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# ELECTED OFFICIAL CLIMATE REPORT CARD

*San Diego*

Presented by:



## **About the Elected Official Climate Report Card Partners**

Hammond Climate Solutions is a mission-based social enterprise with a mission to expedite positive change for a just and livable future. Hammond Climate Solutions works with local philanthropists, nonprofit organizations, advocates and elected officials to implement effective solutions to stopping the climate crisis.

Climate Defenders Action Fund is a 501(c)(4) with a simple mission: to stop climate change. Climate Defenders Action Fund is advocating for 100% renewable electricity by 2035 and zero carbon by 2045.

The League of Conservation Voters San Diego is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that promotes conservation and environmental protection in San Diego County by identifying and electing environmentally responsible candidates and holding them accountable to the conservation agenda. The League of Conservation Voters San Diego has goals to increase the awareness of environmental issues among the general public through education.

## **Executive Summary**

The Elected Official Climate Report Card evaluates how the San Diego City Council members, San Diego Mayor and San Diego County Board of Supervisors voted on key climate issues and is intended to provide transparency into which elected officials have truly demonstrated that they are dedicated to true climate action in the region. It also highlights areas of improvement to help our region advance climate action. This report card scored 2021 votes.

### **What does the report card grade?**

Each organization was given the opportunity to select key climate votes in 2021 based on which issues their members strongly believed were important. After finalizing the votes that the collective organizations felt were the most applicable to include in the report card, elected officials and their staff were invited to provide feedback on additional issues they felt should be included in the report card and/or votes they felt should be removed. The feedback from elected officials and their staff was then taken back to the organizations and a vote was taken on additional votes that should be included. No elected officials or their staff requested for the removal of any of the votes.

County of San Diego votes;

1. Developing a Climate Action Plan
2. Zero carbon regional sustainability plan
3. Climate Advisory Committee
4. Joining San Diego Community Power
5. Restructuring sustainability department
6. Departmental sustainability planning
7. Establishing an Office of Environmental and Climate Justice
8. Rescission of California Senate Bill 743 transportation study guidelines
9. Acquisition of 2,151 acres of open space preserve land
10. Acquisition of 98 Acres of Land in Lakeside for Active Recreation and Trail Connectivity
11. Declaring the Tijuana River Valley a public health care crisis

City of San Diego votes;

1. Stormwater funding
2. CA Theatre Project
3. Establishing a Climate Equity Fund
4. Parks Master Plan
5. Declaring Sports Arena surplus affordable land
6. Gas and electric franchise agreements
7. Energy equity campus

8. The Trails Project
9. Net energy metering resolution
10. Commercial parking reform
11. Fossil Fuel Divestment policy
12. 2022 City of San Diego budget (including funds for climate initiatives)
13. Barrio Logan Community Plan update
14. Adoption of the San Pasqual Valley Groundwater Basin Groundwater Sustainability Plan

City of San Diego Mayor;

1. Committed to transition all City's facilities to 100% renewable energy through San Diego Community Power
2. Climate Equity Fund
3. Negotiated the 20-year gas and electric franchise agreements with SDG&E
4. Proposing City's Divestment from Fossil Fuels
5. Staffing Sustainability Department
6. Net energy metering public statement
7. Mayor's 2022 budget (including funds for climate initiatives)
8. Barrio Logan Community Plan update
9. Added CAP consistency section to staff reports for all items at City Council
10. Climate Resilient SD initiative
11. Passed parking reform for Non-Residential development to promote more sustainable development patterns
12. Advanced active transportation projects

### **Grading methodology**

Each vote or issue that was selected was assigned a number from 1 to 3 by each organization, with 1 being a climate issue with moderate or minimal impacts to the region, 2 being a climate issue with long lasting climate impacts and 3 being a climate issue with significant long lasting climate impacts. After each organization assigned a number to each issue, an average of those numbers was calculated for each issue. Full points were given for a pro-climate vote and negative points at the same weight were given for an anti-climate vote. The points were then added up and assigned a letter grade based on a scale (shared below). Each scale across agencies is different because the number of issues evaluated was different.

Since the mayor doesn't vote on issues, the mayor was graded based on if he addressed the issue adequately or not.

If a council member or supervisor was not present for a vote, no points were given or taken away.

Example: Gas and electric franchise agreements were given a weight of 3, categorized as a climate issue with significant long lasting climate impacts because the agreements are for 20 years. Council member X voted no on the agreements and Council member Y voted yes. Council member X receives +3 points while Council member Y receives -3 points.

County of San Diego scoring:

*Total number of issues evaluated: 11, with a perfect score being 19*

A+ = 19

A = 15 - 18

B = 12 - 15

C = 9 - 11

D = 4 - 8

F = 0 - 4

City of San Diego scoring:

*Total number of issues evaluated: 15, with a perfect score being 28*

A+ = 24 - 28

A = 19 - 23

B = 14 - 18

C = 9 - 13

D = 4 - 8

F = 0 - 4

San Diego Mayor:

*Total number of issues evaluated: 12, with a perfect score being 31*

A+ = 30 - 31

A = 24 - 29

B = 19 - 24

C = 13 - 18

D = 7 - 12

F = 0 - 6

## Climate/Environmental Significance of Votes

County of San Diego votes:

1. Developing a Climate Action Plan  
A legally defensible CAP was necessary after multiple prior failures to meet state requirements to reduce greenhouse gas emissions: 40% by 2030 and 80% by 2050.
2. Zero carbon regional sustainability plan  
The plan intends to cut carbon emissions to net zero by 2035, reduce “super-pollutants” such as black carbon (or soot) and ground-level ozone, the main ingredient of smog. The plan will also address gaps between environmental goals and impacts on minority communities, in terms of air quality, job, infrastructure and housing.
3. Climate Advisory Committee  
Establishment of a committee to oversee the development and implementation of the Climate Action Plan, the Supplemental EIR, a Regional Sustainability Plan, and related policies and programs.
4. Joining San Diego Community Power  
San Diego Community Power is the region’s best-positioned opportunity to move to renewable energy sources and dismantle the monopoly of SDG&E.
5. Restructuring sustainability department  
County departments reorganized around sustainability, including a formal plan, and creating a native plant policy to preserve regional biodiversity.
6. Departmental sustainability planning  
Direct all County Departments and programs to develop and implement sustainability plans. Each plan assesses existing sustainability practices and identifies new opportunities in all aspects of internal and external facing operations, existing policies, programs, and practices and must aim to create comprehensive strategies to achieve sustainability.
7. Establishing an Office of Environmental and Climate Justice  
Creation of the Office of Climate and Environmental Justice within the county’s land use and environmental group to work with the San Diego Air Pollution Control District and other agencies to address air pollutants, toxics, hazardous waste and other risks to sensitive populations.
8. Rescission of SB 743 transportation study guidelines  
In 2020, a transportation study guide was adopted by the Board of Supervisors as required by California Senate Bill 743, but it was inadequate and several environmental advocacy nonprofit organizations filed suit. The board rescinded that approval and is

working with staff to revisit compliance with SB 743. Vehicular traffic is the most significant source of air pollution from greenhouse gas emissions in San Diego County.

9. Acquisition of 2,151 acres of open space preserve land  
\$8.8 million purchase of 2,200 acres of land to preserve habitat and extend wildlife corridors in the community of Campo.
10. Acquisition of 98 Acres of Land in Lakeside for Active Recreation and Trail Connectivity  
\$6.44 million to restore and improve roughly 98 acres of open space, trails and recreational facilities in El Monte River Valley in Lakeside.
11. Declaring the Tijuana River Valley a public health care crisis  
Declaration as a public health crisis requires the county to take action to clean up trash, chemicals, and contaminants.

City of San Diego:

1. Stormwater funding  
Investment in stormwater management that protects the public from sewage and heavy metals pollution, flooding throughout vulnerable communities, and property damage is critical. These are dangerous public health risks that disproportionately affect environmental justice and frontline communities.
2. CA Theatre Project  
Infill redevelopment projects such as the CA Theatre Project, especially those in locations that are already near transit infrastructure and other urban amenities, must include significant affordable housing if we are to thwart sprawl and related environmental impacts. Housing equity goes hand in hand with environmental justice, including to reduce climate impacts related to long commutes for displaced families.
3. Establishing a Climate Equity Fund  
The establishment of the Climate Equity Fund was critical to ensure that implementation of the City of San Diego's 2015 Climate Action Plan would provide opportunities for resiliency for historically underserved communities. Increased investment with a stable revenue source in these communities is necessary to provide for future adaptation strategies as sea level rise, increased temperatures and energy and water costs impact residents.
4. Parks Master Plan  
The City of San Diego is under-parked; especially in historically underserved communities. Tree canopies and grass are necessary not only to increase quality of life for residents, but cities that invest in green spaces have lower temperatures and help combat the negative impacts of climate change. The Chollas Creek Watershed was

officially designated as a Regional Park, historic open space was conserved, and the city set the specific goal of obtaining 100 new acres designated for park space within 10 years of the plan's adoption.

5. Declaring Sports Arena surplus affordable land

The city-owned parcels in the Midway District around and including the Sports Arena are prime land for dense affordable housing, with the Old Town Trolley Station and adequate shopping and jobs opportunities in the vicinity. Declaring this area surplus affordable land subject to the Surplus Land Act was an appropriate and necessary action to trigger a process to pursue the highest and best use of this land, including significant affordable land 25% or more of the total housing to be developed.

6. Gas and electric franchise agreements

The Council approved a 10-year franchise agreement with SDG&E (with a 10 year automatic conditional renewal), despite citizen opposition over high utility rates, anger over wildfires that regulators found were caused by SDG&E equipment that ratepayers paid for, and an inadequate commitment to renewable energy sources. The franchise agreement grants SDG&E the exclusive use of public rights of way for transmission and distribution as well as the right to install and maintain wires, poles, power lines and underground gas and electric lines. The franchise agreement delays the potential to implement publicly owned renewable energy on a citywide basis.

7. Energy equity campus

The San Diego Energy Equity Campus plans to transform Valencia Business Park in City Council District 4 into a renewable energy campus for businesses and organizations in the sustainable energy field. It will feature 40,000 square feet of industrial space, 25,000 square feet of office space, an outdoor educational space and a nature trail. The project is in a federally designated promise zone - an area with high unemployment, poor access to healthy food and concentrated poverty.

8. The Trails Project

The Trails at Carmel Mountain Ranch is an urban infill housing development replacing a defunct golf course. Portions of the project are within ¼ mile of a bus rapid transit station. While light rail is preferable, increasing infill housing in already-developed areas near transit and jobs is necessary in nearly every community of the City of San Diego.

9. Net energy metering resolution

This resolution asked California Governor Gavin Newsom and the CPUC to protect rooftop solar and expand access particularly for residential customers in disadvantaged communities. It further urged the CPUC to reject any proposal that undervalues the societal benefits of renewable generation.

10. Commercial parking reform



The reforms removed parking requirements for businesses in many neighborhoods in order to accelerate efforts to make the city less car-reliant and more climate-friendly.

11. Fossil Fuel Divestment policy

Policy to cease investing city's financial reserves in the fossil fuel industry, because that contradicts municipal efforts to fight climate change. The policy required the city to prematurely sell \$17 million in Chevron bonds scheduled to mature in March 2022. The city intends to re-invest money previously given to fossil fuel companies in industries focused on alternative energy and industries with high-paying jobs.

12. 2022 City of San Diego budget (including funds for climate initiatives)

The city budget disincluded line items to fund several climate initiatives, and its passage was therefore unsupportable.

13. Barrio Logan Community Plan Update

The Barrio Logan Community suffers from health impacts caused by decades of incompatible industrial uses next to housing and sensitive receptors, and the Community Plan Update has been delayed for years due to industry pushback. Implementation of a plan that ensures children and adults who live in the community will, over time, be exposed to fewer industrial pollutants is critical, and ensuring families who have lived in the community will not be displaced by gentrification is an important equity goal. This is the first CPU to meet or exceed the Climate Action Plan's mobility goals.

14. Adoption of the San Pasqual Valley Groundwater Basin Groundwater Sustainability Plan

The San Pasqual Valley Groundwater Basin is an agricultural preserve 90% owned by the city and 10% owned by the county, and uses in the basin are 100% reliant on groundwater. The sustainability plan will manage all extractions and reduce pumping.

15. Climate Resiliency Plan

The forward-thinking initiative creates a variety of adaptation strategies, prioritizes areas of the city for implementation, and contemplates funding sources to address each of the five largest threats that climate change poses for San Diego: severe wildfires, droughts, flooding, sea level rise and extreme heat waves.

City of San Diego Mayor

1. Committed to transition all City's facilities to 100% renewable energy through San Diego Community Power

All of the city's facilities will be powered by 100% renewable energy, significantly cutting down the city's environmental footprint.

2. Climate Equity Fund

The establishment of the Climate Equity Fund was critical to ensure that implementation of the City of San Diego's 2015 Climate Action Plan would provide opportunities for resiliency for historically underserved communities. Increased investment with a stable revenue source in these communities is necessary to provide for future adaptation strategies as sea level rise, increased temperatures and energy and water costs impact residents.

3. Negotiated the 20-year gas and electric franchise agreements with SDG&E

The Council approved a 10-year franchise agreement with SDG&E (with a 10 year automatic conditional renewal), despite citizen opposition over high utility rates, anger over wildfires that regulators found were caused by SDG&E equipment that ratepayers paid for, and an inadequate commitment to renewable energy sources. The franchise agreement grants SDG&E the exclusive use of public rights of way for transmission and distribution as well as the right to install and maintain wires, poles, power lines and underground gas and electric lines. The franchise agreement delays the potential to implement publicly owned renewable energy on a citywide basis.

4. Proposing City's Divestment from Fossil Fuels

The Mayor went on the international stage with this announcement. Policy to cease investing city's financial reserves in the fossil fuel industry, because that contradicts municipal efforts to fight climate change. The policy required the city to prematurely sell \$17 million in Chevron bonds scheduled to mature in March 2022. The city intends to re-invest money previously given to fossil fuel companies in industries focused on alternative energy and industries with high-paying jobs.

5. Staffing Sustainability Department

A department is only as good as its resources. The Mayor failed to sufficiently staff the Sustainability Department to implement the city's Climate Action Plan.

6. Net energy metering public statement

The Mayor expressed his support for the Net Energy Metering resolution passed by the City Council, furthering its potential impact with the Governor and CPUC.

7. Mayor's 2022 budget (including funds for climate initiatives)

The 2022 budget failed to include a 5 year outlook and had no budget to fund the mobility action plan, which is an integral part to reduce GHG emissions. It did include \$7M for the Climate Equity Fund.

8. Barrio Logan Community Plan update

The Barrio Logan Community suffers from health impacts caused by decades of incompatible industrial uses next to housing and sensitive receptors, and the Community Plan Update has been delayed for years due to industry pushback. Implementation of a plan that ensures children and adults who live in the community will, over time, be

exposed to fewer industrial pollutants is critical, and ensuring families who have lived in the community will not be displaced by gentrification is an important equity goal. This is the first CPU to meet or exceed the Climate Action Plan's mobility goals..

9. Added CAP consistency section to staff reports for all items at City Council

The inclusion of the CAP consistency section in staff reports for all Council items helps ensure that staff and council members center compliance with the CAP in all relevant considerations and approvals.

10. Climate Resilient SD initiative

The forward-thinking initiative creates a variety of adaptation strategies, prioritizes areas of the city for implementation, and contemplates funding sources to address each of the five largest threats that climate change poses for San Diego: severe wildfires, droughts, flooding, sea level rise and extreme heat waves. The true impact of the initiative remains to be seen with an implementation plan, funding, and management details to be determined.

11. Passed parking reform for non-residential development to promote more sustainable development patterns

The reforms removed parking requirements for businesses in many neighborhoods in order to accelerate efforts to make the city less car-reliant and more climate-friendly.

12. Advanced active transportation projects

Mayor Gloria has been a staunch supporter and leader on the 30th street bike lanes in the face of the vocal opposition of the reduction in parking from some in the community. The bike lanes have made it possible for cycling commuters, customers of local businesses, and families to use bicycles instead of cars.

## 2021 Climate Report Card Grades

### San Diego County Board of Supervisors:

District 1 - Vice Chair Nora Vargas: **A**

District 2 - Joel Anderson: **C**

District 3 - Chair Nathan Fletcher: **A**

District 4 - Terra Lawson-Remer: **A**

District 5 - Jim Desmond: **B**

### San Diego City Council:

District 1 - Joe La Cava: **A**

District 2 - Council President Dr. Jennifer Campbell: **C**

District 3 - Council President Pro Tem Stephen Whitburn: **B**

District 4 - Monica Montgomery Steppe: **A**

District 5 - Marni von Wilpert: **B**

District 6 - Chris Cate: **F**

District 7 - Raul Campillo: **B**

District 8 - Vivian Moreno: **A**

District 9 - Sean Elo-Rivera: **B**

### San Diego Mayor:

Todd Gloria: **C**