



## AB 1252 – Environmental Justice Small Grant Program

### SUMMARY

Under current law, environmental justice non-profits can access funding through the California Environmental Protection Agency's (CalEPA) Environmental Justice Small Grants Program. But smaller organizations struggle to cover program costs as they wait for grant payment upon completion of a project. Some do not even apply in the first place, knowing they would be unable to front the costs as they wait for payment.

AB 1252 allows CalEPA to issue advance payments for EJ Small Grants Program recipients.

### BACKGROUND

The EJ Small Grants Program is an existing funding program at CalEPA that provides grants to community-based non-profit organizations to help address environmental justice issues in areas that are disproportionately impacted by environmental pollution. The purpose of the program is to build capacity among small non-governmental organizations and encourage community-driven approaches that improve access to clean water, address climate change impacts, and reduce exposure to toxic chemicals.

For these kinds of programs, advance payments are an essential tool in truly building capacity. Many of the small non-profits that the EJ Small Grants Program seeks to empower have very little resources and simply cannot bear the cost of completing their project without first receiving grant funding to do so. However, it's currently unclear if CalEPA has the authority to issue advance payments of grants for projects awarded through this program.

### PROBLEM

The lack of clarity surrounding CalEPA's ability to issue advance payments for their EJ Small Grants Program leaves non-profits that are selected for funding, responsible for carrying the full cost of completing a project before they can be reimbursed. This is typically not a problem for larger organizations that have resources, but for smaller non-profits that are often cash-strapped, it can be a large barrier and discourage applications for the program in the first place.

### SOLUTION

AB 1252 would provide CalEPA with the authority to provide advance payments for grants administered through the EJ Small Grants Program. By allowing CalEPA to offer funds needed to complete a project to awardees of the program up front, AB 1252 would meaningfully relieve financial pressure on smaller non-profit organizations and allow more groups to participate.

### SUPPORT

California ReLeaf (Sponsor)

### CONTACT

Rita Durgin, Legislative Aide  
[Rita.Durgin@asm.ca.gov](mailto:Rita.Durgin@asm.ca.gov)  
916-319-2030

Mariela Ruacho  
[mruacho@californiareleaf.org](mailto:mruacho@californiareleaf.org)  
916-497-0037