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Subject: Staff Report 10 - Fiscal Year Budget Surplus (Action Item) - Need for Community Driven Resilience Hubs for Environmental Justice Communities

January 16, 2024

Dear Ava Community Energy Board Members, Alternates and Community Advisory Committee,

We, the undersigned community-based organizations, members and supporters of the East Bay Clean Power Alliance, call for the Board of Directors of Ava Community Energy **to invest \$15 million of any 2023-2024 budget surplus into community resilience hubs and prioritize environmental justice, low income and BIPOC communities in site selection, as this is where the need for energy resilience is highest.**

The need for access to emergency energy services during climate-related and other crises, particularly in communities long neglected due to systemic injustice, has increased dramatically and is expected to become more frequent as accelerating climate chaos brings wildfires, smoke, hurricane-force storms, life-threatening heat, and increased utility power shutoffs (Public Safety Power Shut offs - PSPS). While there is certainly value to any distributed and aggregated solar and storage, we call on Ava/EBCE to fulfill its responsibility to *maximize the* community benefits of its programs by placing these distributed energy resources in community trusted locations that support environmental justice community needs.

In light of massive budget surpluses and the current focus on municipal buildings, the \$2 Million that has been allocated to a Community Resilience Hub program is not nearly sufficient. The draft budget for 2023-2024 included an estimated surplus of \$260.7million. Understanding this to be an estimate, **we call on Ava Community Energy to commit at least \$15 million of any budget surplus to a *Community Resilience Hub* program independent of their municipal ownership status.** Examples include: health clinics, senior centers, day cares, shelters, affordable housing complexes, food banks, places of worship and community centers.

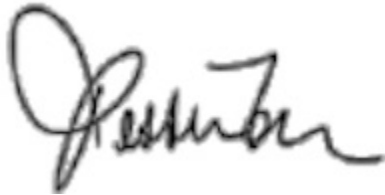
While we were pleased to hear that schools as well as senior and community centers were included as eligible sites for the *Resilient Critical Municipal Facilities* program in May 2023, nowhere is it guaranteed that these sites are being included in the program. Additionally, the program has not explicitly solicited any community feedback on priorities for site selection. **We call on Ava Community Energy to develop a community feedback process for site selection in the *Resilient Municipal Critical Facilities* program that works with local**

community-based organizations to prioritize sites in environmental justice, low income and BIPOC communities similar to the proposed Community Innovation Grant to facilitate site selection of the Community Resilience Hub program. **At least 60% of facilities in both programs must be in census tract disadvantaged communities:**

We urge the EBCE Board of Directors to prioritize energy equity by:

1. Committing at least \$15 Million of any budget surplus from 2023-2024 into the Community Resilience Hub program to target accessible and trusted community spaces independent of their municipal ownership status.
2. Developing a community feedback process for site selection in the *Resilient Municipal Critical Facilities* program that works with local community-based organizations and prioritizes sites in low income BIPOC communities.

Jessica Guadalupe Tovar, East Bay Clean Power Alliance



Signatory Organizations:

1. Communities for a Better Environment
2. Asian Pacific Environmental Network
3. Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment
4. New Voices Are Rising
5. Kehilla Community Synagogue
6. California Trade Justice Coalition
7. Sierra Club
8. East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation
9. Reimagine Power
10. Reclaim Our Power Utility Justice Campaign
11. Collective Resilience
12. East Oakland Collective