



January 20, 2022

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

**SUBJECT: Climate Action Campaign 2022 Environment Committee Priorities Recommendations**

Honorable Chair LaCava and Committee Members,

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.

The Environment Committee oversees projects and programs that are critical to implementing the Climate Action Plan (CAP), and achieving a climate-just San Diego. We recommend the following priorities for this year:

**CLIMATE ACTION PLAN UPDATE (CAP 2.0)**

***Agendize CAP 2.0 for Review, Feedback, and Committee Workplan Development:***

We applaud the City for committing to a zero carbon future in the latest iteration of the CAP 2.0. However, the draft CAP Update will need to go through a robust community review process, and we hope the Environment Committee will continue to lead on this critical component to the CAP Update process.

We will continue to provide further input on this item, and encourage the Committee to hold an additional hearing(s) on CAP 2.0 before it is presented to the full City Council this year. For more details, please refer to CAC's December 2021 [CAP Update Recommendation Letter](#).

***Direct Staff to Develop Critical Climate Policies & Projects to Implement CAP 2.0:***

In order to begin implementation of the equitable zero carbon CAP Update, it is critical that the Environment Committee work with staff across 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 for the CAP 2.0 Implementation Plan:***

Equity means implementation, and the Environment Committee should request a presentation from the Sustainability & Mobility Department on the pending CAP 2.0 Implementation Plan. This comes after years of delay in the release of the CAP Five-Year Outlook as an addendum to the City's Five-Year Financial Outlook. That Outlook, a five-year CAP implementation plan with associated costs, which 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. We hope the pending CAP Implementation Plan will incorporate these past documents.

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. The City cannot pass CAP 2.0 without a complete, accompanying Implementation Plan.

**CLIMATE JUSTICE**

***Provide an Update on the Climate Equity Fund:***

We applaud the City for creating a separate and dedicated fund for equitable climate mitigation, adaptation and resiliency planning and projects 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. We hope the committee will have annual hearings to ensure the community is updated on where and how these funds are allocated to advance climate justice in our neighborhoods.

**CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE**

***Agendize Building Electrification:***

We are encouraged the City has been working with key stakeholders and the community to develop plans for an all-electric building future. We encourage the committee to host a series of public hearings on this important issue, as building emissions from methane gas represent the third largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the City. With the pending CAP 2.0 expecting to commit the City to aggressive building electrification targets through 2035, the committee must begin to engage the community on all-electric strategies soon. Key stakeholders must include our friends in labor, who will be impacted by this transition, and communities of concern, who should not bear the burden

***Agendize Public Power; Feasibility Study and Business Plan:***

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. We hope the committee will agendize public power this year, and discuss a potential community taskforce to explore public power alternatives.

***Agendize San Diego Community Power:***

This year San Diego Community Power (SDCP) will be launching for residential customers across its member jurisdictions. We encourage the committee to agendize SDCP so the City and community may receive an update on where this leading climate strategy is in meeting the CAP's 100% clean electricity target.

**SUPPORTING INTERGOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION ON CLIMATE**

***Support the Establishment of a Regional Climate Network:***

Across the region, cities are struggling to meet climate goals, citing lack of funding, political will, and knowledge of best practices. Furthermore, only one city in the region is 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 Network.

A regional climate network could serve as a one-stop shop for coordinated action on climate action and adaptation in the region. Potential opportunities for a Regional Climate Network 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 California's Executive Order 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.

Assemblymember Chris Ward is leading a AB 1640 in the state assembly to allow for the creation of Regional Climate Networks in California. As advocates and elected leaders work to

establish a Regional Climate Network in the coming year, we urge the Environment Committee and City to be a supportive partner.

***Prepare for a Green & Just Recovery (State and Federal Funds):***

As federal stimulus packages arrive 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 collaborate with State and Federal efforts to achieve this goal. We also hope the Committee and City will be careful stewards of these funds, and avoid making poor investments in infrastructure, policies or programs that will not support equitable CAP implementation and targets.

**CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCY**

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

We applaud the City for developing and approving ResilientSD, however that project is more a framework than an actionable plan. We encourage the Environment Committee to 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 at least \$1 Billion or more over the next 5 years 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, equity, and climate resiliency. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Vasilakis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matthew Vasilakis  
Co-Director of Policy  
Climate Action Campaign