



July 24, 2020

Tom Steyer  
Chief Advisor to the Governor on Business and Jobs Recovery  
Founder, NextGen America

### **Recommendations for Governor's Task Force on Business and Jobs Recovery**

Dear Mr. Steyer,

The Energy Efficiency For All (EEFA) Coalition believes any action taken by the Governor's task force should be rooted in racial justice and racial equity. It is with this grounding that we elevate the importance of supporting efforts to protect and invest in affordable housing that is powered, heated, and cooled by clean energy, and resilient to climate and environmental disasters. This formula is what we believe will ensure a California that works for all including rural communities, undocumented Californians, and environmental and social justice communities. Prioritizing these groups and their needs first in our recovery plans is mandatory in a time where these communities are being hit first and hit the hardest by energy burden, rent burden, and COVID-19. This stems from a core EEFA ideal that every Californian has the right to an affordable and healthy home during and after the COVID-19 crisis.

Energy Efficiency for All in California is a broad-based coalition of environmental justice, clean energy, affordable housing, and racial equity organizations that believe *together* we can strengthen housing security in the state and advance the state's ambitious climate goals. We are part of a national coalition which released [Pandemic Response Guidance](#) in early April based on the best thinking and examples collected from across our state coalitions and the nation.

This document goes into detail on the following recommendations for the Task Force to consider when making plans for a Just Recovery in California:

- Support Debt Forgiveness
- Prioritize Energy Efficiency Investments and Building Electrification within Affordable Housing
- Invest in Climate Adaptation and Clean Energy to Build Resilience

AND a new and innovative program proposal with an existing funding source:

- Economic Recovery EJ Multi-Family Resiliency Program

## Support Debt Forgiveness to ensure protection for the poor and vulnerable communities impacted by COVID-19.

- Enact debt forgiveness throughout the recovery period for utility customers who are low-income or have lost their income due to the COVID-19 crisis, including accessible debt forgiveness for undocumented Californians who pay utility bills. Without cancellation of debt accrued during the crisis, the state will experience a wave of disconnections when billing resumes due to households' inability to develop savings during this time.
- State and federal stimulus funds should include debt forgiveness funding for low-income customers, net of COVID-related reductions in utility costs.
- For at least 12 months following the period of recovery, eliminate all requirements for disconnected customers to pay arrearages in order to reconnect or maintain service. Instead, allow customers to participate in a debt relief program that is flexible and reasonable.
- All cost deferrals should be done in a longer-period timeframe to ensure true economic relief for customers. Low-income customers should be exempt from all rate hikes related to cost recovery deferral.

## Prioritize Building Electrification and Energy Efficiency Investments within Affordable Housing to ensure increased bill savings and decreased GHG emissions.

- Fund the Multifamily Low Income Weatherization Program (LIWP) which has provided over 12,000 low-income renter households with comprehensive energy upgrades while reducing bills by 30% on average. The program has a list of 18,000 households that live in low-income disadvantaged communities and are waiting to be served with energy efficiency, solar, and electrification improvements.
- Immediately prioritize AB 1232 (Gloria. Affordable housing: weatherization), and go one step further from what APEN, CEJA and EEFA have won in this, to expand LIWP into non-deed-restricted populations with strong tenant protections.
- Ensure insulation materials used for weatherization and efficiency programs, are free of asthmagens and respiratory sensitizers (such substances should not be intentionally added or present at greater than 0.1 percent [1,000 parts per million] by weight in the product).
- Jurisdictions seeking to enact zero net energy or zero net carbon local reach codes must create a working group of affordable housing providers and renters to seek input so as to not increase existing barriers to developing multifamily affordable housing units. Further as funds to construct and preserve affordable housing units are declining, all-electric code requirements must be passed with adequate technical and financial resources so as to not further exacerbate the affordable housing crisis.

## Invest in Climate Adaptation and Clean Energy to Build Resilience especially for our most vulnerable communities.

- Invest in clean, zero-emission, and community-led microgrids involving the integration of energy efficiency, renewable distributed generation, energy storage, and demand response technology delivery in low-income housing and community facilities to prepare for the upcoming wildfire season and protect communities disproportionately impacted by wildfires and power outages.

## Economic Recovery EJ Multi-Family Resiliency Program

Although we believe the three aforementioned categories are important and can be implemented on their own we call for the creation of and investment in the Economic Recovery EJ Multi-Family Resiliency Program, which would fund the implementation of clean energy, energy efficiency, and energy resilience services for California's disadvantaged communities and vulnerable populations. This is one approach, but not the only approach to combine and implement the recommendations made above. This program would be funded by the remaining funds in the Climate Credit, but exempt CARE and FERA customers so they could continue receiving it. According to our estimates, this would provide approximately 1 billion dollars a year for much needed environmental justice and economic recovery programs.

These include solar and storage, home weatherization upgrades, microgrids and distributed energy infrastructure, and clean transportation options in buildings. The EJ Resiliency Program would expand the scope and funding of existing energy programs—including LIWP, SOMAH and SGIP—and ensure there is strong coordination between them to maximize benefits for low-income residents. The program will have strong workforce development standards and tenant protections to ensure that all the investments avoid causing unintended harm. Streamlining and expanding California's various energy services for EJ communities will provide numerous benefits including reduced energy costs; reduced greenhouse gas emissions; improved air quality; healthier and safer homes; and local, high-quality job creation in the clean energy economy.

We look forward to beginning dialogue with you, your staff, and other Task Force members over the upcoming weeks. Thanks again so much for your time and willingness to partner with us on this important effort.

Sincerely,

EEFA Coalition Members:

*Andrew Brooks*  
*Director of Technical Services*  
*Association for Energy Affordability*

*Carmelita Miller  
Energy Equity Manager  
Greenlining Institute*

*Jose Torres  
Energy Equity Program Manager  
California Energy Justice Alliance*

*Srinidhi Kumar  
Sustainable Housing Policy and Program Manager  
California Housing Partnership*

*Michele Hasson  
California Policy Manager  
Natural Resources Defense Council*

*Alexis Cureton  
Clean Energy and Equity Advocate  
Natural Resources Defense Council*