

June 7, 2021

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

The Honorable Toni Atkins
President Pro Tempore of the California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

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

RE: 2021-22 State Budget May Revision Funding for Environmental Justice, AB 617 Community Air Protection Incentives and Implementation For South Sacramento/Florin and Other Communities

Dear Governor Newsom, President Pro Tempore Atkins, and Speaker Rendon:

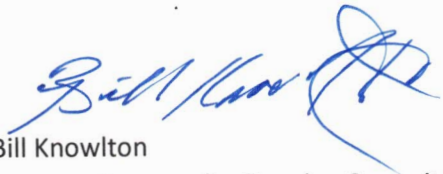
On behalf of South Sacramento-Florin AB 617 Community Steering Committee, we are writing to express both appreciation and concerns for the air quality funding provided in the 2021-22 State Budget May Revision. We applaud your focus on so many important clean air priorities and climate actions. However, we are disappointed to hear that there continues to be inadequate state funding to implement the intent of the AB617 Community Air Protection legislation to achieve environmental justice (EJ), equitable community air protection, and to provide support for community members to participate in this process. Specifically, we are requesting the legislature provide additional funding for AB 617 Community Air Protection implementation and incentives funding in Sacramento and other regions of the state.

As you know, air quality management districts and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) have been working with communities throughout the State to implement AB 617 over the last three years. The South Sacramento-Florin community has successfully worked with the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District to develop a community air monitoring plan and is working together to implement it. However, additional funding is needed to continue this work and take the next crucial step per AB 617 to reduce the pollution burden our community faces and develop a Community Emission Reduction Plan (CERP). The additional funding could also be used to enhance community outreach plans to engage more residents to participate and increase accessibility to our most vulnerable community members through better language (i.e. translations) and technology (i.e. internet, computers, digital materials) support. Insufficient funding for AB617 incentives and implementation is particularly concerning due to California's \$75.7 billion budget surplus and represents a missed opportunity for our communities that carry the burden of a long history of environmental injustice, especially in communities of color.

This state program can improve the lives of people living in our communities that have been most impacted by air pollution and we remain hopeful that it will. What makes AB 617 a transformative program, is its potential to not only improve air quality in our communities, but to also contribute to our local economic development through incentives to create a more sustainable community for our residents to live, work and play. The air quality districts already have processes for effectively channeling AB 617 incentives to address highly-localized air pollution emissions and burden along with helping to create economic growth. But the State's restrictive guidelines say we need to be a Community Emission Reduction Plan (CERP) community to have the flexibility to implement meaningful neighborhood level projects. Yet, there is insufficient funding to move to being a CERP community. We are requesting the legislature work with CARB to provide the flexibility in the incentive guidelines to overcome these issues so that we can immediately start reducing emissions to relieve the pollution burden our community faces.

We are pleased the 2021-22 State Budget May Revision provides funding statewide for incentives and retains the funding for implementation proposed in the January budget. However, these amounts continue to be insufficient to meet the demands in Sacramento and in other regions to relieve the air pollution burden experienced by our communities. We encourage you to consider additional funding, more flexibility in the incentives guidelines and additional support programs that will benefit California communities most in need.

Sincerely,



Bill Knowlton
Co-lead, Community Steering Committee
CEO, Mack Road Partnership



Patricia E. Shelby
Co-lead, Community Steering Committee

Cc:

South Sacramento-Florin Steering Committee Members:

Bishop Chris Baker, Resident
Steve Blanton, Power Inn Alliance
Jesus Cervantes, Resident
Hien Chan, Resident
Rhonda Henderson, Resident, North Laguna Creek Valley Hi Community Organization
Tido Thac Hoang, Vietnamese American Community of Sacramento
Gary Johansen, Resident, North Laguna Creek Neighborhood Association
Vincent J. Valdez, United Latinos
Stephanie Williams, Resident