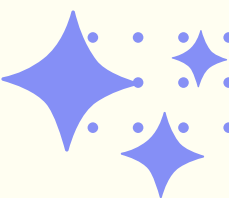
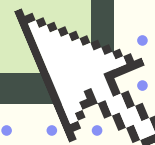


# THE REGIONAL DECARBONIZATION FRAMEWORK ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

---

***Be the Change:*** Empower yourself with this toolkit and become a powerful advocate for a sustainable future. Gain the knowledge, strategies, and tools to make a meaningful impact, engage in climate conversations, and drive positive change in your community and beyond.



# WHY ADVOCATE?

We all would like a more equitable, just, fair, and sustainable society. Whether it be more shade trees, park space, accessible public transportation, affordable housing, addressing homelessness, or clean air and water, there are endless changes we want to see made in our communities.

**Advocating together for local policies is one of the most effective ways to create meaningful change and a healthy, clean, and resilient future.** When we advocate for our communities, we signal to our representatives that we care about the legislation and actions that directly impact our lives. By participating in the advocacy process, we become a part of the solution rather than a by-product.

**Want to learn how to advocate for the issues your community cares about? Use these steps below:**

1. **Set Up Your  
Advocacy  
Strategy**



2. **Power In  
Numbers**



4. **Hold Your  
Representatives  
Accountable**

3. **Make Your  
Voice Heard**



# Set Up Your Advocacy Strategy

## RESEARCH YOUR REPRESENTATIVES AND THEIR STAFF

Find an elected official's position on various issues by looking at their website and voting history. Getting to know your representatives' staff is important! Staff often influences and writes legislation, so understanding their positions is crucial.



### TIP:

Stay current on your representatives by subscribing to their newsletters and receive information about current policies, meetings, events, and town halls where your representative will be engaged.

## DEVELOP YOUR MESSAGING



Be clear about the main issue/s you want to improve and the message/s you want to convey. Include your primary “ask” at the beginning of your messaging. Start with one “ask,” then develop more specific requests based on that initial ask. Your messages should always have a target audience and the specific action(s) that you want to see taken. Make sure that your messaging is solution oriented. This will excite your audience about the vision of a more equitable and sustainable future!

# Power In Numbers

## **BUILD COMMUNITY WILL**



Communities of Concern and Environmental Justice Communities feel the worst impacts of the climate crisis. You must work with vulnerable populations when advocating for policies to ensure equity is centered in all policy decisions. This is how you uplift the wants and needs of communities.

## **FORM OR JOIN A COALITION**

The more people advocating for a specific issue, the more traction it will gain, especially from the media and elected officials. A successful coalition involves people who dedicate time to drive ambitious climate action by increasing public knowledge and support for climate policies. A strong coalition must have a shared vision, clear implementation steps, and mutual trust amongst those involved.

An example of a successful coalition is the [San Diego Green New Deal Alliance](#), which consists of 60+ San Diego organizations advocating for regional climate action.



# Make Your Voice Heard

## WRITE A LETTER

Elected officials want to hear from you. You can send them a letter individually, in a coalition, or both. An effective and persuasive letter consists of the following:



Shared values and goals that resonate with nearly any audience. See a sample list of values [here](#). Be explicit about the issue you are trying to solve and how not solving it may harm a shared value. This will create a sense of urgency to implement policies that will help to resolve your issue.

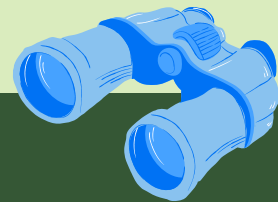


A clear goal at the beginning, a brief introduction outlining your concerns, and two or three key points that emphasize the goal.



A professional and respectful tone. It is okay to disagree with policies and plans that your city or region develops. However, you should thank representatives for the positive action they have already taken on your issue. Frame your goal to provide solutions to resolve or improve the issue you are advocating for.

# Hold Your Representatives Accountable:



## WATCHDOG

Elected officials play a critical role in creating positive change in our communities. By adopting policies and implementing them equitably, they can make a significant difference in people's lives. To ensure that our local governments are held accountable for their commitments to us, we must actively track their progress on the issues we care about and follow up as needed. With collective action, we can work together to create the future we deserve.

**Example:** In late 2022, we found that nearly 90% of the City's 2015 Climate Action Plan (CAP) went unimplemented and underfunded, largely because it was adopted without a clear and detailed Implementation Plan. In response, Climate Action Campaign (CAC) and San Diego 350 held a joint press conference. We stood together, raising our voices alongside our coalition partners, to urge the City to ensure that its 2022 Climate Action Plan Implementation Plan (CAIP) has detailed timelines, benchmarks, and funding sources to help the City achieve zero carbon by 2035.



## DIRECT LOBBYING

Meeting with your elected officials is key to creating positive change in your communities. This provides an opportunity to discuss advocacy letters in further detail, present new perspectives and ideas to decision-makers, and influence policy decisions. Reach out to your elected official's office to request a meeting. Once you secure a meeting, prepare an agenda that includes the meeting purpose, a clear ask, and the next steps. You can meet with your elected officials individually or with your coalition and community.

In the instance that you cannot individually meet with your representative or their staff, you can:



Write a letter and publish the letter online via social media.



Meet with other representatives in your City or region.



Attend an event organized by your representative, such as a Town Hall, and have a conversation with them at the event.



Collaborate with your coalition to see if anyone else can secure a meeting with the representative.

## MAKE PUBLIC COMMENTS

Making public comments is another great opportunity to speak directly to decision-makers on policy issues right before they take a vote. It is a valuable tool that you can use to mobilize your community and coalition partners to advocate for the policies you'd like to see adopted and implemented.

# Advocacy Steps in Action

Jim seeks safer biking options for his family in Escondido. He finds the outdated Bike Master Plan and learns about the County's RDF, which aims to reduce carbon emissions. The RDF has a transportation pathway with options to improve transportation in Escondido.

Advocacy is needed for many of these options, including protected bike lanes. Here's what he can do:



Jim researches his County district, Escondido City officials, and their transportation policies. He determines whether they prioritize climate action and sustainable transportation.



Jim resides in an environmental justice community with inadequate transportation infrastructure. Many community members rely on cars and are unhappy with limited options. Jim teams up with bike, climate, and student activists to lobby for connected, protected bike lanes, particularly in Escondido.



Jim develops a clear and concise message based on his goal for the City of Escondido to develop more bike infrastructure in his community.\*



Jim's new coalition writes a letter and meets with officials to push for updates to Escondido's Bike Master Plan, prioritizing protected bike lanes in Environmental Justice Communities. They aim to enhance safety, equity, access, and sustainability. They also urge County RDF staff to incorporate similar plans into the Implementation Playbook.



After the City of Escondido votes to update its Bike Master Plan, Jim, and his coalition track the implementation of the plan to ensure that the City is funding and implementing it equitably and efficiently.

## \*What should Jim's message look like?



Escondido communities need convenient, safe, clean, reliable, and affordable transportation to work, school, stores, and home. To achieve this, the City must prioritize updating the Bike Master Plan and providing protected bike lanes. It's crucial to increase safety, prevent fatalities, and improve the quality of life for all who travel around our communities on a daily basis.