



May 11, 2023

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
 Governor, State of California
 State Capitol, First Floor
 Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Toni Atkins
 Senate President pro Tempore
 State Capitol, Room 8518
 Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony Rendon
 Speaker of the Assembly
 State Capitol, Room 219
 Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
 Chair, Senate Committee on Budget
 State Capitol, Room 8630
 Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting
 Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget
 State Capitol, Room 8230
 Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Josh Becker
 Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee #2
 State Capitol, Room 7250
 Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Steve Bennett
 Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #3
 State Capitol, Room 4710
 Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Proposed Climate Program Cuts in the Governor's January Proposed Budget

Dear State Leadership:

On behalf of the 52 undersigned agencies and organizations, representing a diverse coalition of dedicated organizations working to advance climate action and resilience-building efforts across the state, we urge you to fully restore the proposed cuts to vital climate and energy programs in the Governor's January Proposed Budget.

We commend State leaders for elevating California as a climate leader on the global stage through your ongoing commitments and actions to address the rapidly worsening impacts of climate change and by targeting investments to support our state's most under-resourced and vulnerable communities. Through your leadership, the State has adopted ambitious policies, piloted effective programs, and created innovative financing models, many of which are now being replicated across our nation and beyond.

While State investments and commitments to-date have established California as a global climate leader, California remains on the frontlines of climate-induced disasters.

In addition to the deadly wildfires, droughts, extreme heat events, and floods that have devastated communities in recent years, this winter brought a series of atmospheric river storms that our most vulnerable communities are still grappling with. These record-breaking storms have taken the lives of dozens of Californians, forced tens of thousands to evacuate, and left hundreds of thousands stranded. Communities across the state – coastal and inland, urban and rural – are still experiencing multiple and shifting isolated areas due to flooding, fallen trees, downed power lines, compromised transportation infrastructure, and mudslides making critical roadways impassable. Collapsed roofs, flooded buildings, damaged levees, and contaminated agricultural fields are just some of the initial storm impacts that require immediate attention. Rebuilding from the full aftermath of these storms will come at a hefty price for the State and impacted local jurisdictions, businesses, and homeowners; costs that could have been avoided with earlier investments in climate-resilient infrastructure.

These recent storms serve as wakeup call for the urgent need to invest in climate resilience and a somber reminder that the worst of climate change has yet to arrive.

We recognize that the magnitude, pace, and catastrophic impacts of climate change in California have been extraordinary and devastating, putting our families and neighbors in harm's way today and into the future. The combined effects of extreme heat, wildfires, drought, flooding, and sea level rise are rapidly accelerating, threatening the lives, public health, and safety of millions of Californians and nearly every industry that drives our economy – both locally and as a state. As climate impacts accelerate, State investments must also accelerate to protect and prepare California communities and businesses to not only survive, but thrive in the face of a changing climate. Fully restoring State climate investments to match prior commitments is one important step towards sustaining and growing the level of investments needed to address the existential crisis of climate change.

We also recognize that climate impacts will not be felt uniformly. Historically marginalized and under-resourced communities that have shouldered the largest health burdens and face the greatest economic barriers, particularly Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)

communities, unhoused populations, people with disabilities, and low-income households, will continue to be disproportionately impacted by climate change. The State has made tremendous progress towards centering policy and investment decisions in equity; however, the proposed cuts to climate programs will hinder this important progress and directly impact our most vulnerable communities.

Restoring the proposed climate program cuts will demonstrate your leadership, not only during budget surplus years but especially when faced with budget challenges.

While the climate crisis may seem insurmountable, it is important to recognize that the widespread and interconnected nature of climate impacts also extends to the benefits that will be realized through early and coordinated action to build resilience. Enhancing the resilience of any one system (e.g., energy) will enhance the resilience of others (e.g., transportation), and the scale of climate impacts that we face in California requires immediate investments across all sectors to set this positive cycle in motion. On the other hand, cutting funds for climate programs will have major implications for the state, particularly the health and wellbeing of Californians, community livability, and economic vitality. We fully acknowledge that difficult budget decisions lie ahead, and believe that climate investments could be the key to addressing this year's budget deficit by leveraging these investments to advance multi-benefit solutions and support other State priorities, such as workforce development and affordable housing.

With federal funding on the horizon and growing momentum for climate action in local communities, now is the time for the State to increase climate investments. Communities across California have made tremendous progress in assessing climate risks and developing adaptation strategies and plans informed by best-available science, cutting-edge models, and robust public input. We cannot afford to waste the resources invested into developing these plans, including the collective time donated by stakeholders and community members to engage in plan development, by allowing the implementation of these plans to remain unfunded. Fully funding the State's climate budget package will help put these plans into action, catalyze planning efforts in communities where comprehensive adaptation plans are absent, and build community and organizational capacity to successfully pursue federal funds.

Cutting or delaying climate funding will only increase costs in the future. [According to the Global Commission on Adaptation](#), "the overall rate of return on investments in improved resilience is very high, with benefit-cost ratios ranging from 2:1 to 10:1, and in some cases even higher." Numerous additional studies have found that early action to build climate resilience will generate high returns on investments resulting from a combination of avoided losses, economic benefits, and social and environmental benefits. As the world's fourth largest economy, California stands to gain (or lose) tremendously, depending on the level of State investments in climate resilience.

We thank you for your ongoing leadership and respectfully urge the State to fully restore budget allocations for climate programs to match the level of prior State commitments.

Thank you for your time in considering our comments. We greatly appreciate your ongoing leadership and commitment to creating an equitable, climate-resilient California, and remain committed to partnering with state agencies to achieve our shared goals. Please do not hesitate

to contact Julia Kim at jkim@civicwell.org if you have any questions or would like to discuss any of our comments further.

Respectfully,

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City of Arcata

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City of Delano

Max Perrey, *Councilmember*
City of Mill Valley

Soheila Bana, *Councilmember*
City of Richmond

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City of Santa Cruz

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Central Coast Climate Collaborative

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