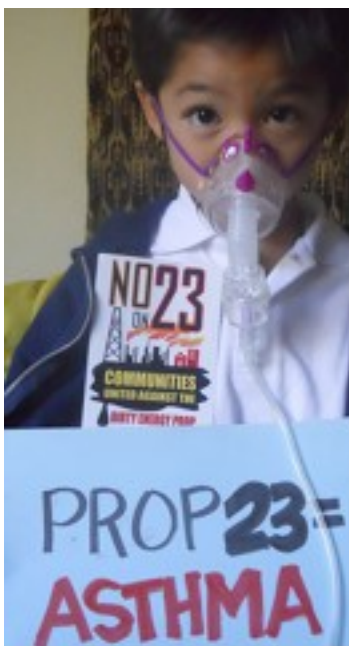


APRIL 2011

A PERFECT STORM: Lessons from the Defeat of Proposition 23

DRAFT

White Paper Prepared for FNTG
By Catherine Lerza



*Photo courtesy of Communities United Against the Dirty Energy Prop
<http://communitiesagainstprop23.com/>*

**Funders Network on Transforming the Global Economy (FNTG)
WHITE PAPER**

This white paper was written by Catherine Lerza for the Funders Network for Transforming the Global Economy (FNTG). It is a work in progress and this version is a draft. We welcome your comments and thoughts as we complete it.

We want to thank the following individuals for their help in preparing this document:

Corey Brown, Resources Law Group
Vanessa Daniel, Groundswell Fund
Bill Gallegos, Communities for a Better Environment
Becky Glass, Labor Network of Sustainability
Lisa Hoyos, UC Labor Center/CA Apollo Alliance
Ian Kim, Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
Roger Kim, Asian Pacific Environmental Network
Michelle Mascarenhas-Swan, Movement Generation
Andy Wong, PowerPac

Mark Randazzo, FNTG
Melissa Cariño, FNTG

Please contact Catherine Lerza at cathylorza@gmail.com if you'd like to discuss this draft.

**Steering
Committee
Co-Chairs****Nikhil Aziz**
Executive Director
Grassroots
International**Sarah Christiansen**
Program Officer
Solidago Foundation**Steering
Committee
Members****Alta Starr**
Program Officer
Ford Foundation**Imad Sabi**
Program Director
Oxfam NOVIB**Jeff Furman**
Trustee
Ben & Jerry's
Foundation**Laura Livoti**
Senior Program
Officer
French American
Charitable Trust**Millie Buchanan**
Program Officer
Jessie Smith Noyes
Foundation**Peter Riggs**
Program Officer
Ford Foundation**Tom Kruse**
Program Officer
Rockefeller Brothers
Fund**STAFF**
Mark Randazzo
Coordinator
415-577-1177
mark@fntg.org**Melissa Cariño**
Program Associate
617-233-3095
melissa@fntg.org*Introductory Note*

Increasing investment in fossil-fuel infrastructure resistance struggles through grassroots organizing and movement building has been an important element in FNTG's work, part of a broader effort by others within philanthropy to ensure that equity and social justice ("differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities" in UNFCCC terms) remains central to the climate debate.

In 2006, California's Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32) was signed into law. Four years later a measure to suspend implementation of AB 32, Proposition 23, was put on the state ballot. In September 2010, Solidago Foundation's Sarah Christiansen led an FNTG funder call entitled "*How grassroots organizing can help save climate legislation - Starting with beating back attacks on California's historic global warming law.*" on statewide initiatives to reach voters of color and low-income voters in a separate-and-coordinated effort with the mainline campaign against Prop 23.

As most funders concerned with climate know, Prop 23 was soundly defeated. In the end, over 61% of California voters rejected this pernicious effort to repeal AB 32.

This case study, developed with great insight and understanding of the issues and political dynamics by Cathrine Lerza, examines a less well-known part of the Prop 23 story: The role in its defeat played by the grassroots organizing sector made up of community based organizations, their networks and their NGO allies, rooted in communities of color and experienced in voter mobilization and electoral campaigns.

In documenting the work done by the grassroots sector in helping bring about a crucial win among a series of larger defeats on the national and international climate front, this paper can provide important insights into the changing nature of climate politics in the US. It can also serve as a guide for rethinking what climate funding must encompass to be successful in the years and decades to come.

As Cathy notes in the course of her report, the role of mainstream environmental groups will be different than in the past, and funding for organizations led by and rooted in communities of color will need to become much more central to the strategy and mission of foundations concerned about climate change. This funding, she points out, will have to be ongoing rather than episodic, support core infrastructure (including coordination, research, communications and leadership development), and help deepen and build on the already strong commitment of people of color to an environmental agenda.

We hope this document contributes to the process of "rethinking" what climate funding needs to look like in the face of a rapidly changing world. We look forward to ongoing dialogue around these issues with philanthropic colleagues, and with activists doing the hard work day to day.

~ Mark Randazzo, FNTG Coordinator

The Funders Network on Transforming the Global Economy is an alliance of domestic and international grantmakers who recognize the global and systemic nature of our social, economic and ecological challenges. FNTG provides a space for strategic collaboration across issues and diverse funding strategies, empowering funders to more effectively support the transformation of the global economy into one that fosters a just, responsible and sustainable world.

INTRODUCTION

*"It's hard to believe
They make it hard to breathe
They're tryin to make a profit
Offa you and offa me"*

--- **No on 23 hip hop anthem**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QCR4QF7w7Aw>

2010 was not a good year for climate protection. Federal climate legislation died the death of a thousand cuts in the Senate; the Obama Administration, with the exception of EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, failed to fight for the strong program it had promised; and, in November, scores of climate champions in the Congress, Governors' mansions, and state legislatures lost their seats to climate deniers.

Amidst all of this one bright light shone: the resounding defeat of California's Proposition 23, an oil company funded attempt to gut the nation's toughest climate protection law. By a nearly two to one margin, Californians said no to Prop 23, despite high unemployment rates and a sluggish economy. And bucking the national trends, they elected a stable of climate champions to top-of-the-ticket state offices and the US Congress.

The Prop 23 victory has been called a perfect storm. But this perfect storm was not a naturally occurring one. It was the result of some important rainmakers, cloud seeders and visionaries who seized the moment and recognized that the time had come for environmental politics in California to change. For the first time, people of color led a statewide environmental campaign on their own terms, and as partners with, not subordinates to, mainstream environmental organizations. To mix metaphors: everyone who needed to be at the table was there. The seating arrangements were not always easy to work out, but everyone stayed for the whole meal –and it was delicious.

So what happened in California? Why were Californians able to buck the national trends and reaffirm the state's hard won climate leadership? What can we learn from this victory and how can we build on it, not only in California, but also around the nation and globally? This White Paper will provide background about Prop 23; describe the no on Prop 23 campaign; and identify key lessons learned and paths forward. Its focus is the role communities of color and people of color-led organizations played in this historic win.

This version of the White Paper is a working draft and we welcome your comments and thoughts.

HISTORY

What was Proposition 23 and why did it matter?

Prop 23 would have suspended the comprehensive greenhouse gas emissions reduction program put in place by AB 32, California's Global Warming Solutions Act until the state's official unemployment rate fell to 5.5 percent or less for four quarters in a row. (Note: Unemployment in CA was about 12 percent in 2010 and, since 1976, has fallen below six percent only during economic booms, and rarely for more than four quarters in a row.) While the measure's "official" goal was to protect jobs and the economy, its real objective was the de facto repeal of AB 32 – and the consequent derailing of climate policy across the nation.

Drafted in 2009 by two Right Wing activists from San Diego, the initiative's original all-volunteer signature gathering drive was spluttering when two Texas-based oil companies, Tesoro and Valero Energy Resources, got wind of the proposal. They hijacked the proposal and launched their own massive \$2 million paid signature-gathering campaign. In May of last year, the measure qualified for the November 2010 ballot as Proposition 23.

Initially calling itself the California Jobs Initiative, the Prop 23 campaign hit economic issues hard, claiming that AB 32, and indeed the state's long history of incentives for clean energy and energy efficiency, had destroyed California's economy and cost thousands of jobs. Tesoro and Valero were the yes campaign's main bankrollers, but were joined by other interests including the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association. At the time Prop 23 got on the ballot, the yes campaign predicted it was planning to raise \$80 -100 million, the largest expenditure for a state ballot measure in the history of the U.S.

Forces align to fight Prop 23

While going head-to-head with a \$100 million campaign was a daunting prospect, the environmental and environmental justice communities and their allies in business and labor took action quickly to do just that. **The no on 23 efforts encompassed two major coalitions – Stop Dirty Energy and Communities United Against the Dirty Energy Proposition – working in partnership. Together, they represented a long overdue coming together of environmental, economic justice and racial justice leadership in California and the emergence of a people of color environmental majority with political clout.**

With support from investment banker and progressive political donor Tom Steyer, the mainstream environmental community organized **Stop Dirty Energy**, which scored a coup when it signed former Secretary of State and CEO of Bechtel Corp. Republican George Schultz on as its co-chair with Tom Steyer. The coalition ultimately encompassed several hundred organizations; in addition to virtually every environmental and environmental justice and clean energy organization in the state, it included a huge array of businesses; organized labor; Kaiser Permanente and other health care providers; public health organizations, including the American Lung Association; faith communities; local governments; and a diverse array of elected officials. www.stopdirtyenergy.com

Environmental justice and community groups coalesce to oppose Prop 23—on their own terms

As the mainstream environmental campaign organized with strong environmental justice support, **environmental and social justice leaders made an important decision to create a separate coalition --not just to defeat Prop 23, but to build long-term a shared vision of prosperity and environmental quality and a progressive, environmental electorate that looks like California.** The Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, later joined by the California

Environmental Justice Alliance, the Greenlining Institute, Asian Pacific Environmental Network, and PowerPAC, formed **Communities United Against the Dirty Energy Proposition** (Communities United), a coalition of 120+ environmental, social and economic justice organizations from across the state. Most of Communities United's members were also members of Stop Dirty Energy and the Ella Baker Center had a seat on Stop Dirty Energy's executive committee. While remaining independent, the two coalitions crafted a working relationship rooted in shared values and messages, but with an understanding that each would develop its own strategies and implement them.

* * *

It is worth noting here that environmental justice organizations in California, through the Environmental Justice Advisory Committee to the implementation of AB 32 (an official committee established in the law itself) had vigorously opposed cap-and-trade as the law's carbon regulation mechanism. In fact, after the California Air Resources Board (CARB, the entity charged with developing and overseeing AB 32's implementation plan) approved cap and trade, EJ groups filed suit against the state, claiming it had failed to properly consider alternatives to cap and trade. On March 17, 2011, a San Francisco Superior Court judge ruled that CARB had violated CA's Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because its exploration of alternatives to cap and trade was inadequate.

For EJ leaders and community members, cap and trade allows the worst polluters to continue or increase their pollution by buying "reductions." These polluters are disproportionately located in the low income communities of color that already bear the largest burden of air toxins and other environmental problems. All of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit had been members of the Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (EJAC) FOR AB 32 and were motivated to sue because of CARB's rejection of nearly all of EJAC's recommendations. The lawsuit is about making AB 32 stronger. The judge's ruling has effectively put AB 32 on hold, and EJ leaders are committed to pushing for a new carbon reduction mechanism that will result in cleaner air and healthier communities for all Californians. Their rejection of cap and trade, however, was not a rejection of AB 32 and climate solutions or a desire to undercut environmental policies. In fact, EJ organizations and leaders immediately took action to oppose Prop 23 immediately and as vehemently as their mainstream environmental colleagues.

* * *

<http://communitiesagainstprop23.com/>

The campaign unfolds

A July 2010 statewide Field Poll indicated that 48 percent of likely voters opposed Prop 23 and 36 percent supported it, with the remaining 14 percent undecided. The undecided, who tend to be political independents, quickly became the focus of the campaign. In California, 35 percent of those independents are people of color, a fact that gave Communities United the indisputable political gravitas and leverage, which underpinned its collaboration with Stop Dirty Energy. This polling data, combined with the scale and diversity of the forces and communities coming together, convinced leaders of both coalitions that the “no” campaign did not need to match the “yes” campaign dollar for dollar. They set \$25-30 million in c4 funding and \$2-6 million in c3 dollars as their goal.

To insure that the California labor movement, many of whose members had supported AB 32 and the green jobs agenda, was not swayed by Prop 23’s economic rationale, the University of California Labor Center, the Labor Network for Sustainability, the Apollo Alliance, the Blue Green Alliance and key labor leaders took action early. They helped produce educational materials for unions and initiated scores of conversations with local and state leaders and rank and file members across the state. By getting out in front early and developing materials that highlighted AB 32’s role as an economic and green job catalyst, organized labor became a key element of the no on 23 efforts. The 2.1 million member CA Federation of Labor joined the Stop Dirty Energy coalition and provided voter education, mobilization and turn out support to the campaign.

Finally, thanks to Attorney General (and gubernatorial candidate) Jerry Brown, Proposition 23 (“The California Jobs Initiative”) was renamed, accurately, “An Initiative to Suspend Clean Energy and Air Pollution Standards.” Despite fierce objections from Prop 23 backers, this language is what appeared on the ballot and in all official voter education materials. Candidates’ stances on climate, as demonstrated by positions on Prop 23, became a litmus test and the ballot language helped to reinforce support for Prop 23 as a negative, backward and damaging vision for California’s future. This enabled the no forces to get in front of messaging and framing immediately without playing defense.

Separate campaigns working in partnership

While working collaboratively, Stop Dirty Energy and Communities United remained separate entities. It’s worth exploring why.

To be candid, the history between California’s mainstream environmentalists and environmental justice organizations is not a happy one. In an effort to look ahead, this paper will not dwell on the past except to note that the memory of the stinging defeat of 2006’s Proposition 87, which would have placed a tax on oil company profits to fund renewable energy research and development, was strong and painful in 2010. Well funded (to the tune of \$40 million) by two progressive donors, the Prop 87 campaign did not engage communities of color, labor or low-income communities. As a result, the no campaign, funded by Chevron and other oil companies, was able to immediately and effectively tag the measure as a tax on the poor. Thanks to a relentless, well targeted “No on 87” paid media campaign and the lack of a

“yes on 87” ground game or media in those same targeted communities, Prop 87 was defeated by a nine point margin. That defeat was very much on the minds of both mainstream environmentalists and environmental justice leaders as they jumped into action on Prop 23.

Determined not to let corporate interests target and manipulate low income and communities of color again, EJ organizations took the offensive in 2010 to oppose Prop 23 and did not wait to be invited or engaged by mainstream groups. They knew that communities of color and low income communities would be the targets for the yes campaign’s paid media and that the campaign would paint AB 32 as a job and economy killer. They knew it was imperative that people of color and low-income community organizations reached their communities first with different messages. They also knew that they, not the mainstream groups, understood the right messages, messengers and media vehicles for their communities. In creating Communities United, EJ groups and their allies were able to retain full control over resources, strategies and messaging and to assert leadership in a manner not be possible had they been subsumed as a component of the Stop Dirty Energy Campaign, a possibility that was discussed at length, but ultimately rejected.

In addition, the leaders of Communities United recognized that while voters of color in California consistently express more support for environmental protections (including greenhouse gas emissions reductions) than do white voters, the perception is that people of color do not “understand” or prioritize environmental issues and that the “real” environmental constituency is white. The creation of Communities United was a clear statement that people of color have – and will act on – strong environmental values, and are more likely to do so when organizations and individuals from those communities are visible leaders and when messages and campaign strategies are crafted and implemented by those leaders.

As a result of regular and consistent communications, the two coalitions were able to cooperate and reinforce one another – and avoid duplication and contradictions. No where was this more important than in the identification of the three central “No on 23” messages:

- Californians don’t want outside interests, especially dirty Texas oil companies, dictating what our future will look like. California’s future is a green, sustainable one and we want to keep it that way.
- The clean energy economy is the biggest jobs and economy driver in California, and is made possible by AB 32 and related green policies and programs. Don’t destroy what is working for all Californians.



*Photo courtesy of Communities United
Against the Dirty Energy Prop*

- By rolling back AB 32, Prop 23 would result in more air pollution and pollution related illnesses and public health problems, and would rollback years of work to improve public health in California.

While the first message was at the core of most of Stop Dirty Energy's materials (and echoed repeatedly by campaign co-chair George Schultz), the health and jobs messages lead in communities of color and were central to Communities United's media and organizing campaigns.

What happened on the ground

The Democratic Party and almost all Democratic candidates officially opposed prop 23. Jerry Brown and Barbara Boxer made their strong opposition to the measure a centerpiece of their campaigns. (Republican Senate candidate Carly Fiorina strongly supported Prop 23, but gubernatorial candidate Meg Whitman ultimately backpeddled away from the measure). Many national environmental organizations, including the League of Conservation Voters and its CA affiliate, invested money and other resources into the no campaign as well. As already noted, the California Federation of Labor officially opposed Prop 23, and some of its member unions reached out to their members and their families through voter education materials and voter mobilization efforts. An extensive paid media campaign, funded primarily by the c4 Stop Dirty Energy, included TV, radio and mailers began in late August. This media campaign was accompanied by c3 voter engagement efforts in targeted communities and aimed at independent voters and Latinos.

Communities United organized and implemented an impressive and large scale voter engagement program (funded by its own fundraising, by Stop Dirty Energy and by the CA League of Conservation Voters) which included:

- One-on-one conversations at the door or on the phone (in English, Spanish and Chinese) with 250,000 households in the 10 counties, which are home to 75 percent of CA's voters of color. Communities United partnered with existing organizations (Mobilize the Immigrant Vote, California Alliance, CA Environmental Justice Alliance and PowerPAC) for this part of the program, insuring that these organizations will continue to see themselves as environmental leaders.
- 280,000 pieces of direct mail (also in English, Spanish and Chinese) to targeted likely voters of color in those same 10 counties.
- A successful *UV-MC* caravan to six college campuses across the state, which featured popular hip hop artists and attracted thousands of young people to the cause. A hip hop no on 23 anthem went viral on You tube thanks to the tour and the popularity of the artists. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QCR4QF7w7Aw>
- Communities United also organized scores of Days of Action – rallies and street events that drew tens of thousands of activists and community members in nearly a dozen

California communities, including Wilmington (which is home to several major refineries), San Diego, Riverside and Oakland. These events all attracted earned media, particularly ethnic radio stations and newspapers, which are the main source of news for many Californians.

- Reaching every ethnic media outlet in California in its own language, with activists and leaders from those communities. Stories appeared in everything from large print dailies like *La Opinion* in Los Angeles to small weeklies and big radio and TV outlets such as Univision to small community based stations. In addition, Communities United purchased \$200,000 worth of radio time in every major media market in the state and ran Spanish language ads featuring LA mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and legendary United Farm Workers founder Delores Huerta.

A word about money: Because Communities United and Stop Dirty Energy were out of the box quickly, and with clear and obviously effective strategies in place -- and because the stakes were so high -- fundraising for both efforts moved quickly. Here is where George Schultz' participation (and then Governor Schwarzenegger's as well) was key: while progressive donors answered the call for support generously, Schultz and Schwarzenegger were able to convince many conservative donors and corporations in California to stay out of the fight. Early money to oppose 23 and pressure from two high profile Republican lawmakers who take climate seriously helped level the playing financial field and in the end, No on 23 forces raised around \$30 million, while the yes campaign spluttered and, recognizing it had been outflanked, ultimately raised only about \$10 million.



Photo courtesy of Communities United Against the Dirty Energy Prop
<http://communitiesagainstprop23.com/>

THE RESULTS

It wasn't even close – **Prop 23 went down to a resounding defeat, with 61.6 percent voting no and only 38.4 percent voting yes.** But there is more to the story: Voters of color comprised 37 percent of the electorate and whites 63 percent. However, **seventy three percent of voters of color and 57 percent of white voters voted against the measure.** One million new voters of color came to the polls last November in California, and clearly the vast majority of them opposed Prop 23. Even had white voters supported Prop 23, this huge outpouring of motivated voters of color would have guaranteed its defeat.

Voters of color were the climate firewall

Here's why: while environmentalist Jerry Brown defeated former Ebay CEO Meg Whitman in the Governor's race with about 52 percent of the vote overall, only **45 percent of white voters cast their ballots for him, while 64 percent of voters of color supported him.** Similarly, climate champion US Senator Barbara Boxer kept her seat, winning 54 percent of voters overall. However, **Senator Boxer got just 42 percent of the white vote, but a stunning 67 percent of the voters of color vote.** In other words, **these climate champions are in office today solely because of overwhelming support from voters of color.**

This is great news for climate and environmental issues. According to 2010 US Census data, California's population is now "majority minority," as the old, and soon to be outdated, cliché goes. Only 40 percent of its residents are white and 60 percent are of color. Latino/as account for nearly 38 percent of the population, with Asians (nearly 13 percent), African Americans (about six percent), Native Americans and mixed race individuals accounting for the remaining 22 percent. As noted above, however, the electorate is the mirror opposite: whites comprised 60 percent of the electorate in 2010. However, given current demographic trends, this proportion will change, possibly in time for the 2016 elections.

In 2010, about 10.3 million Californians voted. A little more than 17 million Californians were registered to vote last November and another 6.3 million Californians (most of them of color) were eligible to vote but not registered and, by 2012, some 3.5 million immigrants in California will be eligible for naturalization, which means they too will be eligible to vote. Any increases in voter turnout and registration will significantly increase the number of people of color coming to the polls in California.

And if the Prop 23 and related ballot outcomes are any indication, these changes should be positive ones for environmental and climate policy, if these new voters' environmental values can be turned into voting issues that resonate with them.

LOOKING AHEAD

What are the lessons of the Prop 23 victory?

- People of color are environmentalists and are, in fact, the future of the environmental movement.
- Taking the offense and framing issues first were essential to victory. Prop 23 opponents organized early to seize the issue so that initiative backers were never really able to get traction with the “jobs killer” argument.
- Partnership and shared leadership, not command and control, enabled the creation of a smart, sophisticated campaign built on respect and a recognition of where political power in California really lies. Partners also acknowledged that community and constituency based organizations knew which messages and strategies would be most effective.
- The no on 23 efforts, especially Communities United, used existing infrastructure to reach voters by partnering with community organizations and with experienced civic engagement organizations like SCOPE/AGENDA in Los Angeles. No one relied on “paratrooper” organizers, but instead took advantage of existing organizers and organizations committed to engaging their communities around social, economic and environmental justice issues on an ongoing, long term basis.
- By creating a shared frame, but a variety of messages and messengers, the no on 23 efforts was able to reach and sway the vast majority of Californians. Again, eschewing command and control, the campaigns listened to constituent organizations and communities and tailored messages and strategies for maximum effectiveness.
- Whatever difficulties existed among the leadership of the no on 23 efforts, they were never public and what **was** public was a united front that looked like California.
- While opposing Prop 23, the campaigns avoided the negative and instead created a vision of a sustainable, opportunity rich, healthy, diverse, democratic, and vibrant California built on broadly shared prosperity. The California envisioned by Californians United and its allies is a hopeful one.

A new environmental movement, led by people of color

Perhaps the single biggest takeaway from the Prop 23 battle is that **people of color are environmentalists**. They may not be members of mainstream Green Groups; they may not talk about issues the same way that so-called mainstream environmentalists do, but their values are just as strongly environmental ones. In fact, according to poll after poll, people of color are

more concerned about environmental problems and more committed to environmental values than are white people. For example:

- A March 2009 poll found that in CA, while 52 percent of whites said they considered themselves “environmentalists,” 83 percent of Asian Pacific Islanders (API) called themselves environmentalists.
- In July 2010, a Public Policy Institute of CA poll found that while 67 of all Californians polled said they supported AB 32, only 59 percent of white people supported it. However, 80 percent of Latinos, 75 percent of Asian Pacific Islanders and 69 percent of African Americans voiced support for AB 32.
- A November 2010 LA Times/USC poll found that Latinos and Asian Pacific Islanders are more concerned about global warming and air pollution than are whites. Just 27 percent of whites said they ‘worried’ about global warming, but 50 percent of Latino/as and 46 percent of APIs expressed worry. And while 31 percent of whites were concerned about air pollution, 66 percent of Latino/as and 51 percent of APIs were.

California is not alone

California’s demographic changes are not unique. 2010 census data indicate that four states (CA, TX, HI, NM) and the District of Columbia are now “majority minority,” and another dozen or so states are rapidly heading in that direction. Latino/as represent the fastest growing demographic group in the US, and today comprise about 20 percent of the population in CO, FL, NY, NV, and AZ and more than ten percent of the population of IL, VA, RI and CT. And Americans

under 30 are already “majority minority,” and are moving into leadership in business, politics and community life. **People of color, young people and women (especially single women of all ages) together comprise what many call the “emerging American electorate” and it is they who will both determine environmental policy and live with the consequences of those decisions.**



*Photo courtesy of Communities United
Against the Dirty Energy Prop*

Again the good news is: the emerging electorate has environmental values and will act on them. But here is where the lessons of Prop 23 ring loud and clear. We cannot win by talking about “climate change” and “climate policy” and “greenhouse gas emission reductions” alone. It’s true that reducing greenhouse gas emissions will benefit everyone on the planet, but HOW those reductions are achieved is the most pressing question for most people, including people of color and low-income

communities. Climate policy, like all public policy, can help or hurt; it can address and redress inequities or it can exacerbate them. It can create new opportunities or it can maintain the status quo.

In framing messages about Prop 23, Communities United focused on two things: public health, particularly air pollution and respiratory diseases that are epidemic in CA's low income communities of color, and the jobs and economic opportunity that will flow from an investment in a clean, sustainable economy. **Its messages never mentioned climate, but instead focused on AB 32 as a force for clean air and a new, more broadly shared prosperity for all Californians.** They also implied that Prop 23 was an attempt to undercut community power and the ability of communities of color to create their own sustainable, healthy futures. **The Communities United campaign emphasized that a positive, healthy future is possible – if individuals get involved and take action, in this case on Prop 23, but also long term on other issues. Communities United set the stage for long term organizing and mobilizing and, indeed, the organization has now morphed into Communities United for Clean Energy and Jobs.**

The movement on the ground is making gains, even as policy stalls

As Communities United Against the Dirty Energy Proposition, this coalition has the potential to frame and drive environmental victories, not just in climate policy, but also in air and water quality, smart growth and sustainable communities, water management, parks and open space and toxics. In fact, the organizations that are part of Communities United, working in concert with union and environmental allies, are already driving change, often on a community-by-community basis, but with real results. Some examples:

- In 2009, Communities for a Better Environment, working with local partners, prevented the City of Vernon in Southeast Los Angeles County from building a 943-megawatt fossil fuel power plant. This plant would have annually emitted 1.7 million tons of toxins, such as PM2, SoX, Nox, etc, as well as 2.5 million tons of greenhouse gases. The campaign against this plant was led and carried by mostly Latina immigrants and Latino/a high school students. Their efforts prevented more than 100 million tons of greenhouse gases from being emitted into the atmosphere over the next four decades or more from that one single plant. At the time of the Vernon victory, some 24 similar new fossil fuels were being proposed across the state and this community-led win put all of them on hold. However, the Southern California Air Quality Management District and its utility industry allies responded by moving a bill through the state legislature and into law that overturned the Vernon court victory and allowed new plant construction to continue (the City of Vernon had already ended its efforts to secure a permit for its plant). Environmental justice advocates have filed a lawsuit to challenge the legislation and insure that all Californians benefit from this grassroots victory.
- Chevron's Richmond, CA refinery covers 3,000 acres in the highly urbanized east side of San Francisco Bay; its emissions negatively effect the health of nearby low income African American, Latino/a, and Laotian communities. In 2009, Chevron announced

plans to expand its operations to begin refining dirtier grades of crude oil, possibly including crude from the Canadian tar sands, a process that is more energy intensive than other kinds of refining. In addition, it would have emitted a host of pollutants, as well as an estimated 900,000 tons of greenhouse gases per year. A campaign led by CBE, Asian Pacific Environmental Network, and the West County Toxics Coalition organized local residents and stopped the project. The story is not over, however, since Chevron is now seeking a legislative exemption that would override the community as part of a state budget deal – a fact which makes the emergence of a new statewide environmental movement with people of color leadership all the more important.

- The ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach are the busiest in the nation, and before 2008, some 10,000 trucks drove in and out of their facilities every day, creating some of the dirtiest and most unhealthy air in the nation. The Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) in 2007 launched a Clean and Safe Ports Campaign whose mission was cleaning up the air and improving the lives of the primarily low-income immigrants who drive those trucks. LAANE put together a coalition that included environmental organizations, labor, community residents, progressive businesses and elected officials to push for a comprehensive reform of port operations. In 2008, thanks to savvy campaigning and a brilliant use of insider/outsider tactics, the ports of LA and Long Beach adopted the plan; it has since been contested by the American Trucking Association (ATA) and others and is in legal and regulatory limbo as of this writing, but over the past three years, this program has resulted in the removal of nearly 7000 dirty trucks from highways and communities. As of August 2010, the Port of Los Angeles estimates that this new fleet of trucks means a reduction of more than 30 tons of diesel particulate matter annually, and equates to removing the particulate matter emissions of nearly 200,000 automobiles from California highways over the course of one year. Thanks to LAANE's membership in the national Partnership for Working Families, coalitions in Oakland, New York/New Jersey and Miami are demanding the same kinds of changes in their ports even as the ATA challenge continues.

Similar success stories can be found across California and the nation, and their direct impact on greenhouse gas emissions and air quality is significant, but at this point undocumented and too often dismissed as singular "local struggles." These local battles can be –and indeed have been -- leveraged into policy and electoral victories, as the history of the modern environmental movement and the environmental justice movement demonstrates. The national environmental community has embraced the defeat of Proposition 23, but it is part of a long strong and continuing string of mainstream victories fueled by grassroots environmental and social justice organizations. For example, already in 2011, members of the California Environmental Justice Alliance (CEJA), partnering with the mainstream environmental community, played a key role in winning the nation's most aggressive renewable energy standards, which increased California's mandate for renewable energy from 20 percent to 33 percent by 2020. EJ organizations not only helped make the bill's passage possible by securing three critical committee votes, but also added important components to the bill, including codifying into the law the "Garamendi Principles" (a set of principles aimed at reducing the

negative environmental impacts of proposed new energy transmission infrastructure) and a commitment to distributive generation via local renewable energy projects. Governor Jerry Brown signed this visionary bill into law in mid-April, in the midst of partisan bickering over the state budget and tax policy and near total gridlock in Sacramento. He has also committed to building 12,000 megawatts of distributive generation in California.



Photo courtesy of Communities United Against the Dirty Energy Prop
<http://communitiesagainstprop23.com/>

THOUGHTS FOR FUNDERS

The Proposition 23 victory is worth careful examination for its implications for future funding. This White Paper is an invitation to begin that examination, including a set of conversations about what successful climate and environmental funding will look like in the years to come. A few big ideas jump out immediately, however.

- Communities of color do not need to be “educated” about environmental and climate issues. They need to be recognized as environmental and climate activists and, most important, as leaders. **Funding for organizations led by and rooted in communities of color should not be an “add on,” but should instead be a driver of strategy and mission for foundations and donors concerned about climate change.**
- Mainstream environmental organizations still have important roles to play, but their future roles will likely be different than those of the past. **The Prop 23 experience points to the need to fund collaborations and partnerships in which mainstream organizations play important, but not dominant, roles.**
- **Funders need to support the infrastructure and “glue” that holds collaborations together (coordination, research, communications, leadership development), rather than efforts that use a “command and control” approach.** And this infrastructure needs to exist permanently, not just when a crisis or opportunity arises. The c3 progressive tables now operating in more than 20 states are good examples of this kind of on-going permanent collaboration.
- **Grassroots organizing and policy advocacy will not achieve appropriate scale victories or political power without concomitant and equal investments in civic engagement strategies, including voter registration, voter identification, and voter education and voter mobilization.** And here, it is important once again to **support and expand existing infrastructure** for voter engagement (in California, this includes the CA Alliance, Mobilize the Immigrant Vote, CA Environmental Justice Alliance, CA League of Conservation Voters, Communities United For and other environmental and progressive organizations) that are building people of color commitment to an environmental agenda.
- **Invest in the many leaders of color – organizations as well as individuals –** who can speak powerfully and effectively about environmental and climate issues by linking them to healthy communities and an opportunity-rich future based on sustainability and shared prosperity.
- **Support the ability of organizations to get out in front of issues and frame them first,** before the opposition does. Foundations in CA played key roles in supporting labor and communities of color to seize the Prop 23 frame early on and continued support enabled them to maintain that advantage. Prop 23 opponents

also understood the value of different messages and messengers, all rooted in the same values, to engage different communities. **Adequate funding allowed for sophisticated polling, communications strategies and research that were shared with the whole “no on 23” community on a regular basis.**

* * * * *

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This draft paper is an attempt to launch a conversation about what it will take to actually address global warming and climate change in the United States and to break through the climate denier, anti environmental noise machine. The defeat of Prop 23 is a high-water mark, but its impact was to protect an existing law. **The real challenge ahead is taking the energy, creativity, drive and discipline that fueled that no on 23 effort and turning it into a force for real change – a force with what Blue Green Alliance executive director Dave Foster calls “determinative political power.”** If climate advocates had had determinative political power in 2010, they would not have had to fight the Prop 23 battle in the first place—all that time, energy and \$30 million could have been spent advancing environmental and climate equity, not protecting the status quo.

Perhaps the most important lesson of Prop 23 is that there is a diverse, rich and growing community of people in California, and around the nation, who are **already** climate and environmental leaders and activists who are working every day to create a sustainable, equitable healthy and democratic future for themselves, their families and their communities. The challenge to us as climate and energy funders is to recognize what they have already accomplished and to support their ability to do even more. It’s time to unleash their power.

