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March 26, 2024

Wayne Nastri, Executive Officer
South Coast Air Quality Management District
21865 Copley Drive
Diamond Bar, CA 91765

Re: South Coast Air Quality Management District Climate Pollution Reduction Grant regional proposal, INVEST CLEAN

Dear Executive Officer Nastri:

On behalf of the Inland Empire Labor Institute, I write to express our commitment and support for the regional U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) application led by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD). The Infrastructure, Vehicles, and Equipment Strategy for Climate Equity, Air Quality, and National Competitiveness (INVEST CLEAN) project aligns with U.S. EPA's ambitious CPRG goals, Justice40, and Joint Office of Energy and Transportation, "National Zero-Emission Freight Corridor Strategy." It is an all-of-government project with strong industry, labor, and community participants and supported by the Priority Climate Action Plans (PCAPs) for Los Angeles – Long Beach – Orange County and Riverside – San Bernardino – Ontario Metropolitan Statistical Area as well as the State of California.

Through Plug In IE, our High Road Training Partnership in logistics with Teamsters Local 1932, we have developed a deep understanding of the needs of inland Southern California communities as we work together to meet our state's climate goals, particularly in heavy-duty freight transportation. In 2022 and 2023, we held two stakeholder workshops for the Riverside County and San Bernardino County region to connect the dots across infrastructure, labor, environmental impact, and land use issues. Based on South Coast AQMD's participation in these events, we are confident that the air quality district is well placed to coordinate between a variety of stakeholders who are crucial to a just electrification transition.

INVEST CLEAN is a transformational initiative aimed at overcoming barriers to transitioning the Southern California goods movement corridor from the Coast through the Inland Valley to California's border to zero-emission technologies. This project targets issues such as inadequate charging infrastructure, cost of medium- and heavy-duty vehicles and equipment, and scarcity of real-world deployments to demonstrate zero-emission technologies. INVEST CLEAN is also designed to uplift community benefits through a robust workforce training program in partnership with labor and educational institutions. Further, INVEST CLEAN integrates community input and benefits into projects and creates an innovative program to help mitigate the impacts of goods movement on our most vulnerable residents in coordination with existing efforts while significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

INVEST CLEAN will drive innovative and sustainable changes within the goods movement industry, a major source of greenhouse gas emissions in Southern California. These efforts will foster economic expansion by promoting the manufacturing of U.S. made vehicles and equipment. Furthermore, it will serve as a catalyst for nationwide improvements in goods movement by establishing a blueprint and leveraging economies of scale.

The Inland Empire Labor Institute recognizes the critical importance of projects like INVEST CLEAN to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, spur economic growth, and generate employment opportunities while delivering community benefits. We wholeheartedly endorse this initiative and are committed to supporting the project's vision and objectives, recognizing its potential to foster a greener, more sustainable future that benefits all.

We earnestly advocate for the EPA's favorable consideration and support for INVEST CLEAN. Please feel free to contact me for any reason regarding our support for this invaluable project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hillary", followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right.

Hillary Jenks, PhD
Co-Executive Director