



May 9, 2018

To: Senate President pro Tem Atkins, Speaker Rendon, and budget subcommittee members  
From: Sustainable Communities for All Coalition  
RE: Building Sustainable Communities with Cap-and-Trade Revenue

Sustainable communities integrate low-carbon affordable transportation and housing options with significant green infrastructure. They connect residents with opportunities to work, learn, and play in healthy and desirable neighborhoods. **We urge you to invest \$210 million of this year's available auction revenue to create sustainable communities for all Californians.**

We applaud Governor Brown's continued support for integrated sustainable communities investments through the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program and for low-carbon transportation through Transit and Intercity Rail Capital and the Low Carbon Transit Operations programs. These programs are vital for resource-poor households and communities throughout California and directly address the climate change impacts of California's transportation system.

However, the Governor's proposal for expending the remaining funds - "the 40%" - falls short in helping those who suffer most directly and significantly from the impacts of climate change. Therefore, we urge the Legislature to continue its history of investing in a community-focused suite of GHG-reduction programs. *Specifically, we recommend appropriating \$210 million to reduce GHG emissions and create more sustainable communities through:*

- **Energy efficiency and solar energy for low-income residents: \$75 million**
- **Greening disadvantaged communities with urban forestry, parks, and more: \$85 million**
- **Building the next generation of transit riders: \$50 million**

The following pages outline the specific programmatic investments we believe will have the greatest impact on giving more low-income Californians the opportunity to live in sustainable communities.

Thank you for considering our recommendations.

*The multi-sector Sustainable Communities for All Coalition formed in 2011 to advocate the investment of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund revenues in building vibrant communities for all Californians. We championed creation of the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program to advance this goal and now focus on complimentary programs that benefit lower income households.*

## INVESTING TO CREATE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LOWER-INCOME CALIFORNIANS

### **\$75 million for Low-Income Weatherization Program**

The Low-Income Weatherization Program (LIWP) is California's flagship program for providing energy efficiency and solar energy to low-income residents of disadvantaged communities.

The California Energy Commission's SB 350 Barriers Report recognized that low-income households and disadvantaged communities face greater barriers to adoption of clean energy and need tailored programs to overcome those barriers. LIWP is the only California program designed to systematically overcome each of these barriers, empowering low-income renters and farmworker households in disadvantaged communities to benefit from our state's transition to a clean energy economy.

Expanding access to clean, affordable energy is also an essential climate resilience and adaptation solution. 2017 was a devastating year of climate change impacts, including deadly summer heat waves with record highs. Where temperatures regularly climb over 110 degrees, affordable clean energy is a health necessity.

The Low-Income Weatherization Program's two subprograms for multifamily energy efficiency and solar installation and single-family solar installment will run out of funds this Spring, leaving long waiting lists, including 300 multifamily properties. This program has no other funding source.

### **\$60 million for Urban Greening Program**

### **\$25 million for Urban and Community Forestry Program**

Natural resources continue to be woefully underfunded in the GGRF programs. Both CalFire's Urban and Community Forestry Program and the Urban Greening Program are oversubscribed by 500%. Meaningful investments in both programs are essential for the state to take full advantage of the carbon sequestration benefits offered by this sector.

### **\$50 million for a new Student Transit Pass Program**

Studies have shown that well-designed student transit pass programs at public colleges and universities have resulted in robust gains in student ridership—often 20% to 40%—and concurrent reductions in driving and GHG emissions. Experience at multiple campuses across the U.S. shows that the highest ridership results when *all* students pay a small fee for a transit pass—usually a sticker affixed to their student ID—when registering for classes.

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The cost is typically about \$20-\$30 per student per semester, though a subsidy from a state, school, or transit agency could further reduce the cost. For example, at one community college in California, students pay \$10 per semester as part of their registration fee, with the result that about 37% now arrive on campus by transit.

A \$50 million appropriation would allow half of all 2.8 million students at community colleges, CSU and UC campuses to participate using this approach, as well as a smaller number of middle- and-high-schools.

### **\$100 million floor for the existing transit operations program**

The formula-based Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) provides much-needed mobility improvements, including expansion of bus service into underserved communities. A guaranteed minimum will give transit agencies and riders the predictability and stability necessary for long-term transit planning. The program currently receives a 5% continuous appropriation of GGRF funds, so a \$100 million floor would only be triggered if auctions bring in less than \$2 billion.

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For additional information, please contact:

**Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program**

Tyrone Buckley: [TBuckley@housingca.org](mailto:TBuckley@housingca.org)

**Low Carbon Transit Operations Program**

Joshua Stark: [jstark@transformca.org](mailto:jstark@transformca.org)

**Low-Income Weatherization Program**

Stephanie Wang: [swang@chpc.net](mailto:swang@chpc.net)

**Student Transit Pass Program**

Gloria Ohland: [gloria@movela.org](mailto:gloria@movela.org)

**Urban Greening**

Rico Mastrodonato: [rico.mastrodonato@tpl.org](mailto:rico.mastrodonato@tpl.org)

**Urban Forestry**

Chuck Mills: [cmills@californiareleaf.org](mailto:cmills@californiareleaf.org)

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