Explanation:
This legislation expands the benefits provided to disadvantaged communities in relation to funds and resources used to implement the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

The CLCPA established an equity goal that set a floor for investing in disadvantaged communities stating that no less than 35 percent of the benefits of clean energy expenditures from state entities or programmatic resources be allocated to disadvantaged communities. The CLCPA also determined that while 35 percent of spending and resource benefits is the minimum requirement to be invested to benefit disadvantaged communities, the goal for the state should be 40 percent. This bill strengthens the commitment by mandates that disadvantaged communities receive 40 percent of the benefits, as opposed to a goal of 40 percent.

Providing a specific resource carve out for disadvantaged communities is necessary due to the historic underinvestment in these communities coupled with the disproportionate burden that these communities face in relation to the impacts of climate change. Given that disadvantaged communities are presently the most harmed by climate change and air pollution and that they will also continue to be the most vulnerable populations as the impacts of climate change become more severe, it is appropriate for the state to provide specific investments and resources to support these communities.

This legislation would be strengthened if the 40 percent of investments directed to disadvantaged communities was explicitly monetary. By including programmatic resources as an appropriate source of investments from which disadvantaged communities can benefit it will be much harder for both state entities and the public to determine the true value of those resources, which will in turn provide a greater challenge in tracking how much of the overall benefits of each program area have been allocated to disadvantaged communities. The term programmatic resources is not defined within the legislation which means it could translate to staff time, physical resources, health benefits or other intangible co-benefits.

Summary:
This legislation amends the environmental conservation law, section 75-0117, to require that all state authorities, agencies, and other entities allocate resources such that 40 percent of the funds or programmatic resources related to implementation of the CLCPA benefit disadvantaged communities. Programs related to CLCPA implementation include spending and resources from clean energy and energy efficiency programs, investments in housing, workforce development, pollution reduction, energy assistance programs for low-income customers, energy, transportation, and economic development related programs.