's policy priorities	Deep relationships with <u>5 champions</u> through 2026 that have clearly defined regional and statewide leadership benefits
Engaging on ballot measures	Build an EJ voter base to engage on EJ issues on the ballot	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Build capacity for all members to lead public issue education related to the Oil and Gas referendum, with a focus on expanding voter contact2. Develop environmental and climate justice civic engagement narrative and messaging3. Understand landscape and relationship to other statewide electoral formations, with a focus on Million Voters Project4. Assess if and how to grow statewide ballot measure work beyond 20245. Build relationship with civic engagement funders and donors