



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### CONTACT:

Catherine Walker

catherine@climateactioncampaign.org

### **New Report Finds Orange County Lagging on State-Mandated Climate Targets: Leaves Families at Risk**

**Orange County, September 17, 2024**—At today’s press conference, Climate Action Campaign released its highly anticipated Orange County Climate Action Plan (CAP) Report Card Update, bringing together local elected leaders and community advocates, including County Supervisors Katrina Foley and Vincente Sarmiento as well other local elected officials.

The OC CAP Report Card Update, a continuation of last year’s [inaugural Report Card](#), provides insights on how Orange County and its cities are progressing—or lagging—on climate action.

### **Key Takeaways:**

Orange County has made national headlines for devastating wildfires and extreme heat in just the past week, harming health and community well-being. The fires not only upended lives but led to community-wide air pollution. Extreme heat can worsen chronic conditions like asthma, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes and lead to dehydration and heat strokes for outdoor workers and other vulnerable populations like children and seniors.

**Orange County is not prepared for climate change.** Three Orange County cities—Irvine, Santa Ana, and Anaheim rank among the least prepared for climate dangers in the United States, landing in the bottom third of 96 U.S. cities for climate readiness according to a [study](#) based on climate risk and mitigation research from FEMA, NOAA, and other sources.

Cities have both the ability and responsibility to protect the people and places we love by adopting bold Climate Action Plans (CAPs), which are roadmaps to slash pollution, secure community resilience, and achieve a safe and healthy future.

*“Climate change isn’t a distant worry—it’s happening now and uprooting lives. Record-breaking summer temperatures, wildfires, severe flooding, the list goes on. By refusing to take action, cities are sending the message that the health and well-being of*



*our families are not a priority.” —**Tomas Castro**, Climate Action Campaign OC Climate Equity Advocate and Organizer.*

Yet, only 18% of OC jurisdictions have a CAP, none of which includes greenhouse gas reduction targets set by the state legislature (SB 32, AB 1279).

This means the county is at risk of not receiving the dollars it needs to protect residents vulnerable to worsening climate impacts, health risks, and disinvestment. Inadequate plans, action, and implementation mean state and federal funding for climate action go to better-prepared regions. **By avoiding action, OC leaders remove funding sources and put their residents at the forefront of climate impacts.**

The good news is that since the release of our inaugural Report Card last year, we’ve seen the county and eight of its cities start working on or continuing to develop a CAP. Buena Park, Orange County, and Laguna Beach have taken notable steps with accelerated and solid action on drafting CAPs.

Unfortunately, other cities haven’t met this progress, choosing to delay action and implementation.

*“As a youth activist in Orange County, I’ve seen firsthand the urgent need for local climate action – my family and I had to evacuate my home in the Silverado Fire 3 years ago. Every wildfire, evacuation, drought, and flood reminds us of the cost of inaction—and each disaster deepens my frustration at the human suffering that Orange County residents are suffering through. It’s clear: our local leaders must be bold.” – **Youssef Kaddeche**, Remake Irvine Streets for Everyone*

#### **Other Quotes:**

*“We want to make sure that generations afterwards are able to enjoy the beauty of this county that we’ve been able to enjoy as we’ve grown up here. The problem is that there are communities that suffer more than others. The 2nd district, like Santa Ana, is the most park-poor part of our county. We have the fewest trails and the fewest open space, and that’s something that doesn’t lead to good health outcomes or a good quality of life for anybody here. So we have to reverse engineer how the county’s grown up... We have to do a lot more developments, like those that are transit-oriented developments, where you can have people walk to public transportation.” – **Supervisor Vincente Sarmiento**, County of Orange Board of Supervisors District 2*



*"OC has the opportunity to bring funding to our region through unprecedented federal climate funding." – **Supervisor Katrina Foley**, County of Orange Board of Supervisors District 5*

*"While climate change affects everyone, the worst impacts of the climate crisis—rising urban temperatures, polluted air, and an increase in the frequency and intensity of wildfires and floods—disproportionately affect vulnerable communities in Santa Ana and globally." – **Councilmember Jessie Lopez**, Santa Ana*

Read the full report and find press conference visuals in this [folder](#).

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

Our mission is simple: **protect the people and places we love from the dangers of the climate crisis** through effective and equitable policy action. For more information, please visit [www.climateactioncampaign.org](http://www.climateactioncampaign.org)