March 17, 2016

The Honorable Das Williams, Chair
Assembly Natural Resources Committee
State Capitol, Room 4005
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 1550 (Gomez) – SUPPORT
Dear Assembly Member Williams:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to express our strong support for Assembly Bill 1550 (Gomez), which increases the investment of California’s climate pollution funds to benefit disadvantaged communities (DACs) while simultaneously directing a portion of these funds to projects that directly benefit low-income households.

Specifically, AB 1550 requires a minimum of 25% of the proceeds from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) to be invested in projects that are located directly within DACs, as identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency’s California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen) established under SB 535 (De Leon). Since CalEnviroScreen classifies a quarter of the state’s population as living in DACs, at least a quarter of GGRF proceeds should be invested directly within the boundaries of DACs, which generally provides more assistance than simply “benefiting” these communities. This is a simple equity adjustment to the existing formula that reflects the need to invest in these communities hit first and worst by the adverse impacts of climate change.

Additionally, experience has shown that some of the best greenhouse gas reduction strategies are those that benefit low-income households, whether they lie inside or outside CalEnviroScreen-designated DACs. Low-income Californians often lack adequate and affordable transportation and housing choices, access to green spaces, and spend a significant percentage of their budgets on necessities including fuel and energy. For these reasons, AB 1550 also requires an additional 25% of the proceeds to fund projects that benefit low-income households. These households, located in both urban and rural areas of California, can immediately benefit from a designated portion of GGRF dollars being available for multiple projects and programs — such as advanced clean cars, weatherization and energy efficiency, transit passes, and household clean energy generation — that can help families both be a part of climate solutions and adapt to a changing climate.

Numerous findings suggest that low-income communities and communities of color are and will continue to be disproportionately impacted by the adverse impacts of climate change. It is, therefore, critical that the state continue making a concerted effort to specifically target investments in these areas as well as take advantage of every opportunity to lift poor and working Californians out of poverty while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

AB 1550 is about making a greater investment in California’s environmentally and socioeconomically disadvantaged populations, which has the potential to yield significant climate, public health, and cost benefits while helping bridge the ‘green divide’.

Please support AB 1550 when it comes before you in the Assembly Natural Resources Committee. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Shiva Patel
Energy Solidarity Cooperative

Ann Rojas-Cheatham
Community Health for Asian Americans

Sandra McNeill
TRUST South LA

Brian Angus
Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission

Jim Lindburg
Friends Committee on Legislation of California

Jennie Ward-Waller
California Bicycle Coalition

Bill Sadler
Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Kevin D. Hamilton
Central California Asthma Collaborative

John Mataka
Grayson Neighborhood Council

Kemba Shakur
Urban Releaf
Stanley Greschner  GRID Alternatives  Laurie Broedling  Tree San Diego
Daniel Dumovich  GRID Alternatives  Mallika Nair  Growing Together
Veronica Padilla-Campos  PACOIMA Beautiful  Jackie Heyneman  Fallbrook Land Conservancy
Katelyn Roedner-Sutter  Catholic Charities, Diocese of Stockton  Willis White  Solar-Oversight
Diana Vazquez  Sierra Club California  Joel Ervice  Regional Asthma Management and Prevention (RAMP)
Ben Russak  Liberty Hill Foundation  James Pappas  California Housing Partnership Corporation
Tom Knox  Valley Clean Air Now  Yolanda Park  Catholic Charities
Alina Bokde  Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust  Jason Barbose  Union of Concerned Scientists
Mark Masaoka  Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council  Denny Zane  Move LA
Remy De La Peza  Little Tokyo Service Center  Zachary Darrah  Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries
Catherine Martineau  Canopy  Mari Rose Taruc  Filipino/American Coalition for Environmental Solidarity (FACES)
Ray Tretheway  Sacramento Tree Foundation  Michelle Passero  The Nature Conservancy
Kelly Conroy  Tree Davis  Laura Muraida  SCOPE
Constance Higdon Gannon  Greenspace-The Cambria Land Trust  David Lewis  Save the Bay
Alan Lessik  California Association of Local Conservation Corps  Cynthia Strathmann  Strategic Actions for a Just Economy
Leonard A Smith  Jean Nagy  Huntington Beach Tree Society, Inc.  Nancy Hughes  California Urban Forests Council
Claire Robinson  Amigos de los Rios  Miya Yoshitani  Asian Pacific Environmental Network
Sandra Fluke  Voices for Progress  Kerry N. Doi  Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment (PACE)
Guillermo Mayer  
Public Advocates

Ronald Hughes  
California Vanpool Authority

Wendy Butts  
Los Angeles Conservation Corps

Alvaro Sanchez  
Greenlining Institute

Bill Magavern  
Coalition for Clean Air

Rico Mastrodonato  
Trust for Public Land

Jena Price  
California League of Conservation Voters

Ron Sundergill  
National Parks Conservation Association

Chuck Mills  
California ReLeaf