OVER FIFTY ORGANIZATIONS CALL ON LEGISLATORS TO PROTECT COMMUNITY CHOICE ENERGY

(Oakland) The California Alliance for Community Energy today presented a letter to Senate President Toni Atkins (D-San Diego) and Speaker of the Assembly Anthony Rendon (D-Lakewood) calling on the Legislature to protect Community Choice energy programs from being undermined by the utility-friendly Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). The letter, signed by representatives of 50 statewide and local organizations, calls on the Legislature and Governor Newsom to “Roll Back the CPUC Attack” on Community Choice and our communities.

California's 19 public Community Choice energy agencies already provide energy services to 11 million customers, a number expected to increase further in 2020. These locally-governed programs provide crucial economic and environmental benefits to their communities; they lead the state in achieving its climate goals, and provide Californians with a compelling public alternative to the state’s faltering private monopoly utility model.

“While the Governor's recently-released Strike Force report does describe the urgency California faces due to the recent deadly wildfires, we had hoped it would also highlight the steps needed to ensure that our electricity system is not held hostage to the state’s monopoly utilities,” said Al Weinrub, coordinator of the statewide Alliance. “The electricity system needs to serve the needs of our local communities, not destroy them. That means providing for public safety, community resilience, and a broad array of other benefits. It means facing down the CPUC and facing head on our new climate reality.”

The CPUC's attack against Community Choice has been unremitting, and ratepayers –whether in Community Choice programs or not-- and their communities have been the losers. As California’s electricity model is restructured in the wake of PG&E’s malfeasance, the State should not allow the CPUC to further attack Community Choice on behalf of the state’s monopoly utilities.

The climate crisis requires that we start now to build a new electricity system, one designed around local control and decentralized development of renewable energy resources. Community Choice agencies are at the center of this new model. In the May 1 letter to legislators, the signatory organizations are calling on our Legislative leadership and all our elected representatives to support this new model—by rolling back the CPUC’s attacks and by strengthening Community Choice energy programs.

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1 “Wildfires and Climate Change: California's Energy Future”, Governor Newsom's Strike Force, April 12, 2019. [Linked here](#).

2 And documented by the Alliance through multiple position papers, including “CPUC Bias Against Community Choice (January 2019)” and “Backgrounder: Roll Back the CPUC Attack on Community Choice (February 2019)”. 
To: Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins and
Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon

The organizations below request your action to end the CPUC’s attack on our communities and on Community Choice.

This past October, CPUC commissioners unanimously adopted Decision 18-10-016. This Decision dramatically increases an arbitrary, unpredictable, and ongoing “exit” fee—the PCIA—on customers of California's 19 Community Choice agencies.

This action is just the latest and most egregious example of the CPUC’s consistent pattern of bias* against Community Choice in favor of the monopoly utilities. It is contrary to state law (AB 117). It fails to hold utilities accountable for managing costs; it lacks transparency; and it accounts for utility-owned-generation costs in a way that may be wholly illegal.

The PCIA methodology imposed via the CPUC Decision threatens the viability of Community Choice programs. It has already had the following negative impacts:

- **Aborted and delayed programs** – A new Community Choice program in San Luis Obispo/Morro Bay aborted its launch. Desert Community Energy (San Bernardino) delayed its launch.
- **Increased electricity rates** – Both CleanPowerSF and Valley Clean Energy (Davis) have been forced to increase customer rates, undermining their ability to compete with PGE.
- **Curtailed local investment** – East Bay Community Energy expects to cut $13 million from its 2019 budget, including for local renewable energy development. Monterey Bay Community Power has pulled its distributed energy resource (DER) procurement entirely.

The CPUC has a duty under AB 117 to ensure that avoidable, unfair, anti-competitive costs are not shifted from the investor-owned monopoly utilities to Community Choice customers. Yet such a shift is precisely what Decision 18-10-016 did.

The dramatic increase in PCIA fees threatens the viability of Community Choice programs.** The CPUC’s October decision is also unfair to bundled rate payers, as utility ratepayers end up paying higher rates when the utilities are shielded by the PCIA from competition with more attractive Community Choice programs.

Because the CPUC Decision is particularly damaging to Community Choice programs, it thereby obstructs our fastest means of achieving the state’s climate targets. In this way, it does a major disservice to the public interest.

On behalf of our members, we, the undersigned organizations ask you to:

- Demand the CPUC suspend Decision 18-10-016, pending resolution of its procedural and legal deficiencies;
- Call on Governor Newsom to appoint new CPUC commissioners and top staffers who support Community Choice and prioritize community interests.


---For background information and documentation, visit www.cacommunityenergy.org.---
California Alliance for Community Energy  
Erica Etelson- Steering Committee

Clean Coalition  
Rosana Francescato- Communications Director

Consumer Watchdog  
Adam Scow- Senior Advocate

Food & Water Watch  
Jim Walsh- Renewable Energy Policy Analyst

Greenpower  
Benjamin Eichert- Director

Local Clean Energy Alliance  
Al Weinrub- Coordinator

Pacific Environment  
Alex Levinson- Executive Director

World Business Academy  
Robert Perry- Director of Energy Research

Alameda Interfaith Climate Action Network  
Frances Aubrey- Co- convener

East Bay Clean Power Alliance  
Jessica Tovar- Organizer

Green Party of Santa Clara County  
Nassim Nouri- Council Member

Livermore Indivisible  
Van Rainey- Environmental Committee Lead

San Jose Community Energy Advocates  
Ruth Merino- Chair

Oakland Climate Action Coalition  
Colin Miller- Coordinator

Sustainable Marin  
Wendi Kallins- President

House Kombucha  
Aaron Lehmer-Chang- Co-owner

Organizing for Action-Contra Costa  
Renee Zeimer- Chapter Lead

Californians for Energy Choice  
Eric Brooks- Campaign Coordinator

Climate Action Campaign  
Matthew Vasilakis- Climate Justice Advocate

Emerald Cities Collaborative  
Veronica Soto- Program Director

Green Party of California  
Maxine Daniel- Co-Coordinator

Indivisible California Green Team  
Jennifer Tanner- Steering Committee

Numi Organic Tea  
Jane French- Director of Sustainability

Protect Our Communities Foundation  
Bill Powers- Boardmember

350 Conejo/San Fernando Valley  
Alan Weiner- Chapter Co-chair

Berkeley Climate Action Network  
Minna Toloui- Program Manager

Emerald Cities Oakland  
Tara Marchant- Director

Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice  
Bradley Angel- Executive Director

Local Power, Inc.  
Charles Schultz- Research Director

Sunflower Alliance  
Shoshana Wechsler- Coordinator

Physicians for Social Responsibility, San Francisco Bay Area Chapter  
Robert Gould- Executive Director

Bay Area Green Tours  
Marissa LaMagna- Founding Executive Director

Kehilia Community Synagogue  
Beth Weinberger- Greening Committee Rep.

Planting Justice  
Gavin Raders- Executive Director
Community Environmental Council
Michael Chiacos - Director of Climate Programs

Long Beach Community Choice
Energy Working Group
Clay Sandidge - Chairman

North County Climate Change Alliance
Marian Sedio - Boardmember

Ventura County Garden Club
Barbara Rigney-Hill - Member

SoCal 350 Climate Action
Jack Eidt - Co-Founder

Carlsbad Sustainability Coalition
Phil Rogul - Chair

Public Bank of the East Bay
Margie Lewis - Community Representative

California Progressive Alliance
Gayle McLaughlin - Chair

Sustainable
Edward Howard - Principal

Long Beach 350
Alice Stevens - Organizer and Co-founder

SanDiego350
Joyce Lane - Policy Chair

Preserve Wild Santee
Van Collinsworth - Director

The Ecology Center
Minna Tolou - Education Program Manager

Energetic Management Associates
Erika Morgan - Founder/Principal Consultant

Sustainable Rossmoor
Marcia McLean - President