

ASSEMBLY BILL 1087 (CHIU)

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE HUBS

SUMMARY

This bill would protect those populations most vulnerable to climate crises from future disasters by creating a streamlined grant program for climate resilience improvements to buildings that constitute community hubs.

BACKGROUND

Working-class communities of color are experiencing the cumulative impacts of the public health, economic, racial, and climate crises. In California, historic disinvestment in environmental justice has resulted in disproportionately harmful impacts for low-income communities of color across a range of climate disasters (e.g., wildfires, power shutoffs, extreme heat, flooding). Low-income communities tend to have buildings with conditions such as leaky windows, poor insulation, and substandard ventilation systems that worsen health burdens during heat waves and wildfire smoke. The health consequences of living in polluted neighborhoods include higher incidences of asthma and cancer, which have made the COVID-19 crisis particularly harmful in low-income communities as air pollution makes the illness worse; for example, black and Latinx neighborhoods are experiencing a higher disease burden relative to their share of the state's population. As the pandemic has laid bare deep inequalities produced by our political and economic systems, it foreshadows devastating impacts and disruptions from the intensifying effects of climate change.

THE PROBLEM

There is a need, given the growing negative impacts of climate change, to ensure communities have sufficient support and mechanisms to respond.

Several existing clean energy programs offer funding to reduce dangerous climate pollution, make buildings cleaner and safer for vulnerable communities, and improve community resiliency against the worst effects of climate change. These programs have overlapping goals and scopes of work, but are operating in isolation from each other. This has meant missed opportunities for collaboration and economies of scale. Additionally, separate programs and application processes have established additional barriers for communities to access services.

THE SOLUTION

AB 1087 addresses these problems by reallocating funding from the California Climate Credit towards creating a new resilience hubs grant pilot program. Currently, most consumers only receive a small credit, averaging approximately \$54 annually on their utility bill from this program. This bill allows consumers to pool a small portion of those revenues towards holistic whole-building improvements in shared community facilities.

The resilience hubs grant program will rely on a CPUC-appointed third party administrator to offer technical assistance to applicants and to coordinate with existing programs that already deliver building-specific clean energy and community health benefits.

Eligible applicants for the grant program would be property owners of critical community institutions located in disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. Applicants would need to demonstrate input and a shared plan for the proposed resilience hub from relevant stakeholders, including community organizations, local governments, residents, and community-choice aggregators.

This program would boost the climate change resilience of institutions that communities trust (such as libraries, schools, health clinics, and places of worship) with building upgrades such as improved building insulation for extreme heat protection, clean energy microgrids installation for backup power during grid outages, and air filtration systems to combat wildfire smoke. In addition to eliminating climate pollution and supporting the transition to a clean energy economy, these upgrades would transform buildings into what we call "resilience hubs": community-serving facilities that offer people space to gather, organize, and access services not only during climate disasters, but on a daily basis.

SUPPORT

Asian Pacific Environmental Network (co-sponsor)
California Environmental Justice Alliance (co-sponsor)
Natural Resources Defense Council (co-sponsor)
350 Butte County
Acterra
Activesg
California Coastkeeper Alliance
California Releaf

California Walks
Catholic Charities, Diocese of Stockton
Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice
Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment
Central Coast Alliance United for A Sustainable Economy
Ceres
Climate Compassion
Communities for A Better Environment
Converging Storms Action Network
Cooperation Humboldt
Courage California
Elders Climate Action, Norcal and Socal Chapters
Environmental Working Group
Esmeralda Marquez, Consultant
Essential Food and Medicine
Fossil Free California
Greenbelt Alliance
Grid Alternatives
Human Impact Partners
Industrial District Green
Little Manila Rising
Local Clean Energy Alliance
Local Government Commission
Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust
People Power Solar Cooperative
Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles
Re-up Refill Shop
Reclaim Our Power: Utility Justice Campaign
Regional Asthma Management and Prevention
Resilience Cooperation Humboldt
Romero Institute
Sacramento Area Congregations Together
Safe Routes to School National Partnership
Sierra Club California
Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education
Sunrise Bay Area
Sunrun
Surfrider Foundation
Sustainable Claremont
The Climate Center
The Greenlining Institute
Union of Concerned Scientists
University of California Los Angeles
Vote Solar

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