

March 12, 2019

The Honorable Laura Friedman, Chair
Committee on Natural Resources
California State Assembly
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 1252 (Rivas) -- SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Laura Friedman,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are pleased to offer our support for Assembly Bill 1252, which would amend the Environmental Justice (EJ) Small Grant Program to authorize advance payments to grant recipients.

AB 1252 speaks to an important issue that can discourage small, nonprofit entities working in disadvantaged (DAC) and low-income (LIC) communities from applying for grants from the program. Because these community-based groups often lack significant fiscal resources, the existing reimbursement structure can serve as an unintentional deterrent. AB 1252 provides the California Environmental Protection Agency (CAL EPA) with authority to offer advance payments to grantees, which could encourage more community organizations to apply and prevent these organizations from being financially stretched.

The EJ Small Grant Program has been in existence since 2005, serving primarily disadvantaged and low-income communities. The program helps these communities receive training to adapt and mitigate climate change and environmental hazards that have been impacting their communities for decades. As an example, the California Environmental Justice Alliance was awarded \$50,000 in 2018 to train community leaders of color from the Bay Area, Ventura, Kern, and Los Angeles on the technical and procedural aspects of establishing and advancing green zones to reduce pollution and improve local land-use planning, health, the economy, and the environment. The project also provided a toolkit in seven different languages ranging from English to Spanish to multiple Asian dialects.

AB 1252 provides a small but important amendment to the program that can enhance community participation and provide some financial security.

For these reasons, the undersigned organizations support AB 1252. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Mariela Ruacho at mruacho@californiareleaf.org.

Sincerely,