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Subject: Need for Increased Funding for Community Driven Resilience Hubs w/ attachment of Community Based Organizations definitions of "Resilience Hubs"

May 13, 2024

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

We call for the Board of Directors of Ava Community Energy to invest **\$15 million of any budget surplus or fiscal year budget into a Community Resilience Hub program, beyond solar and storage assistance.** Such funding can support community based organizations (CBOs) in planning, microgrid readiness, day to day resources and immediate needs in face of climate disaster or other unforeseen crises.

We appreciate Ava Community Energy's proposal to include solar and storage technical assistance for resilience hubs in the surplus budget allocation, but we know that is not enough to meet CBOs where they are at with resilience needs. Solar and storage is just one piece of a resilience hub. Although renewable energy and solar provisions are very important for communities in the fight against climate change, we want to ensure that resilience hubs have other forms of resilience as well.

Food refrigeration, cooling centers, air filtration, and portable solar battery access are a few of many needs that resilience hubs meet. We call on Ava Community Energy to fulfill its larger responsibility to their constituents by funding a diverse set of resilience hub programming in community trusted locations that support environmental justice community needs. We also urge Ava Community Energy to provide this funding regardless of the resilience hub's municipal ownership status.

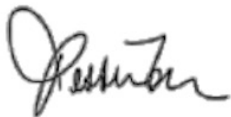
We also ask Ava Community Energy to utilize the attached definitions of resilience hubs. These definitions are rooted in community-led efforts and shared with the Local Development Business Plan staff. These definitions define resilience hubs beyond the proposed solar and storage technical assistance.

We have witnessed an overwhelming amount of support and need for resilience hubs across the Bay, including Ava Community Energy territory. These are some of the most scalable models of support—ones that work with trusted community spaces to provide services to communities on a day-to-day basis. They provide resources on housing, job opportunities, language learning, and resources for the unhoused. They can be living learning labs for climate solutions. They also provide services directly related to clean energy access such as portable solar power and information on government renewable energy assistance programs. We urge the Ava Community Energy Board of Directors to prioritize energy justice and equity by:

1. Creating a definition of what resilience hubs are in collaboration with the CBOs who lead resilience efforts on the ground, and base this definition on community resilience needs. This definition should look beyond just renewable energy and disaster support, but also include a social and environmental justice lens.
2. Committing at least \$15 million of any budget surplus or fiscal year budget to a Community Resilience Hub program, and ensuring that part of that funding is accessible to less resourced CBOs and community groups. The funding should target accessible and trusted community spaces independent of their municipal ownership status.
3. 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.
4. Providing funding for a network approach, with training, best practices, and coalition building between resilience hubs to ensure these spaces are built up to be robust, effective community spaces.
5. Providing a small grants program accessible to CBOs at \$50,000 per year over 3 years (totalling \$150,000 per grant). This compliments the current \$100,000 grants over 3 years that Ava Community Energy is currently administering.
6. Integrating existing Ava Community Energy offerings for the resilience hubs such as e-bikes, induction cooktops, and other services.

As climate related crises will increase, there will be increased need for access to emergency energy services. As California nears the summer wildfire season and the risk of year-round wildfires increases, communities will need stronger infrastructure to withstand destabilizing climate events. Not only that, but we also need to invest strongly in programming to meet the day-to-day needs of communities. BIPOC and low-income communities often are the first and the most vulnerable victims of climate crises due to racism, aging services, and systemic injustice. We are at a make or break point in history, and we need to invest in holistic, outside-the-box solutions that meet community needs.

Clean Power to the People,



Jessica Guadalupe Tovar, East Bay Clean Power Alliance
Ayla Peters Paz, Local Clean Energy Alliance
Carli Yoro, Emerald Cities Collaborative
Susan Silber, Collective Resilience

Definition of Resilience Hubs
Community spaces that can include buildings or facilities, community spaces, neighborhoods, or individual residences that support community members before, during, and after natural and climatic disasters. Resources can include, but are not limited to access to fresh food and clean water, hygienic facilities, community gardens, community transportation, renewable energy and energy back up//storage, community events including concerts, events, etc.
Place of refuge and source of essential supplies in face of any community disaster
Working on our definition
I like APEN's definition: Trusted community spaces where community members can access services for disaster response and recovery, as well as “to gather, organize, and access resilience-building social services on a daily basis.” Rooted in the following pillars: ** Preparing vulnerable community members for extreme weather challenges: ** Becoming a Model for Climate Solutions: Resilience hubs can directly address the Climate Crisis by prioritizing renewable energy, zero waste systems and other green building practices and programming to showcase climate solutions. ** Building Trust and Relationships to Strengthen Community Cohesion: With crime, racism, bullying and everything else related to our social systems unraveling on the rise, resilience hubs can serve as safe and inclusive places, with opportunities for community members to build and strengthen relationships.
A faith-based Resilience Hub is a House of Worship designed to help congregants and their neighborhoods prepare for and recover from climate disaster by providing safe hospitality, clean energy through solar panels and battery storage, clean air through air filtration, and so many other critical resources needed when disaster strikes. Power outages, wildfires, earthquakes, flooding, and so many of the terrible effects of climate change are here: we need to prepare ourselves, our loved ones, and our communities.
USDN summary - Community-serving facilities and spaces where community members can access services for disaster response and recovery, as well as gather, organize, and access resilience-building social services on a daily basis.
We support community-led definitions of hubs that serve their resiliency needs. Also, would like to see hubs that do the following: provide health information regarding climate, air and other pollution, benefits of electrification; include clean air during wild fire red-air quality days; cooling to protect residents from extreme heat which is the most deadly weather event; provide support for emergency water heater replacement and help to replace gas heaters with electric; and resources to help with an equitable transition to electrify homes, particularly to help families with asthma to replace their gas stove (which can trigger asthma) with an electric stove. Hubs can be so much more, but these are some areas we are most concerned with. Park community buildings and libraries could all be electrified and become resiliency centers. And of course, we live in earthquake country and should think about how these hubs would help when the Big One hits.
A filtered air and cool shelter open during days of extreme heat, power loss and polluted air days. Including refrigeration to store medication, charging stations for wheelchairs and other medical devices, and phone chargers.
more discussion of resilience hubs, community solar and microgrids