



January 7, 2021

San Diego City Hall  
202 C Street  
San Diego, CA 92102  
Via Email

**SUBJECT: Climate Action Campaign Environment Committee Priorities Memo Recommendations**

Dear Chair Elo-Rivera and Committeemembers,

Climate Action Campaign is a non-profit organization based in San Diego and Orange County with a simple mission: stop the climate crisis through effective policy action.

We look forward to the new leadership at the City of San Diego's Environment Committee, and recommend the following priorities for this year:

**CLIMATE ACTION PLAN**

***Direct the Sustainability Department to Develop an Equitable Zero Carbon CAP Update***

In 2015, the City of San Diego adopted a landmark Climate Action Plan that made it the largest city in the nation to commit to 100% clean energy. But five years later, climate science and best practices have evolved, and we urge the City to use the Climate Action Plan Update as an opportunity to adopt strategies that meet the scale and scope of the climate crisis and put San Diego back on the map as a state climate leader.

To do so, we urge the City to adopt a "San Diego Green New Deal" Climate Action Plan by integrating strong jobs and equity components with a commitment to a zero carbon future. A "San Diego Green New Deal" Climate Action Plan will require numerous strategies, but we have six high level recommendations that we recommend you prioritize in this stage of the CAP Update:

- Align the CAP emissions reduction target with climate science and state targets by committing to achieving **zero carbon by 2045** or sooner in line with state goals (Executive Order B-55-18).
- Commit to eliminating building methane emissions through **building electrification**, a critical strategy to achieving zero carbon and safeguard public health.

- Create a **detailed roadmap** to achieve the 50% mode share goals for commuters biking, walking, and taking transit within transit priority areas.
- Commit to **equitable development** of housing near jobs and transit.
- Center and integrate **equity and good union jobs** by including key strategies, benchmarks and best practices in consultation with key stakeholders.
- Help establish and participate in a **Regional Climate Authority** to facilitate regional collaboration towards climate goals.

For more details, please refer to CAC’s [CAP Update Recommendation Letter](#).

To make this all possible, we urge the Environment Committee to direct the Sustainability Department to develop a CAP Update with these strategies.

***Direct Staff to Develop Critical Climate Policies & Projects to Implement the CAP Update***

In order to begin implementation of the equitable zero carbon CAP Update, it is critical that the Environment Committee work with staff in multiple departments to develop citywide policies and projects in consultation with key stakeholders, including communities of concern and workers, that help us reduce our largest source of emissions and promote environmental and climate justice.

***Request a Presentation of the Five-Year Climate Action Plan Outlook***

The Environment Committee should request the (overdue) release of the CAP Five-Year Outlook as an addendum to the Five-Year Financial Outlook. That Outlook, a five-year CAP implementation plan with associated costs that has been completed but not released, would offer the Mayor and Council a clear understanding of the actions and investments needed to hit CAP targets. The City must take a holistic programmatic approach to CAP implementation, rather than continuing a piecemeal approach to CAP implementation through the annual budget cycle.

***Request a Presentation of the CAP Audit***

In 2020, the City Auditor began an audit of CAP Implementation. The Environment Committee should request a presentation of the audit findings when completed.

**CLIMATE JUSTICE**

***Create a Climate Equity Fund for Mitigation, Adaptation, and Resilience***

The City of San Diego needs a separate and dedicated fund for equitable climate mitigation, adaptation and resiliency projects and planning (including the City’s new CAP Update and Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Plan) to support neighborhoods most vulnerable to the climate crisis. These funds should be allocated to very low to low access to opportunity areas identified in the City’s Climate Equity Index. Sustainability and equity must go hand in hand, and a Climate Equity Fund can better leverage and deploy City resources to fight the climate crisis.

## **CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE**

### ***Initiate the Public Process for Equitable and Sustainable Electric and Gas Franchise Agreements***

The City must complete a robust public process that begins at the Environment Committee to secure the best deal on the electric and gas Franchise Agreements. These agreements must include climate, community and equity provisions and strong worker protections, and give the City the leverage it needs to hold our energy utility accountable. A shorter term, analysis of public power utility alternatives, right to purchase clause, benchmarks and goals, code of conduct and cooperation requirements, and other provisions should be explored and included.

### ***Shepherd the Development and Review of a Public Power Feasibility Study and Business Plan***

As part of the Franchise Agreement process, the City must complete a thorough analysis of public power alternatives to the current investor owned utility model. Careful study and detailed planning for a potential public power utility for San Diego can give the City real options to consider to meet our climate, clean energy, worker, and energy equity goals.

### ***Review and Approve the Implementation of the Municipal Energy Strategy***

In the current CAP, the City commits to reducing energy consumption at municipal facilities by 15% by 2020 and an additional 25% by 2035 through the Municipal Energy Strategy. While the City has the plan, the Environment Committee should direct the Sustainability Department to begin implementation of this strategy. It is important that the City demonstrate its commitment to climate action by beginning to reduce its own emissions.

## **SUPPORTING INTERGOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION ON CLIMATE**

### ***Support the Establishment of a Regional Climate Authority***

Across the region, cities are struggling to meet climate goals, citing lack of funding, political will, and knowledge of best practices. Furthermore, no cities in the region are planning for zero carbon, as climate science says is necessary, and region-wide, climate solutions are not being implemented equitably.

Current structures and this siloed approach to climate action are proving to be ineffective and dangerous to our region's future, which is why we are proposing a solution: the establishment of a Regional Climate Authority.

A regional climate authority could serve as a one-stop shop for coordinated action on climate action and adaptation in the region. Potential opportunities for a Regional Climate Authority include:

- Facilitating regional collaboration on climate mitigation and adaptation best practices, projects, and strategies among participating municipalities.
- Researching and creating plans to achieve zero carbon in line with EO-B-55-18.

- Promoting best practices and supporting local municipal climate efforts by offering sample ordinances and policy recommendations for cities.
- Facilitating equitable implementation of climate strategies, by identifying, through state and local analysis, frontline communities that should be prioritized in implementation of climate strategies.
- Raising and allocating resources for climate mitigation and adaptation efforts and prioritizing allocation to frontline communities.
- Facilitating stakeholder engagement on climate strategies, plans, and projects, and prioritizing frontline communities in this engagement.
- Ensuring a just transition for workers and frontline communities.
- Providing technical support to local agencies, including measuring, quantifying, and analyzing and progress towards climate goals.
- Conducting education for policymakers, key stakeholders, and the public related to climate strategies and projects.
- Collaborating with local tribal nations on climate solutions.
- Collaborating with other regional climate efforts.

As advocates and elected leaders work to establish a Regional Climate Authority in the coming year, we urge the Environment Committee to be a supportive partner.

***Prepare for a Green & Just Recovery***

As federal stimulus packages are predicted to trickle down from the Federal Government in the coming year, we urge the Environment Committee to plan projects that not only prioritize relief for communities most devastated by the impacts of COVID-19, but also ensure a downpayment on a sustainable future. We recommend the Environment Committee to collaborate with State and Federal efforts to achieve this goal.

**CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCY**

***Direct the Planning Department to Develop an Actionable Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Plan***

The Environment Committee should direct the Planning Department and key stakeholders to develop a robust and actionable Climate Adaptation and Resiliency plan that prioritizes communities of concern and prepares San Diegans for the impacts of a changing climate, including increased wildfires, flooding and drought, extreme heat, and sea level rise.

***Explore a Long-Term Funding Strategy for Stormwater Systems***

The Stormwater Department is responsible for ensuring city residents have access to safe, clean water and are protected from the public health hazards that accompany pollution, flooding, and insufficient and aging infrastructure. The City estimates a budget shortfall of nearly \$1 Billion over the next 5 years alone in meeting these public and environmental health goals. With sufficient funding would come great opportunities to advance green infrastructure and integrated solutions that address pollution,

water supply, and equity. The committee must prioritize the implementation of a long-term funding strategy to secure sufficient revenues to meet these community and Clean Water Act needs.

***Move forward with Rewild Mission Bay***

The Environment Committee should champion the ReWild Mission Bay project for substantial wetland restoration in Mission Bay Regional Park. This science-based project, with a 49-member coalition of support, shows the habitat, water quality, resilience and access benefits to updating our public land uses in the northeast corner of the bay. It represents a restorative project for Indigenous Communities with opportunities to reconnect to our shared shorelines, and will not only adapt to, but also mitigate, some of the climate change impacts we are already seeing in San Diego. This project could save the City money through more resilient land uses and by bringing in substantial grant money from outside the City to help restore our public land.

***Continue to Monitor and Support Tijuana River Valley Protections and Restoration***

The City must continue to work with local, state and federal agencies to solve the decades-long environmental disaster in the Tijuana River Valley. San Ysidro and other neighboring frontline communities deserve clean water free from sewage and other pollutants. Continued attention from the Environment Committee will be critical for this important work.

We appreciate the consideration, and look forward to partnering with the Committee on these and other environmental efforts.

Sincerely,



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