

California Green Stimulus Coalition

- Policy Recommendations-

The American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) presents California with an unprecedented opportunity to build a long-lasting, robust green economy that leads to new economic opportunities, healthier communities and shared prosperity. The California Green Stimulus Coalition (“Coalition”) urges decisionmakers to direct ARRA spending in accordance with the following goals, principles and policy recommendations:

I. GOALS

- To the greatest extent possible, jobs created by ARRA should be “green-collar jobs,” defined as well-paying, family-wage jobs with full benefits that are connected to real career ladders and contribute directly to preserving or enhancing environmental quality.
- ARRA funds should be used to set up an adequate and ongoing structure that supports economic growth beyond the timeline of ARRA funding.
- California should develop funding priorities that provide the greatest number of high quality, career-track jobs with lasting environmental and social benefits.
- Projects should take advantage of economies of scale by aggregating projects whenever possible.
- ARRA funds should prioritize applicants based on need instead of distributing funds proportionately based on population. Rural communities have traditionally been underserved by state and federal funding because preference has been given to highly populated regions, and infrastructure allocations in urban areas have been made without regard to factors such as poverty levels and health disparities, placing both communities at a disadvantage.

II. PRINCIPLES

- *California’s existing environmental and labor laws and regulations must be applied to all projects.*

High Road Job Creation- *California’s economic recovery is dependent on more than getting Californians back to work-- there must be a substantial investment in workforce development and career technical education that will result in a highly skilled, sustainable labor pool in key industries.*

- All publicly funded infrastructure projects should be tied to Project Labor Agreements, ensure prevailing wage and local first-source hiring goals that create new opportunities for disadvantaged, underserved communities.
- ARRA dollars should be focused on projects with potential for significant high quality job placement and creation.
- Training grants should only be available to employers offering high-road, green-collar jobs.
- Only contractors holding qualified licenses should be considered for ARRA funding.

- Employer recipients of ARRA funds should be good corporate citizens with a commitment to being responsible stewards of public dollars.
- All ARRA grantees should make a commitment to safe and healthy work environments.

Benefit All Workers and Communities- *ARRA investments must ensure broadly shared prosperity for all workers including those facing employment barriers such as low income levels, lack of work history and education, and former incarceration.*

- Targeted assistance should be provided to those who have been most affected by the economic crisis, including the unemployed, underemployed, dislocated workers, low-income youth & adults, and populations often excluded from economic opportunities.
- Job opportunities should be fully accessible to women in and entering the workforce.
- Targeted assistance should be provided to geographical areas that have been hardest hit by environmental degradation including low-income communities and communities of color where residents bear significant environmental, public health and economic impacts.
- Training investments should focus on creating career ladders that allow unemployed and underemployed workers to access higher-skilled jobs and provide training for those transitioning to more modern technologies.
- All publicly-funded infrastructure projects should include a commitment to equal opportunity in business and contracting to ensure the participation of small businesses owned by women and those that serve underserved communities.
- Agency contracts for technical assistance to help local entities prepare grant and loan applications should be expedited to ensure equitable competition for funding among all eligible applicants.
- Existing green career pathway programs with a proven track record of training and placing disadvantaged/underserved populations should be considered for expansion funding.

Transparency & Accountability- *State and local officials must uphold the highest standards of transparency and accountability so that taxpayers know how ARRA dollars are being spent and can track each project's progress.*

- California's State and Agency websites related to ARRA should be created and include detailed reporting on contracts awarded by state and local governments and list multi-stakeholder bodies charged with administering and providing oversight of stimulus spending.
- Recipients of funds, including contractors & subcontractors, should report on jobs created and retained, wage and benefits levels and data related to the hiring and training of target populations.

Invest in Justice- *Ensure equal protection of the laws covering access to public resources.*

- Uphold, strengthen and enforce civil rights and environmental justice laws in the planning and enforcement processes, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its regulations prohibiting discrimination by recipients of federal funds, the President's Order on

Environmental Justice, and analogous state laws under California Government Code 11135 and its regulations.

- Prevent "sacrifice zones" and "sacrifice communities"-- locations targeted by industries for the siting of polluting industries and activities that other communities have refused to accept, and which lack political clout, money and resources.

Invest for Long-term Gain- *Adopt a "phased approach to Stimulus"-- undertaking short and medium term projects that will ensure long term recovery of California's economy.*

- Provide project development and planning support for projects that are not currently ready to go so they can be "shovel ready" by the beginning of 2010.
- Longer-term training programs should be supported so that workers can prepare for green jobs that may not be available in large numbers until the next year or after.

III. POLICY AREAS

The following policy recommendations are informed by the overarching principles set forth above:

Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy

- Energy Efficiency Requirements: Energy efficiency and water efficiency requirements must be attached to all construction investments that have the potential to include energy and water efficiency measures, such as military and Veterans Affairs construction projects, construction of community health centers, and the redevelopment of abandoned and foreclosed homes.
- Program Coordination for an Integrated Approach: All energy efficiency retrofit and weatherization efforts should be coordinated with existing programs to avoid duplication and missed opportunities to install additional upgrades such as lighting and water reduction initiatives. Any effort to retrofit or renovate an existing building must increase energy and water efficiency through a comprehensive and integrated approach that captures the full energy and water savings potential for each building. Weatherization of residences should include a comprehensive number of measures, including HVAC duct system leak testing and sealing.
- Meeting 2008 Energy Code Standards: Every building receiving ARRA funding should be designed to meet or exceed the 2008 Energy Code Standards and should be incorporated into a longer-term plan to bring California's entire building stock up to code. Priority should be given to low-income housing, commercial buildings, and public buildings. To ensure that this goal is pursued beyond the timeline of ARRA funding, this effort should be accompanied by a plan to audit and re-commission all applicable buildings every two to five years and have those buildings brought up to the energy efficiency standards at that time.

- Building Code Compliance: Efforts to meet energy efficiency goals must include greater code compliance and enforcement throughout California. Ample resources must be made available to train builders, contractors, and local building inspectors according to the 2008 Energy Code Compliance Manuals (Residential and Non Residential), and to ensure that building code standards are applied properly and uniformly across California. To obtain the best quality work, all renovations and retrofits must be required to obtain permits through the local code authority.
- Creating Projects At-Scale: Where applicable, energy efficiency and renewable energy projects should be designed to take advantage of economies of scale by aggregating individual projects, such as retrofitting entire blocks or neighborhoods, rather than one house at a time. By reducing transaction costs and bundling small jobs into bigger projects, energy efficiency programs can achieve the maximum possible scale while establishing an industry that maximizes long-term, high quality job opportunities with connections to workforce training programs.
- Linking Renewable Energy to Energy Efficiency: All on-site renewable energy projects should be coupled with comprehensive energy and water efficiency efforts to achieve the greatest energy savings and output of clean energy. Renewable energy project investments should target benefits to local communities, with participation of low income and disadvantaged populations.
- Energy Efficiency in Transportation- The Coalition urges funding for initiatives to improve transportation efficiency, including transportation electrification projects, electric grid modernization and advanced battery development.

Parks & Open Space

The Coalition recommends that policymakers apply relevant ARRA funding to Park and Open Space projects and use the following criteria to evaluate and prioritize funding decisions:

- Park Poor- Park projects in communities that are *both* park poor and economically poor should receive top priority over other projects.
- Multiple Benefits- Park projects that address physical, psychological and social health needs should receive priority. Applying public health criteria to infrastructure investments could improve health and quality of life by providing opportunities for physical activity to reduce obesity and diabetes levels, improve academics, bring people together and provide positive alternatives to gangs, crime and violence.
- Joint Use- Projects for the joint and shared use of parks, schools, and pools should receive priority, as they are important to expand open space opportunities in densely developed communities. Multi-benefit green spaces can clean the air and water, provide flood control, promote climate justice, and convert toxic sites and brownfields to green fields.

- Environmental Benefits- The enormous environmental benefits of parks and natural open spaces should be highly valued, including clean air, clean water, habitat protection, shade, rain absorption and soil erosion reduction. Green spaces help reduce the carbon footprint by producing oxygen and absorbing carbon dioxide, which cuts down on global warming.
- Conservation Corps- Conservation Corps job programs should be strengthened and expanded in order to keep young people in school, physically active and healthy, and out of gangs. The Corps also lead to permanent jobs and careers as stewards of the environment.
- Public Art Projects- Public art projects should reflect diversity, democracy, and freedom. Studies such as *Five Views* by the California Department of Parks and Recreation offer guidelines on diversity and its manifestations on the land. Native American sacred sites must be preserved.
- Transit to Trails- Transportation funding should support transit to trails as alternatives to highway transportation in order to provide access to parks, mountains, and beaches.

Transportation

- Fix-It First- For transportation projects, policymakers should “fix-it-first,” prioritizing repair and upgrade projects for roadways and transit and supporting ongoing public transportation operations and services.
- Transportation Efficiency- The Coalition urges that transportation funding be invested in projects that help California use its existing systems more efficiently, including projects that prioritize public transportation in mixed-flow lanes, and highway efficiency investments such as ramp metering and dynamic signage.
- Access to jobs- Job creation should be targeted to locations that are accessible by public transportation. Low-income populations and workers with physical disabilities rely heavily on public transportation to access jobs and training opportunities.

Water

- Green Infrastructure Investments- The Coalition supports the State Water Board and Department of Public Health’s assertion that improvements in drinking water and wastewater systems qualify as Green Infrastructure investments-- reducing contamination through these investments improves water quality throughout the State.
- Small-Scale, Pilot Projects- Among other investments, the Green Infrastructure priority set by ARRA should benefit small-scale, pilot projects to demonstrate the effectiveness of these alternatives and increase utilization of green infrastructure practices.

- State Revolving Fund (SRF) Priorities- ARRA funds should be used to advance the State's priority projects funded by the Clean Water SRF and Safe Drinking Water SRF, namely, those that help communities meet and maintain basic public health standards.
- Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Component- Expenditure of federal funds should maintain a loan component to maximize the stimulus impact by securing an ongoing funding stream that could be accessed by Californians beyond ARRA's 20-month time period

Workforce Development & Education

- Career pathways: All stimulus-funded jobs should be connected to training and education opportunities that are part of career pathway frameworks to help workers increase their skills and prepare them for careers in high-growth or high-employment industries.
- Leverage existing programs and partnerships: State agencies and grantees should build upon and strengthen existing cross-sector and regional collaborative partnerships that align K-12 districts, community colleges, state universities, workforce investment boards, accredited apprenticeship programs, labor unions, the Employment Training Panel, and community-based organizations, rather than create new service delivery systems.
- Build on STEM initiatives. When possible, ARRA investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency, transportation, and water conservation should be aligned with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) educational programs.
- Certifications: Education and training should result in transferable certifications recognized by industry, including community college certificates and apprenticeship training programs accredited by the Division of Apprenticeship Standards.
- Access: Access to job training programs for disadvantaged and underserved communities should be provided through an expansion of bridge programs that incorporate basic skills education and career pathways and have a proven track record of preparing low-skilled adults and youth for work. ARRA funded workforce and education programs should also build on the Obama Administration's call to improve post-secondary attainment for low income students and students of color.
- Learning and Earning- Training programs that allow people to combine learning and earning over time should be supported, such as in-classroom experience with on-the-job training.
- Workforce Training Set-Asides: After a 10-year decline in federal support, the ARRA presents California with an unprecedented opportunity to build the workforce training capacity for targeted growth industries. Toward this end, all agencies that receive stimulus funds should set aside the maximum possible funds for workforce education and training in the regions that projects are undertaken. For example, the California Energy Commission is setting aside approximately 10 percent of the State Energy Program budget for workforce

training. When feasible, the State Department of Transportation and Metropolitan Planning Organizations should likewise set aside a significant percentage of each highway and public transit capital project dollars for workforce training.

- Improved data and integrated tracking: California dedicates substantial resources to tracking student achievement and expects an additional \$75 million for “educational technology” from ARRA. The state should build a more coordinated and robust infrastructure that can track the educational progress of students from pre-K through postsecondary, to employment outcomes. Educational data systems should be linked to unemployment wage data (UI) collected by the Employment Development Department.

Other

- Environmental Cleanup- Environmental cleanup and restoration investments should be made in redevelopment projects that are consistent with state and regional environmental goals and meet health standards.