

March 22, 2019

To the California Public Utilities and Energy Commissions,

The Disadvantaged Communities Advisory Group (“Advisory Group”) has recommended that the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and the California Energy Commission (Energy Commission) adopt and establish the Equity Framework as a central tenant to all climate related policies, bills, proceedings, requests for proposals, etc. to ensure equity is front and center when considering any climate investment/intervention in the State.

The purpose of the Advisory Group pursuant to Pub. Util. Code § 400(g), is to advise the CPUC and the Energy Commission regarding the development, implementation, and impacts of proposed programs related to the Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act of 2015 (also known as Senate Bill 350) in disadvantaged communities.

On September 28, 2018, the Advisory Group adopted the Equity Framework which included the definition of “Disadvantaged Communities” which was based on the definition used in the Energy Equity Indicators Tool<sup>1</sup>, developed by the Energy Division. The CPUC subsequently included the Advisory Group’s definition of disadvantaged communities in its Environmental and Social Justice Action Plan.

The Advisory Group recommends that the CEC and CPUC update their definitions of “Disadvantaged Communities” to reflect the DACAG’s Equity Framework definition, including but not limited to replacing the following definitions located on the Commissions’ websites.

**Definition of Disadvantaged Communities:**

**Disadvantaged Communities refers to the areas throughout California which most suffer from a combination of economic, health, and environmental burdens, including the following communities:**

- **CalEnviroScreen, as defined by Cal EPA,**
- **Tribal Lands,**
- **Census tracts with area median household income/state median income, less than 80%, and**
- **Households with median household income less than 80% of Area Median Income (AMI).**

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<sup>1</sup>See Figure 3: California Tribal Lands, SB 535 Disadvantaged Communities, and Low-income Communities, <https://caenergy.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=d081a369a0044d77ba8e80d2ff671c93>, “Disadvantaged communities are defined as California census tracts facing the highest environmental burdens, as determined by economic, environmental, and socioeconomic factors including low income, high unemployment, poor health conditions, air and water pollution, and hazardous wastes. SB 535 (De León, Chapter 830, Statutes of 2012) directs the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to identify disadvantaged communities for funding, and as of April 2017, CalEPA uses the top scoring 25 percent of communities using the CalEnviroScreen 3.0 tool to make this determination.”

This definition would replace the definitions on the CPUC and CEC websites located at:

California Energy Commission Website:

<https://www.energy.ca.gov/commission/diversity/definition.html>

California Public Utilities Commission Website:

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/discom/>

The Advisory Group respectfully requests that the CPUC and Energy Division formally adopt the proposed definition and revise and update all relevant program literature, online content, and other publicly accessible material to include the Equity Framework elements as fully detailed in the Advisory Group's Equity Framework.

Sincerely,

- The Disadvantaged Communities Advisory Group