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**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Zach Lou, [zach@apen4ej.org](mailto:zach@apen4ej.org), 978-505-8698

**California's Justice40 Bill, AB 2419 dies in the Senate Appropriations Committee**

*AB 2419 would have directed at least 40% of federal climate and infrastructure funding to low-income, Indigenous, rural communities and communities of color at the frontlines of the climate crisis; addressing decades of underinvestment and discriminatory policies*

**Sacramento, CA** — Environmental justice advocates, community leaders, environmental groups, union representatives and allies across California expressed deep disappointment with the Senate Appropriations Committee's decision to hold AB 2419 — a bill introduced by Assemblymember Isaac Bryan (CA-54) that would have created an equity framework for federal climate and infrastructure funds, mandating that 40% of those federal funds directly benefit communities facing the greatest environmental burdens, with an additional 10% to benefit low-income communities. The California Justice40 Act would have aligned California with the Biden Administration's Justice40 Initiative, and served as a model for the rest of the country for how to equitably invest federal funds.

As California prepares for a wave of federal dollars from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), it is more important now than ever that we put equity at the center of our investments. Justice cannot be an afterthought. Despite strong and diverse support for AB 2419, the decision to kill this legislation comes as a bitter failure to deliver on environmental and economic justice.

**The California Green New Deal Coalition members and supporters put out the following statements in response to this missed opportunity:**

**QUOTES:**

"We are stunned that the California Legislature would kill a bill designed to center equity in our climate and infrastructure investments. Legislators talk a lot about caring for frontline and disinvested communities, but when it comes to actually putting money where their mouth is this is the result: a failure yet again to deliver for environmental justice and communities of color in California." — **Zach Lou, Coalition Manager, California Green New Deal Coalition**

"We are deeply disappointed that the Senate Appropriations Committee decided not to prioritize accountability to California's frontline communities and workers by failing to pass AB 2419. Justice40 is a no-brainer: climate and infrastructure investments should benefit communities

and workers that bear the brunt of climate catastrophe. This is a total failure of leadership.” – **Miya Yoshitani, Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN)**

“SCOPE is a co-sponsor of AB 2419, and our members in South LA have loudly expressed their support of the bill and the urgent need for equitable climate investments in their communities. We were hopeful that AB 2419 would finally bring much needed investment to our communities so that we can live dignified and healthy lives. By letting AB 2419 die, elected officials have once again shown their unwillingness to champion bold legislation needed to address the climate crisis and repair the past harm on frontline communities.” – **Agustin Cabrera, Policy Director, SCOPE-LA**

“We are disappointed by this missed opportunity to make progress on closing the racial equity gap, just as Congress is finally starting to take action,” said **Debra Gore-Mann, President and CEO of The Greenlining Institute**. “AB 2419 would have been our chance to actually implement President Biden’s Justice 40 Initiative here in California--directing billions of dollars in infrastructure funding to low-income communities and communities of color. We will continue to fight for our communities and will be back next session to urge the California Legislature to put politics aside and advance policies like AB 2419 that prioritize equity and invest in the resilience of communities hit hardest by climate change.”

"California's commitment to environmental justice and equity is once again thrown in question with the legislature's failure to pass AB 2419. Sierra Club California and our allies will be hard at work over the coming months to ensure that federal dollars are spent equitably and in a manner that prioritizes our most at-risk communities." – **Brandon Dawson, Director, Sierra Club California**

"As oil and gas industry executives look to snap up billions in federal ‘climate’ funds, it’s worrying to see lawmakers dodge their responsibility to bring real health benefits to working class Californians of color. By killing AB 2419 in Senate Appropriations, the legislature fails to invest in frontline communities and sends a dismal signal to Californians about their commitment to environmental justice. We expect more from our lawmakers." – **Alexis Sutterman, Energy Equity Program Manager, California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA)**

"The California Senate has failed yet again to prioritize climate action and ensure equity by killing the Justice40 initiative in committee. AB 2419 was a chance to codify into law the values of justice and equity into California’s spending of the historic federal investments of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, ensuring that communities that have long been systemically disinvested and underinvested were finally prioritized. It is disappointing that a majority-held Senate has actively chosen not to prioritize climate justice by not passing AB 2419 this year." – **Aaron McCall, Federal Advocacy Coordinator, California Environmental Voters**

“By failing to pass AB 2419, the California legislature has failed to prioritize equity within state climate investments. As climate disasters continue to disproportionately impact working class

communities and communities of color, California must do more to secure equitable climate funding.” – **Ellie Cohen, CEO, The Climate Center**

“The California Justice40 Act is a model for channeling billions of dollars in lead pipe removal, modern infrastructure, and cleaner air to communities who have been historically neglected by policymakers. Yet, the same week that the Senate failed to protect frontline neighborhoods from polluting corporations by locking in fossil fuel give-aways in the Inflation Reduction Act, California lawmakers failed to pass the California Justice40 Act, leaving disadvantaged communities in California to fend for themselves. While California has failed to pass this much-needed policy, we look to President Biden to issue stronger federal Justice40 rules so that communities across the country have access to investments they have needed for a long time, and ensure no more harm comes down on the people who bear the brunt of climate pollution.” – **Adrien Salazar, Policy Director, Grassroots Global Justice Alliance**

“As an Environmental Justice organization working in underserved, underfunded, and underrepresented communities, we are appalled by the decision to kill AB 2419 and a future of Justice40 in CA. In our decades of experience, we have never seen such disregard in the face of progress for justice in disadvantaged communities where paramount climate and infrastructure investments are in desperate need to accelerate California's ambitious climate goals.” – **Luis Olmedo, Executive Director, Comite Civico del Valle**

“AB 2419 would have been a game-changer in how public dollars are spent, reversing centuries of racist and classist policies of disinvesting in BIPOC communities and low-income communities. We are very disappointed to see that Senate leadership instead decided to preserve the status quo of inequity and injustice.” – **Dan Ress, Staff Attorney, Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment**

"For communities that lack investment, the California Justice40 Act was an opportunity to spend where we say our values are. These communities are not disadvantaged by happenstance -- it's the result of decades of intentional disinvestment and policy decisions. With this decision to kill AB 2419, the legislature sends a signal that they don't value our hard working, often forgotten communities - shame. We will continue to fight for them!" – **Nailah Pope-Harden, Executive Director, ClimatePlan**

“If California leaders are truly committed to reducing economic inequality in our state, they need to make that real by funding revitalization of disadvantaged and low-income communities,” said **Susannah Churchill, Western Deputy Program Director for Vote Solar**. “When legislative leadership killed AB 2419, they failed to deliver on equity.”

“California had the opportunity to serve as a national leader and take an overdue step toward equitable infrastructure investments through AB 2419, but unfortunately our state's most impacted and under-resourced communities were failed by our senate,” said **Irene Kao, Courage California's Executive Director**. “We at Courage California are deeply disappointed that our state's most vulnerable communities will continue to face deadly conditions caused by

climate change due to the inaction of our elected leaders. Californians want and deserve an equitable California and legislators who govern in-line with our values – and we value climate justice, for all.”

“AB 2419 provided a significant opportunity to address long standing inequities and transform the lives of the millions of Californians struggling to access the most basic elements of healthy, opportunity rich communities-safe and affordable water, transportation systems that connect residents to schools, services, and economic opportunity, accessible parks and open space, and other infrastructure that builds community resilience in the face of covid, climate change, and our shifting economy. We are deeply disappointed in our state legislative leaders who chose to walk away from this transformative opportunity. Our communities need and deserve better!” – **Chione Flegal, Managing Director, PolicyLink**

"We're deeply disappointed that Senator Portantino has killed a bill endorsed by the California Democratic Party that united the environmental, labor, and racial justice wings of the party." – **RL Miller, Chair Emeritus, California Democratic Party's Environmental Caucus**

“AB 2419 was a sensible and broad-based option to allocate federal and infrastructure funds to disadvantaged communities. The fact that Senate Appropriations killed the bill is nonsensical and disappointing. We need to understand why.” – **Valerie Ventre-Hutton, 350 Bay Area Action**

“Not passing AB 2419 puts a glaring and condemning spotlight on our CA lawmakers for their lack of commitment to listening to and supporting our environmental justice communities. With such a broad array of EJ, environmental, labor, faith, community, youth, and racial justice groups all supporting this funding guidelines bill, this is both deeply revealing and disappointing. We can do better!” – **Jennifer Koney, 350 Bay Area Action**

“Legislators talk a lot about environmental justice and support for disadvantaged communities to justify all kinds of things, but when there is finally a bill that does it they kill it! Actions not words count. This is very very disappointing.” – **Jennifer Tanner, Indivisible CA Green Team**

“Assemblymember Isaac Bryan’s AB 2419 would have advanced equity in climate and infrastructure investments. Our communities deserve better. The Legislature must act to ensure infrastructure investments deliver for Californians most impacted by climate and health inequities.” - **Victoria Rome, California Government Affairs Director at NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council).**

“Retired professors are deeply disappointed that Senate Appropriations stopped AB 2419 from even getting a final vote. We will continue to support this bill to protect our future.” – **Robert Girling, Legislative Director, Emeritus and Retired Faculty and Staff Association**

"Public Advocates is deeply disappointed with the death of AB 2419. Governor Newsom told President Biden and the nation that California supported Justice40 and its equity principles, and we need to see the same commitment from our Legislative leaders. Public Advocates is

committed to making sure IIJA dollars are invested in the communities that need them most, and that job will be harder without AB 2419.” – **Michelle Pariset, Senior Policy Advocate, Public Advocates**

“Today, the United States Congress is poised to pass its largest-ever investment into climate resilience. But yesterday, the California state legislature decided against directing federal resources to the communities hit first and worst by the climate crisis. By failing to allow AB 2419 (Justice40) a floor vote, legislators failed to protect California’s most vulnerable communities from a crisis they did little to create.” – **Benjamin Eichert, Director, Let's Green CA!**

“California's failure to pass AB 2419 and Justice40 keeps barriers in place for low-income communities of color and slows our organization's work. The individual training we provide only goes so far in addressing poverty and inequity. Ultimately, this was a missed opportunity to direct deep investment in climate and infrastructure towards Californians who face the greatest risks of climate disaster.” – **Rising Sun Center for Opportunity**

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