

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2312

Introduced by Assembly Member Chu

February 21, 2002

An act to add Section 71116 to the Public Resources Code, relating to environmental justice.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2312, as introduced, Chu. Environmental justice: grant program.

Existing law requires the California Environmental Protection Agency develop policies, and implement and coordinate various activities for boards, departments, and offices within the agency relating to environmental justice.

This bill would require that the agency, and any of its boards, departments, or offices deposit 10% of the moneys received from penalties and fines imposed for violations of environmental protection laws and regulations implemented and enforced by the agency, or any of its boards, departments, or office into the Environmental Justice Fund, which the bill would create. The bill would require that moneys in the fund, upon appropriation by the Legislature, be used by the agency for the Environmental Justice Small Grant Program, which the bill would establish. The bill would require the agency to award grants on a competitive basis to community-based, grassroots organizations that are working on local solutions to local environmental problems, in accordance with specified priorities. The bill would require the agency to review, evaluate, and select grant recipients, and screen grant applications to ensure that they meet the requirements of the bill.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 71116 is added to the Public Resources
2 Code, to read:
3 71116. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the
4 California Environmental Protection Agency and any of its
5 boards, departments, or offices shall deposit 10 percent of the
6 moneys received from penalties and fines imposed for the
7 violation of environmental protection laws and regulations
8 implemented and enforced by the agency, or any of its boards,
9 departments, or offices, into the Environmental Justice Fund,
10 which is hereby created. The moneys in the fund shall be used,
11 upon appropriation by the Legislature, by the agency for the
12 Environmental Justice Small Grant Program, which is hereby
13 established.

14 (b) The purpose of the program is to fund grants to
15 community-based, grass roots, faith-based, and nonprofit
16 organizations located in areas directly affected by environmental
17 pollution and hazards, and that are involved in work intended to
18 address those environmental justice issues. Preference for grants
19 shall be given to community-based, grassroots organizations that
20 are working on local solutions to local environmental problems.

21 (c) Grants shall be awarded by the agency on a competitive
22 basis, in accordance with the following priorities:
23 (1) Projects that address public health concerns or issues in
24 minority and low-income communities.
25 (2) Projects that address how environmental information is
26 made available to minority and low-income communities.
27 (3) Projects that promote and strengthen community
28 involvement in the decision making process that affects the
29 environment of the community.

30 (d) The agency shall review, evaluate, and select grant
31 recipients, and screen grant applications to ensure that they meet
32 the requirements of this section.

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