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Climate Action Campaign Releases Report With Solutions To The Housing, Climate, And Equity Crises

SAN DIEGO, September 23, 2021 - Today, Climate Action Campaign (CAC) unveiled a new report—Solving Sprawl: Building Housing for a Sustainable and Equitable San Diego—at a press conference with advocates and elected officials. This report provides critical recommendations to address the intersection of two major crises in our region: the climate emergency and housing unaffordability.

The San Diego region is experiencing, along with the rest of the world, an accelerating climate crisis. Just last month, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released another groundbreaking report, which the UN Secretary General called a “Code Red for Humanity”. Unfortunately, the San Diego region is not on track to hit existing targets, let alone zero out emissions. The biggest culprit: emissions from cars and trucks due to urban sprawl and lack of investment in biking, walking, and transit.

In addition to the climate crisis, San Diego is also facing a severe lack of affordable housing, contributing to a historic homelessness crisis. In 2020, only 26% of residents could afford to buy a home in San Diego County, and today, average home prices have only increased, approaching 1 million dollars.

As Climate Action Campaign’s new report shows, San Diegans don’t have to choose between building housing for our workforce and tackling the climate crisis. The Solving Sprawl report outlines the following strategies to address the twin housing and climate crises:

Build More Homes In Existing Cities by increasing housing density near jobs and transit, funding affordable housing projects in all neighborhoods, and better use of public land.

Invest in Existing Communities and Prevent Displacement by preserving existing affordable housing, and creating programs to stabilize rent and empower tenants.

Promote Equity, Justice, and Health through programs that promote homeownership, healthy climate resilient homes, and good jobs.

At the press conference announcing the new report, Brenda Garcia-Millan, lead author of the report, said, "The climate crisis and housing crisis are some of the biggest threats to public health and our future, but we have the solutions, and we call on our elected officials to lead with these strategies."

Read the full report at: <https://www.climateactioncampaign.org/sprawlreport>

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Climate Action Campaign is the leading climate watchdog in San Diego and Orange County.

Our mission is simple: stop the climate crisis. For more information, please visit

www.climateactioncampaign.org

Additional Quotes:

"Justly responding to the region's housing crisis means simultaneously advancing our climate goals. No longer can we do one without the other," said Councilmember Joe LaCava, a member of the City Council's Land Use & Housing and Environment Committees. "The housing solutions recommended in this report are rooted in mitigating the impacts of climate change while producing and preserving affordable homes for all San Diegans. These outcomes must be pursued together, and from scaling up affordable housing on public lands to reducing sprawl to building electrification, we must act with urgency."

"The fact is sprawl is dangerous and cannot be part of our future. Solving Sprawl is an excellent roadmap for community members and policy makers so San Diego can build in a more sustainable direction, house families, stop climate change, and protect lives," said Laura Hunter, activist and Board Member with the Environmental Center of San Diego.

"With alarming regularity, we are reminded there is no time to wait when it comes to climate action. Smart land use is climate action, and 'Solving Sprawl' offers a roadmap for the land use policy needed to meet our region's greenhouse gas reduction targets. This report will guide my policymaking and decisions, and I look forward to working with Climate Action Campaign to implement their recommended strategies to create the healthy, sustainable future all San Diegans deserve," said San Diego City Councilmember Sean Elo-Rivera.

"It doesn't make any sense to address our housing crisis by worsening our climate crisis," said Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer. "Instead of building sprawl development that paves over our open spaces and forces longer commutes and fire risk on residents, we must shift our focus to building the right kind of housing in the right places that working class San Diegans can afford."

"Sprawl is unsustainable. It is leading us to drive more, for longer distances, for more hours of day while creating intense and extreme fires, flooding, droughts and heat in all the wrong places. Sprawl displaces Brown and Black families from the only neighborhoods that were

priced for them to live in. The answer to gentrification and climate change is: densifying our urban corps, especially the over fifty percent of the City of San Diego that is zoned for only single family homes. The answer is clear, but the question remains - will our elected leaders lead?" - Ricardo Flores, Executive Director of LISC San Diego