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San Diegans ask Congress to #SealTheDeal on green economy, climate and justice

Today's local event was part of national movement to urge congressional members to invest \$3.5 trillion into climate justice and jobs

SAN DIEGO (August 19, 2021) - Today San Diego community leaders, climate justice advocates and union representatives rallied at Tierra Central in City Heights, calling on San Diego congressional representatives to pass a \$3.5 trillion budget reconciliation bill that invests in family-sustaining jobs, climate action, equity and a just transition. After the failure to pass a bipartisan infrastructure bill that meets the needs of the nation in the face of climate change, advocates across the country hosted events today on the #SealTheDeal Day of Action, led by the national Green New Deal Network.

Speakers at the local event included Imperial Beach Mayor Serge Dedina, San Diego City Councilmember Sean Elo-Rivera, San Diego City Council President Emeritus Georgette Gomez, Stephanie Hernandez with [City Heights Community Development Corporation](#), Thomas Konrad with [San Diego Green New Deal Alliance](#), Jacob Babauta with [San Diego Urban Sustainability Coalition](#), Bridger Langfur with [San Diego County Democrats for Environmental Action](#), Karinna Gonzalez with [Hammond Climate Solutions](#), Vianni Ledesma with [Sunrise Movement San Diego](#), and Bertha Rodriguez with [Climate Action Campaign](#), and the event was emceed by Jim Miller with [American Federation of Teachers](#). All of the non-elected officials who spoke are associated with organizations that are members of the [San Diego Green New Deal Alliance](#).

“We need Congress to deliver on their promise of climate action for the people. Our communities are suffering, and we cannot wait any longer—the climate crisis is not years away, we are already in it,” said Rodriguez, who is an organizer with Climate Action Campaign. “We need change and this is an opportunity to heal our communities who have endured toxic air and water, poor housing and transportation infrastructure. We need to #SealTheDeal for our communities, for our families and for our future.”

The bipartisan infrastructure bill that was passed by the Senate on Tuesday, Aug. 10, lacks critical investments in climate solutions, the economy and social justice. Congress has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to tackle some of the most urgent crises faced by communities across the nation by using the budget reconciliation process. Climate activists, community leaders and citizens across the country are urging Congress to invest the full \$3.5 trillion from the budget reconciliation bill into climate action, equity, community wellbeing and the economy.

“The bipartisan infrastructure deal is simply not enough. Not only is the deal not enough money to adequately address the needs of our communities, but it includes dangerous handouts to the oil and gas industry,” said Gonzalez, who is the climate justice policy Advisor with Hammond Climate Solutions. “I am calling on our local democratic leaders: Representatives Juan Vargas, Scott Peters, Sara Jacobs and Mike Levin to deliver on your campaign promises and give our communities the much-needed investments that they not only deserve but desperately need. Life on Earth is at stake. Please, stand up for climate, jobs and justice.”

Masked and socially-distanced community members gathered outside at Tierra Central to ask local congressional representatives to prioritize investments for climate change, social justice and jobs with the budget reconciliation bill. Gomez, Dedina and Elo-Rivera expressed their concerns over the increasingly urgent climate crisis and the need for Congress to invest in solutions to prevent the worst effects of climate change.

“Unfortunately, we find ourselves in a moment where our environment is under threat and good jobs, ones that offer dignity and respect, are all too rare,” said Elo-Rivera. “That is why it’s imperative that Congress pass a \$3.5 trillion reconciliation bill that is responsive to climate change and takes advantage of the opportunities to improve our local communities through environmental action.”

The budget reconciliation bill comes at the heels of the newly released [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report](#), labeled a “code red for humanity” by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and at a time when California is seeing worsening fires, heat waves, drought and record breaking temperatures. A recent [report](#) on climate change in the state of California, authored by credible climate scientists and advocates, shows that climate change is occurring at a faster, more destructive rate than previously known, requiring California’s leaders to accelerate statewide climate efforts. One of the report’s key findings concluded that a dangerous level of climate change, determined by an average temperature increase of 2.7°F, will be reached as early as 2027.

“We need resources to ensure that the future of this land becomes a reality for the community, that it delivers affordable housing, that it delivers spaces for the community to have access to,” said Gomez. “There is no time for wavering. There is no time for watering it down. This is the moment—the future of the planet is at stake, San Diego’s future is at stake and we are urging our representatives in Congress to act strong, courageous and to #SealTheDeal to deliver \$3.5 trillion and not a penny less.”

To learn more about the San Diego Green New Deal Alliance and join local efforts for climate action, jobs and justice, visit www.greennewdealsd.org.

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