To: Senate and Assembly Budget Committees, Senate President pro tem Kevin de León, Speaker Toni Atkins
From: The SB 535 Coalition
Date: February 17, 2016
Re: 2016-'17 GGRF Investments in Disadvantaged Communities

Our groups are dedicated to effective implementation of SB 535 (de León), enacted in 2012. As you know, that law requires that a minimum of 10% of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) be spent on projects located within California’s most disadvantaged communities, and that a minimum of 25% of GGRF be spent for the benefit of disadvantaged communities. We stress that the levels in SB 535 are minimums, and we urge the Legislature to exceed them, because these are the communities most at risk from the health hazards and economic dislocation threatened by climate change.

These are our priority recommendations on proposals in the Governor’s budget:

1. Transfer the $100 million proposed for Low-Carbon Roads to the Active Transportation Program. The ATP has not received any new funding since it was created.

2. Transformational Climate Communities – We support giving backbone community-based organizations the capacity, tools and capital resources needed to implement multiple, cross-cutting approaches to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This strategy has the potential for catalytic impact at the neighborhood scale while also increasing jobs, economic, health, and environmental benefits. To achieve these core goals, this program needs substantially more funding than the proposed amount, and a commitment to community engagement that ensures affected residents of disadvantaged communities the ability to shape investment proposals to address community needs and provide direct, meaningful, and assured benefits to those residents.

3. We support the dedication of funds to reducing short-lived climate pollutants, like the black carbon and methane that damage our health and also rapidly warm the planet.

4. Urban forestry and community greening – We support the continued investment of $30 million in CAL FIRE’s Urban and Community Forestry, as well as the $20 million to create an Urban Greening Program administered by the Natural Resources Agency. Moving forward we encourage the final funding plan for both CAL FIRE and Natural Resources Agency to allocate a substantial majority of funding for projects that both are within and benefit disadvantaged communities and provide a portion for statewide competition.

5. Of the $400 million in one-time funding proposed for the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program, allocate half ($200 million) to that program and half to the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program. Additional “fix it first” support is critical not only to maintain our transit infrastructure but also to operate it, particularly as State Transit Assistance funding declines. Of the $200 million to the Low Carbon Transit
Operations Program, earmark $50 million for implementation by transit operators of a **transit pass program** for college, university, and K-12 students and low-income residents, an allowable use under the LCTOP Guidelines. Well-designed transit pass programs have been proven to increase mode shift and transit ridership, fill empty seats, and create lifelong riders in a new generation. This one-time investment should be seen as a down-payment on a multi-year program to make transit affordable for low-income students and others who depend on it.

6. We also stress our continued support for full funding of the Governor’s proposed spending on **low carbon transportation** and **clean energy** programs that are providing vital and sustainable services to disadvantaged communities.

Furthermore, we urge the Legislature to permanently increase the percentage of funds directed to be spent within and outside of disadvantaged communities, through something like the approach embodied in Assemblymember Gomez’s AB 1550.

We do not see the need for a $500 million reserve in the GGRF, and we agree with the LAO’s projection that revenues into the GGRF in 2016-’17 will substantially exceed the Governor’s $2 billion projection.

Finally, we urge the Legislature to pass the GGRF budget as soon as possible, in order to ensure continuous funding for climate investments that improve the quality of life for California’s most disadvantaged residents.

*For more information, please contact Bill Magavern, Policy Director of Coalition for Clean Air, 916-527-8051, bill@ccair.org.*

Miya Yoshitani  
Executive Director  
Asian Pacific Environmental Network

Bill Magavern  
Policy Director  
Coalition for Clean Air

Richard Marcantonio  
Managing Attorney  
Public Advocates

Alvaro Sanchez  
Environmental Equity Director  
The Greenlining Institute

(additional organizations on pages 3 and 4)
Mark Masaoka  
Policy Director of Government Affairs  
Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council

Jeanie Ward-Waller  
Policy Director  
California Bicycle Coalition

James Pappas  
Manager of Housing Preservation and  
Policy Research  
California Housing Partnership

Chuck Mills  
Director of Public Policy and Grants  
California ReLeaf

Katelyn Roedner Sutter  
Environmental Justice Program Manager  
Catholic Charities, Diocese of Stockton

Alvaro Palacios Casanova  
Pollution Prevention Advocate  
Center for Environmental Health

Ann Rojas-Cheatham  
Director of Training and Research  
Community Health for Asian Americans

Taylor Thomas  
Research and Policy Analyst  
East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice

Carolina Martinez  
Senior Planner & Policy Advocate  
Environmental Health Coalition

Brian Angus  
Chief Executive Officer  
Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission

Zachary Darrah  
Executive Director  
Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries

Jim Lindburg  
Legislative Director  
Friends Committee on Legislation of California

Stanley Greschner  
Vice President of Government Relations and  
Market Development  
GRID Alternatives

Lisa Hershey  
Associate Director  
Housing California

Veronica Garibay  
Co-Director  
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability

Jerard Wright  
Policy Analyst  
Move LA

Kerry N. Doi  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment (PACE)

Joel Ervice  
Associate Director  
Regional Asthma Management & Prevention

Bill Sadler  
California Senior Policy Manager  
Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Bradley Cleveland  
Planning and Health Policy Consultant  
San Mateo County Union Community Alliance
Robert García  
Founding Director and Counsel  
The City Project

Mary Creasman  
California Director of Government Affairs  
The Trust for Public Land

Joshua Hardy Stark  
State Policy Director  
TransForm

Sheila Nem  
Policy Analyst  
TRUST South LA

Ellen Wu  
Executive Director  
Urban Habitat

Tom Knox  
Executive Director  
Valley Clean Air Now