

## Red, Black and Green Environmental Justice Coalition, Sacramento Public Comment

October 19, 2024

### Opening Statement:

In Sacramento, in California, and the nation, there has been an increase in the already disproportionate amount of Black people experiencing homelessness. There is an overrepresentation of Black Americans in the homeless population. According to the California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness (CASPEH), Black Californians make up only 7% of the State population yet comprise 26% of people experiencing homelessness in California.

In 2021, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) just detailed in the Climate Change and Social Vulnerability in the United States: A Focus on Six Impact Sectors report all the numerous ways climate change will hit U.S. racial minorities the hardest. It is an extensive list such as:

- Black people are 40 percent more likely than other groups to live in places where extreme temperatures will cause more deaths. In addition, African Americans are 34 percent more likely to live in areas where childhood asthma diagnoses are likely to be exacerbated by climate change.
- Low-income residents with no high school diploma — including White people, who like the other groups fall under the environmental justice umbrella of communities historically zoned for pollution — will also experience more flooding and lost work hours from climate -related issues.

For Sacramento, and California bold new visions and forward-thinking plans are necessary for the cities, and counties to deal with the complexities of the **extreme heat, ongoing drought, the impacts of air quality from vehicles (toxic emissions from vehicles), industrial pollution, wildfires, and the potential for disastrous floods that are predicted to increase, even more rapidly than anticipated.**

- Sacramentans but especially for those communities historically zoned for pollution such as: Latinos, African Americans and others living in disadvantaged communities where air pollution is high thereby causing health related risk of diabetes because of poor air quality.
- Many of the local municipal government's Climate Plans failed to address how the climate plan will impact on the health and safety of the more 200,000 unhoused community members (*men, women, youth and children*) specifically around the protection from the extreme heat, smoke from the seasonal wildfires, protection

from the winter freezing weather and rain; and lack of access to clean drinking water.

- Municipalities' Climate Plans failed to address how local government will bring public transportation (buses/Regional Transit and light rail) to disadvantaged communities by 2030.
- Municipalities' Climate Plans failed to provide an implementation timeline to bring Low and Zero Vehicles and Equipment to disadvantaged communities by 2030.
- Municipalities' Pedestrian Master Plans/Active Transportation Plans failed to address as to how the plan will engage disadvantaged communities, communities of color and create environmental justice for all communities.
- Specifically, the Sacramento County Climate Plan failed to identify local environmental justice groups and how the climate plan will engage them and other people of color groups working to address environmental justice issues at the local level.
- It is critical that disadvantaged communities, the unhoused and minority owned businesses must be included in the USE COOL PAVEMENT TECHNOLOGY AND REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF PAVED SURFACES.

I would like to recommend the AB 32 Environmental Justice Advisory Committee in partnership with those most impacted by the climate and environmental inequities must collaboratively engage to create policies and strategies immediately to reduce ozone exposure in communities to guarantee that the health benefits from physical activity are not diminished by pollution exposure, especially in vulnerable populations living and working in throughout the state.

- Simply stated “the State of California and local government we must work hard to eliminate systemic racism takes the form of laws and policies that target people of color, especially poor people of color, to create and deepen inequities in democracy, health, economic security, education, housing, jobs, which has contributed to the disproportionate impact of COVID–19 on poor communities of color. Systemic racism also takes the form of failing to address or even acknowledge these deep inequities.”

The state of California, local cities, and counties must move expediently (*because communities of color are living in crisis zones*) toward seeking environmental justice for all people and communities immediately.