

The Green Paper

A Community Vision for Environmentally and Economically Sustainable Development



ABOUT CRPE

The Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment is an environmental justice organization dedicated to helping grassroots groups across the United States attack head on the disproportionate burden of pollution borne by poor people and people of color. Our mission is to achieve environmental justice and healthy sustainable communities through collective action and the law. We have three ambitions in our work: (1) individuals leave a particular campaign with more skills than when they entered; (2) communities have more power vis-à-vis decision-makers; and 3) we address the environmental hazard facing the community. We provide organizing, technical, and legal assistance to help community groups stop immediate environmental threats. In the over 20 years that CRPE has been helping the poor and people of color resist toxic intrusions and protect their environmental health, we have had many victories: we have beaten toxic waste incinerators, forced oil refineries to use cleaner technology, beaten a 55,000-cow mega-dairy, stopped numerous tire burning proposals, helped bring safe drinking water to various rural communities, stopped a garbage dump on the Los Coyotes reservation in southern California, and empowered hundreds of local residents along the way among other victories. As a result, many residents involved in our campaigns have gone on to take positions of leadership in their communities in order to protect their families and communities in the future.

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Foreword

The Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment (CRPE) conceived of this Green Paper in 2007, after California passed its landmark climate change legislation, the Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32). AB 32 positioned California at the front lines of the new “green economy.” The State and the Country began to recognize what low-income communities and communities of color had been saying for decades- we needed to transition away from fossil fuels and the unsustainable use of natural resources towards sustainable, environmentally friendly solutions. Under this guise, several proposals for biomass projects and alternative energy solutions such as ethanol and hydrogen energy productions popped up around the San Joaquin Valley.

Once we began investigating the local impacts of these proposed projects, we discovered that while these projects may have some regional, state-wide, national, and global benefits, those benefits came at the expense of the low-income communities and communities of color where the projects were located. CRPE saw the same cycles of environmental, economic, and social harm that had plagued the San Joaquin Valley being perpetuated. We noticed that proponents of the green economy in Sacramento, the Bay Area, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C. would often talk about the role of rural communities in the green economy, but no one was talking to those rural communities. We decided to change that.

We began a series of trainings that engaged the communities we worked in from Fresno, Kern and Tulare Counties, some of the poorest Counties in California. We engaged



residents in a conversation about what green jobs meant to them, where they saw their communities fitting into the promise of the new green economy, and how they wanted to see their communities develop in a healthy and sustainable way. Most importantly, participants felt it was imperative to ensure the green economy did not perpetuate the myth of jobs vs. the environment. But rather, that jobs, economic opportunity, and environmental health needed to be linked in order to have a truly sustainable and healthy community. It was an exciting discussion and we are proud to share our results.

The communities with whom we work are not alone in seeing the potential of legislation such as AB 32. Over four million people in California voted to preserve AB 32 by defeating Proposition 23 on the November 2, 2010 ballot. This Green Paper outlines how rural San Joaquin Valley communities plan to participate in the promise of AB 32 and ask for your support in making their vision a reality.

Executive Summary

The San Joaquin Valley is a unique region of California faced with serious social, economic, racial, and environmental inequities and challenges. Community leaders and residents across the San Joaquin Valley are optimistic about the potential of the emerging “green economy” to help solve the complex problems facing the region. There is particular enthusiasm for the promise of green jobs and a healthier environment among residents of rural cities and unincorporated communities where the need for economic and environmental justice is the greatest.

Traditional efforts to promote economic development in the Valley have consisted of top-down approaches that have failed to include meaningful avenues of participation for grassroots leaders from disadvantaged communities. This has resulted in a model of economic development that has perpetuated a cycle of low-wage jobs in polluting industries such as prisons, mega-dairies, distribution warehouses, and power plants. In order to build a new green economy in the Valley that can truly address social, environmental, and economic inequities, residents from the Valley’s most disadvantaged communities must not only have a seat at the table; but also be able to sit at the head of their own tables.

Applying our “from the ground up” philosophy to issues of economic development, reducing pollution, and protecting public health, CRPE worked with grassroots leaders from low-income, rural communities in the Valley to develop their vision of the green economy. The purpose of this paper is to present a proactive strategy which builds upon their experience in the Valley’s economy. Only a holistic, community-driven green economy can succeed in the long term.

We submit the vision, principles and recommendations presented in this document as a roadmap for arriving at that community-driven green economy.

The Vision and Principles

CRPE developed this report’s vision, principles and policy recommendations in conjunction with over 160 residents who participated in our Power to the People Program (P2P) representing, eighteen disadvantaged communities from

Fresno, Tulare, and Kern counties. The P2P Program consisted of twelve trainings during 2009–2010 that covered topics related to the emerging green economy. The ultimate goal of this program was to empower community leaders to define a sustainable and equitable green economy and to actively participate in its creation.

From this process, community leaders crafted the following **vision** for a new green economy:

Community leaders want to live in healthy, vibrant, rural communities, where they can live, work, and play free from the threat of environmental harm; they want to breathe clean air, drink clean water, and have access to economic opportunities that lift their families out of poverty. They want access to equitable and sustainable green jobs, that respect the dignity of workers, provide a living wage and year-round employment, and protect the environment in which people live, work and play.

From this vision, community leaders crafted **three core principles** which must guide the development of a true green economy in the Valley. These principles are:

- » Promotion of Environmental Health and Justice
- » Economic Opportunity for All People
- » Green Jobs Must Support Equity and Justice



Policy Recommendations

Power to the People leaders identified **three major strategies** for attaining the community's vision for a new green economic model:

- » Invest in the human capital of low-income disadvantaged communities in the Valley;
- » Promote socially responsible green businesses and practices; and
- » Address environmental impacts of economic development and support meaningful public participation.

From these strategies, we developed the following **six main policy "actions"** or recommendations:

- » Adopt comprehensive immigration reform;
- » Create green vocational training programs;
- » Increase access to capital and other resources for emerging and potential green entrepreneurs;
- » Require and incentivize existing businesses to adopt sustainable and just practices in their production and operations;
- » Identify environmentally over-burdened communities and analyze potential impacts of proposed new development and projects in the San Joaquin Valley; and
- » Address environmental impacts of economic development and support meaningful public participation of all residents, in particular leaders from over-burdened communities.

Report Organization

The first section of this report describes the socio-economic and environmental conditions that characterize the dominant economic model in the San Joaquin Valley, often referred to as the "Grey Economy." We explain how this grey economy, with industrial-scale agriculture as the main driver, leads to extreme poverty and chronic unemployment, environmental degradation, health disparities, and lack of civic participation in the San Joaquin Valley. The second section of the report describes the vision and principles crafted by community leaders. The last section presents the strategies and policy actions for state and local governments to ensure the San Joaquin Valley creates a sustainable and equitable green economy. In the Appendix, we outline the process CRPE and community leaders used to develop this Report.

Our hope is that this report will inspire a new green economic model for the San Joaquin Valley guided by the vision of leaders from communities who are most negatively affected by the "grey" economic model. The policy recommendations offered are neither exhaustive nor comprehensive; they are intended to be a starting point for discussions among stakeholders, policymakers, and community leaders on how to create a green economy that incorporates principles of environmental, economic and social justice while also providing tangible improvements to the Valley's most underserved communities.

CRPE is committed to the development of a sustainable, community-driven green economy for the San Joaquin Valley. Moving forward, we will continue to work with community leaders, our allies, and policymakers to ensure that this new green economy becomes a reality.

How the Grey Economy Has Failed the Valley

The San Joaquin Valley—comprised of Kern, Tulare, Fresno, Kings, Madera, Merced, Stanislaus, and San Joaquin Counties—is pivotal to the state and national economy, as it leads the nation in agricultural and dairy productivity. Sometimes referred to as the nation’s “bread basket,” the Valley produces the majority of the produce grown in the United States. In 2008, the Valley’s Agricultural industry generated \$25.3 billion dollars, over 70% of the state’s entire agricultural revenue, keeping California as the top agricultural producer in the nation.¹ Amidst, and supplying this wealth, are equally extreme levels of human and environmental exploitation. Industrial-scale agricultural production is inextricably tied to, and dependent upon, cheap immigrant labor, unsustainable resource extraction and waste disposal in order to generate profits.

While the region is hailed as one of the most productive agricultural regions of the country, it also stands out, unfortunately, because of its extreme poverty, chronic unemployment, environmental degradation, health disparities, and lack of civic participation. Despite all of the wealth and abundance generated by agriculture, the Valley has some of the highest rates of food insecurity in California. In 2005 it had four of the top ten most food insecure counties in the state.² Additionally, a 2008 report on the well-being of Americans ranked California’s 20th Congressional District, encompassing Kern, Kings, and Fresno counties, last in the nation based on income, education, and health outcomes of its residents.³

These realities are, one could argue, a byproduct of the Valley’s agricultural legacy. The socioeconomic structure of the San Joaquin Valley and the greater Central Valley region has been entirely shaped by large-scale, primarily corporate agriculture which has been the main economic engine in the Valley and California for many decades. Much research has been done on the impact that industrial-scale agriculture has had on the development of rural communities. Overwhelmingly, this research has shown that,

... communities characterized by large-scale, especially industrial, farm structures are often associated with adverse community socioeconomic conditions, e.g., lower community standards of living, less economic diversity, fewer community services, less vibrant retail trade, etc., than communities with other types of farming enterprises.⁴ (U.S. Congressional Research Service, 2005).



Demographics

The Valley has a diverse population of 3.8 million residents. In 2008, Latinos became the largest ethnic group representing 47% of the population, followed by non-Hispanic whites at 39%, Asian-Pacific Islanders at 7.3 %, Blacks at 6%, and Native Americans at .5%.⁵ It is important to note that while Latinos represent the majority of the population; they continue to be a minority on the decision-making bodies that govern the region.

Agriculture has also played a key role in shaping the Valley’s diversity, serving as a magnet for immigrants, predominantly from Mexico, drawn to the Valley in search of jobs. In 2000 nearly 20% of Valley residents were foreign born,⁶ many of whom reside in small, rural communities dependant on agriculture.

Poverty and Unemployment

The model of large-scale industrialized agriculture that produces so much bounty also creates much poverty. Valley communities experience some of the lowest incomes and highest unemployment rates in the state and nation, with poverty rates higher than those of Appalachia.⁷ Valley residents have among the lowest per capita personal incomes and more residents living below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) than California as a whole.⁸ This type of chronic poverty is continuously fueled by economic development strategies narrowly focused on the creation of jobs in low-wage industries, such as industrial-scale agriculture, which trap families in a cycle of poverty.⁹

In addition to poverty, unemployment levels in the Valley are persistently higher than the national and state averages. In 2000 the Valley's unemployment rate was 12% while the national and California averages stood at 5.8% and 7% respectively.¹⁰ This trend has continued during the economic recession of the last few years. In July 2010, while the national and statewide unemployment rates reached 9.5% and 12.8%, respectively, the jobless rate in Fresno County hit 16.2%, 16% in Kern County, 15.6% in Kings County, and 16.9% in Tulare County.¹¹ The seasonal nature of agricultural work also means that farm workers remain permanently underemployed. The biggest economic problems farmworkers continue to experience are underemployment, unemployment, and job instability. Many farmworkers only get about 900 hours of work a year, versus the estimated 2,000 hours a year provided by full-time employment. In many cases, the instability of seasonal work can be worse than unemployment because families can get caught in periodic cash flow crises throughout the year.¹²

Environmental Degradation and Pollution

The negative impacts of poverty in rural communities are exacerbated by a variety of environmental stressors that endanger the health of these communities. Residents of the San Joaquin Valley breathe some of the dirtiest air in the nation. The Valley's topography resembles a bowl, and traps the smog and particulate matter from various local sources, including: pesticides, mega-dairies, oil refineries, diesel trucks and vehicles on Highway 99 and Interstate-5, and sprawling cities.

From 2006 to 2009, the San Joaquin Valley violated the federal 8-hour smog standard on 455 days, beating out Los

Angeles by one day.¹³ During that same time period, the City of Arvin, located in at the far southeastern end of the Valley, violated the federal 8-hour smog standard on 370 days, making this farmworker community of only 15,000 residents one of the smoggiest cities in the nation.¹⁴ The American Lung Association ranks Kern, Tulare, and Fresno as the third, fourth, and sixth most ozone-polluted counties in the United States, respectively.¹⁵ For long term exposure to PM2.5, the American Lung Association ranks Kern, Tulare, Fresno, and Kings Counties as the second, third, sixth, and ninth most polluted counties.¹⁶

“Governmental institutions which simultaneously exclude the majority of Valley residents and are ruled by a minority class thus lack fundamental legitimacy.”

In addition to breathing dirty air, many of these communities lack access to safe, clean, and affordable drinking water. Arsenic, nitrate, pesticides and other pollutants largely from large scale industrialized agriculture have degraded the quality of groundwater, which is the primary source of drinking water for Valley communities.¹⁷ Many Valley communities lack other basic infrastructure such as sidewalks, curbs, sewer, storm drains, and adequately paved roads—all of which compromise environmental health and safety. Communities must also deal with pollution from numerous waste facilities located throughout the Valley, further exacerbating environmental threats. Two out of California's three toxic waste dumps are located in low-income, predominantly Latino farm-worker communities in the San Joaquin Valley: the largest toxic waste dump west of the Mississippi, located in Kettleman City, as well as a toxic waste landfill in Buttonwillow.¹⁸ Indeed, the Valley serves as the dumping ground for the waste from other regions of California as well as waste from other states.

A recent trend has emerged whereby Southern California cities are shipping partially treated human waste to the San Joaquin Valley for application on agricultural fields as a soil amendment. In 2006 Kern County residents passed a ballot measure, Measure E, to stop this practice.¹⁹ Kern County sought to prevent the potential economic and environmental harm County residents would suffer from

potentially contaminated agricultural land. Los Angeles unsuccessfully sued Kern County to force it to accept this waste. Kings County also created a similar health protective ordinance to prevent this practice.²⁰ The Valley is not only the source of the nation's food; it is also seen as a dumping ground for the rest of the state.

Throughout the United States, low-income communities and communities of color are more likely to be located near polluting facilities and live in areas with high concentrations of poverty.²¹ This is not a coincidence. The 1984 Cerrell report, commissioned by the California Integrated Waste Management Board (now called Cal Recycle) to identify communities that would present the least resistance to the siting of waste incinerators, highlighted this fact.²² In his book, *From the Ground Up*, CRPE founder Luke Cole discusses the report's main recommendation that,

... companies target small, rural, communities whose residents are low-income, older people, or people with a high school education or less; communities with a high proportion of Catholic residents; and communities whose residents are engaged in resource extractive industries such as agriculture . . . Ideally, the report states, 'officials and companies should look for lower socioeconomic neighborhoods that are also in a heavy industrial areas with little, if any, commercial activity.'

While the Cerrell report focused on siting incinerators, the distribution of unwanted land-uses and high polluting industries across the San Joaquin Valley, as in other parts of the country, are disproportionately located in communities that fit the Cerrell criteria. The Cerrell Report confirmed what many grassroots environmental justice leaders know intuitively: that polluting industries deliberately target their communities. The fact that this report was commissioned by a government agency also highlights the role of policymakers in allowing exploitation of these communities.

Cumulative Health Impacts

The cumulative impact of these serious environmental injustices can be seen in the health outcomes of Valley residents. Rates of respiratory illness and health problems related to poor air quality are extremely high. Valley children have the highest childhood asthma rate in the state: one in five children in the Valley suffers from asthma.²³ High levels of particulate matter in the air also contribute to high rates

of cardiac and respiratory illness. Breathing polluted air that fails to meet federal health-based standards for ozone and fine particulate matter costs Valley residents over \$6 billion dollars a year in health-related expenses, nearly \$1,600 per-person per year, and is associated with 2,600 premature deaths annually.²⁴



Many rural communities—like McFarland, Earlimart, Buttonwillow, and most recently Kettleman City—have experienced the emergence of clusters of cancer and birth defects. This is not surprising, given that homes and schools are often located next to crops and fields that are routinely sprayed with pesticides. Due to their proximity to pollution sources, low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately impacted by these negative health outcomes. Many residents are forced to drink water which is often times contaminated, while also breathing a toxic soup of air pollution that leads to severe health issues. These health problems are exacerbated by the fact that many Valley residents lack access to health care. In 2009, one-million Valley residents—or roughly one-fourth of the Valley's population—lacked access to health insurance.²⁵ Young adults and non-citizens, a large segment of the Valley's population, are more likely to endure this health assault without a doctor.

Lack of public participation

The cycle of poverty, chronic unemployment, pollution and poor health outcomes that grips the San Joaquin Valley perpetuates itself because of the fundamentally undemocratic nature of the region. The people most impacted by

these injustices are quite often deliberately excluded from participating in the decisions that affect their lives. There are numerous barriers to public participation in the Valley, particularly for rural, low-income communities of color. For example, important meetings are often held during normal business hours, when most people are at work and cannot attend. These meetings are held in county seats or in Sacramento, or in otherwise distant locations inaccessible to most low-income residents, many of whom lack access to adequate transportation. Notification of these meetings is usually done *via* the Internet, which automatically excludes anyone that lacks access to a computer. Meetings are usually conducted in English and important documents are only available in English, which excludes participation from a large part of the Valley's residents who are limited English speakers. Importantly, decision-making bodies throughout the Valley do not reflect the racial and economic demographics of impacted communities. All of these institutional barriers prevent meaningful community participation, and disconnect the government from the governed. Governmental institutions which simultaneously exclude the majority of Valley residents and are ruled by a minority class thus lack fundamental legitimacy.

Conclusion

The implementation of the community vision described in this report requires a complete and total departure from the Valley's current model of economic development described above; a type of "grey economy," defined in the Green Equity Toolkit as one where,

... profits are routinely permitted to be derived from the pollution of air, water and land; the exploitation and under-compensation of workers; the creation of environmental-related illnesses; the disproportionate dumping of toxins in low-income communities of color; and the creation of wealth stratification and deep poverty.²⁶

As this grey economy continues to exploit disadvantaged communities, the need for a new, sustainable economic model in the San Joaquin Valley becomes crystal clear. Green economic development initiatives being tested in other regions of the state promise change, yet must be adapted to the Valley's unique socio-economic, political, and rural culture to ensure that those efforts succeed. Only a holistic, community-driven "green economy" can succeed in the long term, both socially and environmentally.

P2P Leaders' Vision for a Green Economy in the San Joaquin Valley

Community leaders and residents' overarching vision is simple and straightforward. Leaders want to live in healthy vibrant rural communities, where they can live, work, and play free from the threat of environmental harm. They want to breathe clean air, drink clean water, and have access to economic opportunities that lift their families out of poverty.

From this vision, the community leaders who participated in the Power to the People program crafted three specific core principles which they believe must guide the development of any projects or efforts to create a truly green economy in the Valley.*

1. Promotion Of Environmental Health & Justice

A sustainable and green economy must result in a clean and healthy environment for all people. It must actively work to reduce the disproportionate burden of pollution placed on the Valley's rural, low-income communities and communities of color. Any project or industry purporting to be green must either directly reduce environmental pollution or not exacerbate existing pollution levels in the Valley. Additionally, local, state and national governments must stop the trend of locating polluting facilities or industries in low-income communities of color and accepting regional pollution reductions as a trade-off. Finally, government and private investors must support ventures that remediate existing pollution.

2. Economic Opportunity For All

A green economy must provide economic opportunity for all residents, with priority given to traditionally marginalized groups, such as women, people of color, and people with low incomes. Failure to include traditionally marginalized populations in the green economy threatens the success of

economic development in the Valley. Studies of economic development in regions with weak economies and high levels of social inequity have found that strategies that pursue fairness, inclusion, and broadened opportunity are critical for regional revival of weak economies.²⁷

Compliance with this principle will require a serious investment in the development of Valley's human capital in order to prepare its residents for jobs in the green economy, via training programs for local residents in communities where a green industry seeks to be located. Local policies that promote the hiring of local residents for job opportunities are another example of the types of policies that must be implemented in order to ensure equitable community access to economic development opportunities.

3. Green Jobs Must Promote Equity & Justice

The third and most critical principle of green economic development demands the infusion of justice and equity into each sector of this new economy. As the *Green Equity Toolkit* states, "when policymakers and green firms don't consciously weave equity into a strategy for developing the green economy, green jobs are not guaranteed to be any more equitable or sustainable than jobs in the grey economy."²⁸ Green and sustainable jobs in rural communities must actively contribute to a more sustainable environment, and afford actors in this economy the ability to sustain a good quality of life for themselves and their families.

Green Jobs Defined

Community participants in the Power to the People campaign developed their own definition of green jobs in accordance with their core principles. Given the high levels of unemployment in the Valley, job creation is a key component of the new green economy. However, the ultimate objective of a new green economy is to reverse trends of discriminatory and exploitative economic development in the San Joaquin

* Power to the People refers to the yearlong trainings conducted with community leaders to develop this vision. For more information refer to the Appendix.

Valley. Job creation must be regarded as a means to achieving this end. Therefore, community leaders and residents envision jobs which will actually lead to improved quality of life for disadvantaged communities in the Valley.



As defined by P2P community leaders, sustainable and green jobs are those that:

- » PROTECT & IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH PEOPLE LIVE, WORK, & PLAY

Green jobs are found in industries that either work to reduce environmental pollution or do not exacerbate existing pollution levels. These may be conventional green sectors such as solar and wind energy, modern public transportation systems, recycling, and especially small scale, sustainable organic agriculture. Community leaders also identified an interest in developing employment opportunities in non-conventional green industries that provide an environmental and social benefit such as education, catering focused on healthy organic foods, park maintenance, and other types of social entrepreneurship that capitalize on their existing assets.

- » PROVIDE A LIVING WAGE

A sustainable green economy should provide employees a living wage that allows them to meet their basic needs, including food, clothing, housing and medical care, child care and basic transportation, helping them lift their families out of poverty.

- » RESPECT THE DIGNITY OF WORKERS

Green jobs respect the rights and human dignity of workers including their most basic right to form and join a union with their co-workers to protect their interests. This also includes the provision of basic benefits such as health insurance, vacation, and sick leave.

- » GENERATE OPPORTUNITY FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Overall health and benefits to the community at large must also be taken into consideration when seeking to create green jobs. Local hiring policies must be enacted to ensure economic benefit in the communities in which these industries are located. In the case of jobs that require technical expertise, training and educational opportunities should be made available to develop the capacity of residents to perform those jobs.

- » PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY & INCLUSION FOR PREVIOUSLY MARGINALIZED RESIDENTS

Jobs should be available to all members of the community regardless of their gender, age, or national origin with priority given to traditionally marginalized residents. Passage of comprehensive immigration reform is critical to meeting this goal and ensuring economic mobility for immigrant workers and their families.

- » PROVIDE YEAR-ROUND LONG-TERM EMPLOYMENT & OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT

Given their experience with precarious seasonal jobs in large-scale industrial agriculture, it is important for leaders that sustainable jobs offer year-round employment with long-term advancement opportunities for employees.

- » PROVIDE A SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT FREE OF TOXICS

It would be a contradiction to have a so-called green job that exposes workers to toxics. Green jobs must afford their employees a safe and healthy work environment free of exposure to chemicals that may damage their health.

How the Vision Becomes Reality

Power to the People community leaders have a vision for the creation of a new green economic development model in the Valley, which promotes a clean and healthy environment, equal access to economic opportunity for all residents, and green jobs that promote equity and justice. Community leaders identified three major strategies for attaining this vision:

1. Invest in the human capital of low-income disadvantaged Valley communities;
2. Promote socially responsible green businesses and practices; and
3. Develop comprehensive decision-making practices and meaningful public participation.

For each of these strategies, we recommend specific policy actions to ensure the creation of a sustainable and equitable green economy in the San Joaquin Valley.

Strategy #1: Invest in Human Capital

Only by investing in developing the full human potential of all the Valley's residents will a truly sustainable and green economy flourish in the poverty-ridden rural communities of our state. Investing in the human capital of the impoverished residents of the San Joaquin Valley will yield greater overall opportunities for employment and social entrepreneurship. This is critical in light of historically low educational attainment levels of Valley residents; in California's 20th Congressional District alone, 43% of residents lack a high-school diploma and only 7% of residents are college graduates.²⁹ Investing in the development of Valley residents is pivotal to establishing a sustainable green economy that will thrive in the long-term.

Action #1: Adopt Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Investing in human capital is only possible when all individuals in the community are legally recognized as members of that community, with full rights and responsibilities. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, there are 1.8 million

undocumented Latino immigrants in California's labor force, representing nearly 10% of the state's labor force.³⁰ An estimated 8% of undocumented immigrants in California reside in the San Joaquin Valley.³¹ Undocumented residents face many barriers as they attempt to secure quality jobs, become entrepreneurs, or participate in the mainstream economy. In 2009, undocumented Latino immigrants missed out on approximately \$2.2 billion in wages and salary income due to their legal status alone.³² The limitations that result from undocumented status are not simply limited to wages. Undocumented K-12 students in the Valley face limited options upon graduation because of costly non-resident college tuition and limited employment opportunities, among many other barriers. A change in legal status would improve education access and English language acquisition opportunities for unauthorized students and workers.

“Only by investing in developing the full human potential of all the Valley's residents will a truly sustainable and green economy flourish in the poverty-ridden rural communities of our state.”

Therefore, green economic development in the Valley will depend in large part on comprehensive immigration reform. It is urgent that Congress and the Obama Administration take immediate action; a failure to pass immigration reform will lead to the continual socio-economic exclusion of a significant portion of the Valley's population, and fuel growing inequity in the region which will ultimately undermine the creation of a truly just and green economy. At the state level, the Governor and the Legislature can take action to remove specific barriers facing residents who lack legal immigration status—such as establish a temporary driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants and at a minimum institute

a moratorium on the mandatory 30-day impoundment of vehicles owned by unlicensed drivers. * The latter policy recommendation has strong bipartisan support and emerged as a recommended action in the State Board of Food and Agriculture's Vision 2030 draft report.³³

Action #2: Create Green Vocational Training Programs

Green vocational training and incubator programs play an integral role in the human capital investment strategy to create a socially responsible green economy. Community colleges currently offer various vocational training and basic skills development opportunities, ranging from courses in English and computer literacy to trade apprenticeship programs such as carpentry, nursing, wastewater operation, and many others. It is important that basic skills and trade development

continue to be an affordable and accessible human development opportunity for Valley residents, and particularly for low-income residents and people of color. Valley K-12 schools must adequately prepare students with the basic skills they will need to participate in vocational training programs created as the Valley transitions to a new green economy.

Strategy #2: Promotion of Green and Socially Responsible Entrepreneurship

The transition to a green and sustainable economy in the San Joaquin Valley presents a tremendous opportunity for social innovation and entrepreneurship. Rather than wait for corporations or governments to create green economic development opportunities, low-income communities of color should be encouraged to create those opportunities

Models of Green Economic Development in Action

Evergreen Cooperatives of Cleveland

The Evergreen Cooperatives of Cleveland is an innovative approach to equitable and sustainable economic development working to stabilize and revitalize six low-income neighborhoods of Cleveland, Ohio. Evergreen's comprehensive economic development strategy, based on the Mondragon model, is centered on job creation, wealth building, and sustainability through the establishment of green businesses run as worker-owned cooperatives. Evergreen's employee-owned, for-profit companies are based locally and hire locally. Evergreen creates meaningful green jobs and keeps precious financial resources within Cleveland. Workers earn a living wage and build equity in their firms as owners of the business.
<http://www.evergreencoop.com>

Women's Action to Gain Economic Security (WAGES)

For 15 years, WAGES, has worked with low-income immigrant Latinas in the San Francisco Bay Area to build worker-owned green businesses that create healthy, dignified jobs for low-income women. WAGES helps launch cooperatives where women develop personal and professional skills, become leaders, and gain economic security. As co-op members, women have healthy work, good pay, and a voice and a vote in key decisions – and they distribute business profits equitably. WAGES also provides training and technical assistance to incubate the co-ops and a framework for continued learning and business growth through their Co-op Network.
<http://wagescooperatives.org/>

The Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE)

BALLE's mission is to catalyze, strengthen and connect networks of locally owned independent businesses dedicated to building strong Local Living Economies. A Local Living Economy ensures that economic power resides locally to the greatest extent possible, sustaining vibrant, livable communities and healthy ecosystems in the process. BALLE facilitates the development of community networks of independent businesses, to guide networks through various stages of development, to synthesize and communicate the best ideas and practices, and to build the larger movement for local living economies.
<http://www.livingeconomies.org>

* The mandatory 30-day impoundment of vehicles owned by unlicensed drivers is a punitive practice which extorts poor and working class residents of their hard-earned money, and compromises their ability to feed their families and pay their bills. Impound fees can average about \$30 dollars (or more) per day, meaning that unlicensed drivers can end up paying \$900 or more to recover their vehicles after 30 days. Many unlicensed drivers simply cannot afford to do so and therefore lose their vehicles altogether, resulting in additional hardship.

for themselves by becoming self-employed green business owners. Some residents of low-income rural communities have ideas and skill sets they can use to create their own green businesses. Community leaders identified interest in the development of various businesses, ranging from organic farming cooperatives, catering of healthy organic food, and bike courier services, to name just a few. Community leaders also identified a desire to utilize more equitable business models such as worker-owned cooperatives. Therefore, green economic development in the Valley should include various types of assistance for leaders of these communities who wish to establish socially responsible businesses.

Action #1: Increase Access to Capital and other Resources for Green Entrepreneurs

Many of these potential entrepreneurs face significant barriers in establishing their own green businesses. One of the main barriers is a lack of access to capital. Many traditional banking institutions will simply not lend money to low-income individuals who lack assets or credit history. Thus, availability of non-conventional types of lending such as micro-finance is critical to help low-income people of color establish green businesses. Efforts to make micro-financing opportunities available have had tremendous success in helping individuals transition out of poverty. For instance, the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, which provides financially impoverished residents access to micro-financing to facilitate the establishment of their own business, has helped lift over 65% of their borrowers out of extreme poverty. * Numerous micro-finance initiatives similar to the Grameen model exist in the United States. The Dolores Huerta Foundation is currently piloting a program in the Valley to provide low interest, collateral free small business loans to low income residents in rural communities in Southern Kern County.

In addition to access to capital, many low-income entrepreneurs will also require technical support in order to ensure the success of their businesses. Types of assistance needed will include developing business plans, financial advising, and business management coaching. Business incubator programs are

* Grameen Bank provides financial services to the rural poor of Bangladesh. Those services include loans, saving accounts, pension plans and loan insurance. The overall goal of Grameen Bank is the elimination of poverty. Grameen provides micro-lenders in poor community's access to capital to make micro-loans to women who are working to develop or expand a small business. In many of the poorest regions in the world, micro business creation is the only way for families to escape poverty and build a better future for their children.

Two Models for Organic Farming Options in the San Joaquin Valley

The Agricultural Land Based Training Association (ALBA)

ALBA is a highly successful example of the type of economic development consistent with the vision of the Power to the People campaign. ALBA works to advance economic viability, social equity and ecological land management among limited-resource and aspiring farmers.

ALBA accomplishes this through a holistic approach providing disadvantaged aspiring farmers with education, leadership development, business support and education, and has proven to be successful in changing the lives of people involved with ALBA. Since 1985, 500 families have studied, networked, or developed businesses with the help of ALBA's Rural Development Center. ALBA owns and operates two organic farms with over 27 beginning and limited-resource farmer-tenants. The ALBA program is a model for other "agricultural incubator" projects nationwide.

For more information on ALBA visit: www.albafarmers.org.

The South Central Farmers

The South Central Farmers' Cooperative is a model of a grassroots economic development organization consistent with the vision and values developed by Power to the People leaders. After being displaced in their struggle to save the 14 acre urban farm known as the South Central Farm in Los Angeles—which was bulldozed in 2006—the members formed an organic farming cooperative aimed at providing fresh, healthy grown produce to their community.

Cooperatively owned by its members, the Farm is Certified Organic, using only integrated pest management and biodiversity practices. All produce is grown and harvested on land leased by the cooperative. The farm is located in Bakersfield and Buttonwillow California.

The South Central farmers operate a highly successful Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in which one person or a group can purchase one box or multiple boxes of in-season produce. The CSA largely serves those who normally would not have access to affordable, fresh, and healthy produce. The cooperative believes that all residents are entitled to fresh, healthy food choices.

For more information on the South Central Farmers www.southcentralfarmers.com, (800) 249-5240, csa@southcentralfarmers.com.



another type of resource for potential green entrepreneurs. Most successful incubator programs include intensive trade-specific skill set development and industry-specific business management education. However, in capital and resource intensive enterprises, like farming or energy development, incubator programs must provide access to land and water for skill development. Moreover, upon completion of an incubator program, policymakers should allow expedited mechanisms for accessing capital, land and other necessary resources. There are several successful incubator programs currently available in California, like the Agricultural Land Based Training Association, a highly successful agricultural program. Other potential types of incubator programs that could be created as a component of a new green economy include:

- » Environmentally Sound House Cleaning Cooperatives (i.e. WAGES Model);
- » Distributed Energy Generation Programs (such as solar development and installation);
- » Water Efficiency and Re-Use Programs (such as greywater re-use systems); and
- » Innovative Transit Programs (such as vanpools).

Action #2: Require and Incentivize Changes in the Production and Operation Practices of Existing Businesses

In addition to helping launch new green businesses, the creation of a green economic development model for the San Joaquin Valley requires that existing businesses become more socially and environmentally responsible. There are

various social and environmental production and operation practices that existing businesses should incorporate as they embrace a green economic development model. Examples of **sustainable and just** business policies and practices to adopt include:

- » direct hiring of employees to ensure accountability;*
- » paying adequate wages that allows workers to meet their basic needs;
- » providing affordable healthcare benefits;
- » providing shared ownership opportunities for shared wealth creation (Employment Stock Ownership Programs); and
- » treating workers with dignity, including the right to form a union.

Examples of environmental policies and practices to adopt include:

- » implementing technologies that go beyond Best Available Control Technology and Reasonably Available Control Technology (BACT/RACT)—to achieve necessary pollution reductions needed for the Valley to meet Federal air quality standards—especially for energy production that has significant pollution emissions;**
- » establishing buffer zones and using Integrated Pest Management for application of pesticides in urban and rural operations;

* Farm labor contractors (FLCs) shield growers or landowner from liability by taking responsibility for the recruitment, payroll, management, and working conditions of their workers. According to recent studies, FLCs provide up to 50% of all agricultural labor in California. Growers increased reliance on FLCs is directly related to their desire to avoid legal requirements and liability in regard to immigration, health and safety, paperwork, to avoid unionization or labor disputes. FLC abuses in the fields are well-documented, and include withholding wages from workers, abandoning workers without paying them, paying workers less than the agreed rate, making improper deductions, short-counting or short-weighting units produced, requiring workers to overfill standard units paid by piece rate, charging workers for rental of equipment provided free by growers, keeping bonus or other money due workers, overcharging workers for transportation or collecting for transportation expenses from both employers and workers, and abandoning crews far from home. <http://www.cirsinc.org/Documents/Pub0106.1.pdf>

** BACT and RACT are relative standards set by each Air pollution control district. One of the biggest challenges faced in the San Joaquin Valley is that the regional air district has set the level of BACT/RACT below what is needed to achieve significant reductions needed to bring the Valley into attainment of clean air standards.

- » establishing Renewable Energy goals and standards; and
- » establishing zero waste goals, including reuse of recyclable and compostable materials instead of landfilling.

Public policies that both require and incentivize these practices are critical to attaining this transition.

Strategy #3: Address environmental impacts of economic development & support meaningful public participation”

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), public agencies are required to conduct a review of potential environmental effects of new development

prior to granting approval. The resulting environmental documents can be an important tool in protecting communities from potentially harmful projects. However, these documents often fail to adequately identify existing and potential pollution, as well as the health and social impacts of new development on the community. The law also allows public agencies to approve environmentally harmful projects as long as those impacts are disclosed. This helps explain why there is an over-concentration of polluting facilities in the Valley’s low-income communities and communities of color. In a green economic development model, all of the impacts of potential development or proposed projects must be fully mitigated or avoided prior to making a final decision.

Green Zones for Economic and Environmental Sustainability: A concept created by The California Environmental Justice Alliance

Establishing a green economy in the Valley that is consistent with the vision of grassroots community leaders, will require a significant shift in the way that policymakers currently approach economic development. The California Environmental Justice Alliance, of which CRPE is a member, is launching a new initiative called “Green Zones for Economic and Environmental Sustainability” to create a new holistic framework for achieving change in low-income communities and communities of color. In doing so, it will provide new policy models that are grounded in community participation. The initiative will focus on targeting federal resources to neighborhoods that suffer from concentrated pollution and lack economic opportunities by creating a federal “Green Zones” designation. These areas will be identified using the Environmental Justice Screening Methodology, a cumulative impact screening tool developed by researchers Rachel Morello-Frosch, Jim Sadd and Manuel Pastor. As a result, communities will be prioritized for a range of federal benefits. The initiative will utilize community visioning and planning processes to identify priority benefits in each area. The initiative will focus on creating benefits in three areas:

1. Reducing existing environmental pollution and improving land-use decisions by drawing regulatory focus to those communities that have long shouldered the costs of unsustainable economic activity and land-use planning, and enable the reduction of pollution in overburdened communities.
2. Investing in sustainable, community-based development by proactively connecting public and private resources

to the designated neighborhoods, which will be able to access increased public funding and stimulate private investment in green economic development, such as alternative-energy and energy-efficiency projects.

3. Increasing community capacity and power by grounding each Green Zone in an authentic community-based planning and visioning process and utilizing participatory decision-making structures to ensure community voices guide regulatory action and identify needed benefits.

CEJA’s mission is to strengthen the progressive environmental justice movement in California by building on the local organizing efforts and advocacy successes of our member organizations to achieve state policy change. CEJA’s members are the Asian Pacific Environmental Network, the Center on Community Action and Environmental Justice, the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment, Communities for a Better Environment, the Environmental Health Coalition, and People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights.

The Green Zones initiative is a proactive, comprehensive approach to local change that is grounded in community visions for healthy, sustainable neighborhoods.

For more information check out the full report: “Green Zones for Economic and Environmental Sustainability: A Concept Paper from the California Environmental Justice Alliance” at http://caleja.org/documents/2010_0000_green_zones.pdf

Action #1: Conduct a comprehensive analysis to identify environmentally over-burdened communities and analyze potential impacts of proposed new development and projects in the San Joaquin Valley.

Decision-makers should prevent the continued siting of polluting facilities in overburdened, low-income communities and remediate pollution in communities already overburdened by pollution. An analysis should identify income levels, racial demographics, health disparities, and existing pollution burdens. Special attention should be paid to dominant pollution sources, such as pesticide concentrations, mega-dairies, oil production and refining, waste disposal and composting facilities, incinerators, bio-mass facilities and power plants. The Valley's decision-makers should incorporate this analysis in their decisions to approve proposed new projects, to revise permits on existing facilities, as well as to make appropriate zoning designations to prevent overburdening communities in the future.

Properly Identify Environmentally Overburdened Communities

In order to have a comprehensive analysis of the impacts of new developments or projects, decision-makers must first identify overburdened communities. Various screening tools have emerged to identify overburdened and vulnerable communities. Researchers Manuel Pastor, Rachel Morello-Frosch and Jim Saad developed an Environmental Justice Screening Method specific to air pollution for the California Air Resources

Board. This tool takes into account measures of hazard proximity and sensitive land uses, cumulative impacts from potential air pollution exposures and estimated cancer and respiratory risks, and indicators of social vulnerability, all at the census tract level, to calculate relative scores for high priority areas.³⁴ The San Joaquin Valley Cumulative Health Impacts Project (SJVCHIP), a coalition of environmental justice and health advocates and researchers affiliated with the University of California, Davis, is currently working to develop a screening tool to identify and map out overburdened environmental justice communities in the San Joaquin Valley.³⁵ SJVCHIP has worked with advocates to ensure environmental hazards specific to the Valley such as pesticides and pollution from mega-dairies are included in their screen. Both of these tools, as well as other similar methodologies, can prove useful as starting points for developing comprehensive decision-making analyses. This information should be used by the regulatory agencies when permitting potentially polluting facilities.

Action #2: Foster Meaningful Public Participation in a New Green Economic Model

Meaningful public participation is essential to the establishment of sustainable communities and a green economy; yet residents of environmentally overburdened communities are often excluded from important decisions. Residents from disadvantaged communities face many barriers which complicate their ability to participate in civic life in a meaningful way, and thus are not able to participate in the development

The Trouble with Bio-Mass in the San Joaquin Valley

Biomass refers to organic waste derived from both agricultural and urban areas. Orchard removal, demolition and construction debris, and green waste are the most common sources of biomass. This material can be incinerated in power plants to produce electricity, but these incinerators emit a lot of air pollution.

Using biomass for fuel to make energy is a growing industry in the Central Valley. Electricity from biomass incinerators qualifies as renewable energy. Since the fuel capacity of current and proposed plants is far greater than the biomass

available in the Central Valley, hundreds of thousands of tons of biomass are being trucked to the Valley from urban areas. This is contributing to the Valley's already extensive air pollution problem.

There are better options than incineration for much of this biomass. Timber waste from urban areas should be recycled into new timber products. Green waste from urban areas should be composted or chipped for landscaping, gardening and urban forestation. Agricultural biomass should be returned to the soil whenever possible. This can

often be done directly by leaving the biomass in the field or the material can be composted and returned to the soil.

These alternatives to the current practice of incineration are more sustainable for the long term energy needs of our planet. They promote healthier soil which grows healthier food and provide less dependence on fossil fuel for fertilizer. There are other cleaner, less destructive ways to provide renewable energy by using abundant power sources such as wind, wave, and solar.

of economic policies and actions. Increasing the self-determination and power of disadvantaged communities to be actively involved in decisions impacting their community is a central component of the vision created by Community leaders. This can be accomplished by:

- » **Adopting policies that encourage greater transparency and community participation in civic life**
 - » providing adequate notification to affected residents regarding potential harmful land-use projects;
 - » making professional translation services available at public hearings;
 - » ensuring that meetings related to projects and/or policies which will impact overburdened communities are held at accessible locations and times in close proximity to the affected community; and
 - » providing residents with sufficient reader-friendly information, translated into Spanish, in a timely manner.

- » **Increasing disadvantaged community representation in decision making bodies in the Valley**
 - » Reserving an equitable and sufficient number of appointments for representatives of disadvantaged communities to existing non-elected decision-making bodies;
 - » Creating citizen committees that have real authority to review proposed project plans and approve or deny permits for new facilities and development;
 - » Enacting local and regional campaign finance reform, including public financing, so that leaders from disadvantaged communities can be viable candidates for elected office; and
 - » Ensuring that processes to redistrict the political boundaries are conducted in an equitable manner that include representation of leaders from disadvantaged communities.

The Unique Role of Government in Advancing Green Economic Development

State and local governments both within and outside of the Valley will play an essential role in helping to promote a sustainable green economy in the Valley. First, it is important for state and local governments to incorporate local



sustainability policies that do not have unintended adverse affects or redirected impacts on San Joaquin Valley communities. For example, a waste diversion policy that has no geographic limit, like one from Los Angeles or the San Francisco Bay Area, continues to result in more waste disposal in the San Joaquin Valley. Landfill diversion policies in other regions will indirectly lead to the expansion of bio-mass generation facilities in the Valley who are allowed to accept and incinerate waste from outside the region, but are not required to use localized stock, such as agricultural waste. Bio-mass facilities, generating a supposed renewable energy source, will therefore be able to burn all urban waste largely from outside the Valley, including plastics that produce toxic emissions. Therefore waste reduction policies must go beyond mere landfill diversion and focus on the elimination of waste. For instance, San Francisco's Zero Waste Policy, which aims to divert 75 percent of the City's waste away from landfills by 2010 and zero waste by 2020, will not only benefit the local waste disposal fees of San Franciscans but moreover, lessen the burden of imported waste to be burned in the Valley.*

Second, state and local governments should enact policies that both incentivize and require polluting industries to adopt policies that protect communities from further environmental harm, such as zero waste emissions targets. Regulatory agencies will need to mandate targets for nutrient reductions from fertilizer and manure application, toxic

* SF Environment, the Commission on the Environment, the Board of Supervisors, and the mayor have all helped create ordinances and resolutions to address the problem of solid waste, including setting the goals of 75 percent landfill diversion by 2010 and zero waste by 2020, various policy initiatives to ensure that government leads by example, and efforts to encourage the private sector to move toward zero waste. For details, visit http://www.sfenvironment.org/our_programs/program_info.html?si=3#LegislationInitiatives

pesticide reductions, greenhouse gas reductions, and fine particulate matter and ozone precursor reductions. History has shown that a change in practice cannot solely be incentivized, but rather mandated. For instance, basic health and safety protections for farmworkers, like restrooms and clean and cool drinking water in the fields were a result of legal mandates fought for by farmworker advocates.³⁶ Incentivizing a transition away from an established industry practice that is degrading the environment only truly goes to scale when the harmful practice has been outlawed and therefore a need to transition away from such practice is inevitable.

Third, state and local governments must prioritize investments in environmentally overburdened communities that remediate the effects of long-term exposure to pollution and infrastructure deficits resulting from years of neglect. Such investments must promote environmental sustainability and community health, as well as green economic development. Examples include energy projects that meet local community energy needs via renewable energy sources, such as solar power plants.

“A truly green and sustainable economy cannot be built upon the fault lines of poverty, injustice and inequality.”

Fourth, decision-makers should work with residents of overburdened communities to identify and prioritize their community development and infrastructure needs. Specific priority issues identified by community leaders include roads, sidewalks, street lighting, and clean, affordable drinking water. Environmentally overburdened communities should also have priority in receiving funding allocations from Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), federal stimulus funding, local tax revenues and other public funding sources. Disadvantaged communities in the Valley—particularly unincorporated communities—often times do not receive CDBG dollars and other funds because they lack direct representation. Unfortunately, county supervisors and other policymakers systematically neglect these communities

in the overall allocation of public resources, frequently leaving them out of local planning processes where funding decisions are made. This includes CDBG funds, one of the few funding sources available for infrastructure improvements in low-income communities.*

Conclusion

The vision laid out in this document calls upon policymakers to work with community leaders to make significant investments in the Valley’s most valuable resource, its people. These investments include supporting comprehensive immigration reform which will allow a significant portion of the Valley’s population to participate freely in the new economy and investment in job training and educational programs to provide residents with green job skills. This new model also calls for a proactive strategy to eradicate poverty by facilitating access to capital and providing support for green entrepreneurship. Existing industries and business are a key part of the solution and policies should be developed that require and incentivize their participation in the creation of a new green economy. Lastly, the development of comprehensive decision-making processes that provide avenues for meaningful participation will ensure the establishment of an equitable economy.

A truly green and sustainable economy cannot be built upon the fault lines of poverty, injustice and inequality. The strategies and policy recommendations outlined in this report lay the foundation for a more equitable, environmentally sustainable, and just economy. It is our hope that this report will serve as a catalyst for a longer conversation between policymakers and community leaders about how we can all work together to make this vision a reality.

* In 2010 CRPE and several allied organizations co-sponsored the Community Equity Investment Act (SB 194 Florez), state legislation that would have reformed the CDBG selection process in California to ensure better representation of disadvantaged unincorporated and fringe communities. It would have directed counties and cities to prioritize the needs of residents in these communities that fall within their jurisdiction and have no local governing board or have less than 2,000 residents, when determining how to distribute CDBG funds. The proposed legislation passed both houses of the State Legislature but was unfortunately vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger in September 2010. For details, please visit: <http://www.policylink.org/atf/cf/%7B97c6d565-bb43-406d-a6d5-eca3bbf35af0%7D/SB%20194%20FACT%20SHEET%20090810.PDF>

Appendix:

About the Power to the People Campaign

The Power to the People Campaign was conceived as part of CRPE's larger Land Use Project, which works to ensure that rural low-income communities and communities of color benefit from healthy, equitable land use decisions, with an emphasis not only on changing the decisions, but how and by whom decisions are made. The Power to the People Campaign (P2P) combined CRPE's traditional approach of fighting polluting projects such as ethanol plants and fossil fuel power plants with a new proactive approach of training communities to define for themselves their vision for a healthy sustainable community. In order for rural low-income communities and communities of color to enter the discussions around the new green economy and sustainable land use planning, they first needed to fully understand the issues. Therefore, CRPE prepared a curriculum that would increase community leaders' understanding of the various facets of the emerging green economy. From this curriculum we designed a series of twelve trainings, attended by residents of various Fresno, Kern, and Tulare County communities with whom we work. During the trainings, Community leaders developed the vision, principles, and policies presented in this report.

The Communities

Leaders participating in this process represented more than eighteen communities throughout Fresno, Tulare, and Kern counties*. There were two types of communities represented: rural cities, such as Wasco and Arvin, and unincorporated communities, such as Allensworth and Alpaugh. Both types of communities face distinct challenges. Many of the unincorporated communities are struggling to address basic infrastructure deficits such as lack of sidewalks, street lights, and clean drinking water. Rural city residents, on the other hand, find themselves fighting urban sprawl, construction of freeways through their communities, and polluting industries that want to relocate to their neighborhoods.

* Allensworth, Alpaugh, Arvin, Bakersfield, Delano, Ducor, Exeter, Fresno, Lamont, Lindsay, McFarland, Pixley, Plainview, Shafter, Strathmore, Tooleville, Visalia, Wasco.

Yet, these communities share a common story influenced by the dominance of large-scale industrial agriculture in the region. Populations are comprised of a majority of people of color, most of whom are Latino immigrants. Many are employed as farm-workers. Rural cities and unincorporated communities in the region both face severe levels of unemployment and poverty. In 2006 Tulare and Kern Counties, together with Fresno, Kings, Merced and Madera Counties had the highest percentage of residents living below the poverty line in California.**



Leaders for this campaign were recruited by a combination of grassroots tactics employed by CRPE's Community Organizing Department. Tactics ranged from an intense house-meeting campaign in the City of Wasco, aimed at starting a discussion with residents about the green economy; to targeted outreach to leaders working with CRPE on other campaigns, primarily leaders from CRPE's Forgotten Voices campaign. The Forgotten Voices campaign works with residents of unincorporated communities in Tulare County to influence the update of the County's General Plan in order to reverse basic infrastructure deficits caused by years of neglect.

** Poverty rates in six Valley counties highest in state, U.S. The Fresno Bee August 29, 2007

The Trainings

CRPE held a series of twelve trainings on a regular basis in the City of Wasco (Kern County), throughout 2009 and into early 2010. Many of the leaders with whom CRPE works face economic, linguistic, and social barriers to civic participation; therefore, our training program was structured to address many of these issues in order to facilitate the meaningful participation from our leaders. Our trainings were scheduled on the third Saturday of each month from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm to maximize the number of participants able to attend. We selected Saturday so as not to interfere with the majority of our leaders work schedules during the week; however, for many of our leaders who are farm-workers, Saturday is a regular work day. As trainings were held once a month some community leaders were able to ask for that day off in order to attend.

In addition to selecting a day that would accommodate our leaders, CRPE also provided free, onsite childcare at all the trainings. Many of our leaders are parents of young children who cannot afford to pay a babysitter to watch their children so they can attend these types of meetings. Under the creative leadership of CRPE's administrative staff in Delano, what began as childcare evolved into a parallel environmental education program to follow, while their parents attended their own training. Each of the youth trainings concluded with a presentation by the youth of what they had learned.

Language is also a huge barrier to many of CRPE's leaders who are monolingual Spanish speakers. Thus, all trainings were bilingual to accommodate CRPE's monolingual Spanish as well as monolingual English speakers. Our partner organization Fresno Metro Ministry provided us with translation equipment that allowed us to provide simultaneous translation from Spanish to English and English to Spanish. By removing numerous barriers that normally prevent traditionally marginalized populations from civic engagement, our trainings had repeat attendance of both parents and youth. More than 165 leaders from over eighteen communities participated in at least one of our Power to the People trainings, with over 50% of leaders attending more than one of the trainings.

The trainings themselves were led by CRPE staff members and partners from ally organizations. A range of topics were covered at the trainings, including renewable energy, defining green jobs, organic agriculture, land-use issues, and many others. Trainings also included trips to communities

and groups who are working to build a sustainable green economy in California. Additionally, Power to the People leaders practiced their advocacy skills. In November 2009, Community leaders attended hearings convened by the Kern County Agricultural Commissioner, to provide testimony in support of a measure to prevent the application of restricted pesticides within a quarter-mile of schools in the county. In December 2009, a delegation of community leaders attended the San Joaquin Valley Regional Green Jobs Summit, with one of our leaders presenting about the P2P campaign to a crowd of over 200 people.

But it was not all work. In addition to information, P2P trainings also provided our leaders with opportunities to develop friendships with other community leaders. Each of the trainings concluded with all the participants, leaders and trainers, singing songs from the social justice movement and sharing a meal prepared by community members.

In addition to education and community-building, P2P trainings also focused on leadership development as a central theme throughout. An unforeseen, but exciting, result of the Power to the People trainings was the formation of the Committee of Residents Organized at the Service of a Healthy Environment (ROSAS). Community leaders from the City of Wasco joined to establish ROSAS in order to pursue their vision of establishing an environmentally and economically sound economy in their community. Building from their participation in the P2P trainings, members of Comité ROSAS are currently working with CRPE to raise awareness around risks related to pesticide exposure and mega-dairy pollution, as well as identifying a potential pilot project consistent with CRPE and the community's articulated vision and goals.

Next Steps of P2P Campaign

The next phase of this campaign will be to make this vision a reality by **supporting community leaders in the development of pilot projects that will put this vision into action.** Grassroots EJ leaders should not be left having to wait for the green economy to come to them. Leaders have the social assets, leadership and willingness to develop their own projects which fall within their vision of what is green. CRPE is committed to working with community leaders towards the development of these pilot projects that allow them to become active participants in a new green economy.

Community leaders were inspired by our visit to the ALBA farm in Salinas where they met and spoke with ALBA farmers who were once farm-workers, and are now running their own organic farming businesses. Therefore, the first pilot project being explored is the establishment of a small-scale organic farm. CRPE is currently working with members of the Comité ROSAS to develop this pilot project, to be consistent with the principles and values stated in the community

vision presented earlier in this document. This project seeks to capitalize on the extensive farming expertise of our leaders who are predominantly farm-workers, while also helping these leaders obtain economic independence. Community leaders see this project as a means to achieve their dreams for a better economic future for their children and families, as part of a larger green economy which promotes the health and well being of all.

Power to the People Trainings

DATE	TOPIC	TRAININGS
February 2009	Power to People Training Kick Off!	CRPE Staff
March 2009	Renewable Energy	Rafael Aguilera, Verde Group Mark Stout, Clean Tech America
April 2009	Defining Green Jobs & Leadership	CRPE Staff
May 2009	Organic Agriculture	Brett Melone, Agriculture Land Based Training Association (Alba)
June 2009	Land Use & the Green Economy	Genoveva Islas-Hooker, Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program
July 2009	Field Trip to Salinas for Tour of Alba Farm	Brett Melone, Agriculture Land Based Training Association (Alba)
September 2009	Not So Green Energy & Developing Vision	Tom Frantz, Association Of Irrigated Residents CRPE Staff
October 2009	Different Models of Organic Farming	Shereen D'souza, California Food & Justice Coalition Tezozonoc, South Central Farms
November 2009	Advocacy in Action	
December 2009	Regional Green Jobs Summit Field Trip to South Central Farmers Farm	San Joaquin Valley Green Jobs Coalition South Central Farmers
March 2010	Micro-lending & Next Steps	Brock Seraphin, Dolores Huerta Foundation CRPE Staff

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