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LACAVA'S COLUMN

Earth Day Edition

April 22, 2022

Friends,

The [2022 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\) report](#) paints a grim picture: climate change and its impacts are here. We are combating climate change and if we act with urgency, it is possible to mitigate its impacts.

As the mantra says: Think global, act local.

Our [Scripps Institute of Oceanography](#) is globally leading research on sea level rise and climate including the longest continuous Pacific Ocean sample record in the world, dating back to 1916. Our local scientists and institutions lead in research that influences global science and, if we listen, decision-making.

As your councilmember, my goal is to lead by example and integrate environmental choices into our everyday lives. As Chair, I created the 2022 Environment Committee Work Plan, which identifies four major priority areas to guide the Committee's discussions and actions towards a more sustainable and equitable San Diego. They include energy/decarbonization, water and sustainability, environmental justice, and natural resources.

This work plan is our path to mitigating the effects of climate change, reconciling decades of environmental injustice, and protecting our economy. A full copy of the Work Plan is available at <https://bit.ly/SDenviro22>.

It is not too late, but we must act with urgency.

Office Hours

Please stop by your community rep's Zoom "office hours" happening each week!

Carmel Valley, Del Mar Mesa, and Torrey Hills
11 a.m. - 12 p.m. on Wednesdays (link [here](#))
Ricky Flahive:
rflahive@sandiego.gov

Del Mar Heights
11 a.m. - 12 p.m. on Thursdays (link [here](#))
Krissy Chan:
chank@sandiego.gov

La Jolla
By Request Only
Steve Hadley:
srhadley@sandiego.gov

University City
10 - 11 a.m. on Fridays (link [here](#))
Kaitlyn Willoughby:
kwilloughby@sandiego.gov

**Yours truly,
Councilmember Joe LaCava**

City of San Diego District 1
joelacava@sandiego.gov



How We Are Doing Our Part

The City of San Diego's environmental policies and actions are guided by our [Climate Action Plan](#). Currently under review, CAP 2.0 proposes a City-wide goal of net zero by 2035, committing San Diego to an accelerated trajectory for greenhouse gas reductions.

Here is how the City of San Diego is pushing an environmental agenda to meet our long-term goals:

Equitable Transitions and Implementations

In 2019, the City created a first-of-its-kind [Climate Equity Index](#) to better understand how climate change disproportionately affects Communities of Concern. The index establishes benchmarks and metrics to serve as a citywide assessment of climate equity.

In 2021, my council colleagues and I created a climate equity fund, which targets City infrastructure projects that build climate resiliency in communities identified in the Climate Equity Index.

Funding infrastructure project like sidewalks, streetlights, stormwater, tree planting, and parks will help all San Diegans reduce the impacts of climate change.

Sustainable Energy Decisions

San Diego Community Power

[San Diego Community Power \(SDCP\)](#) is a Joint Powers Authority of six cities and the County of San Diego that procures renewable energy and offers affordable clean power. I am proud to serve as a board member as the City of San Diego representative.

In March 2021, SDCP began serving municipal and commercial accounts in the founding member cities, including San Diego. When the City of San Diego officially turned on the switch of our municipal accounts, we chose to "Opt Up" to 100% renewable energy. The Padres, Illumina, and Sharp Healthcare all joined us in becoming Power100 Champions as well.



Beginning May 2022, SDCP will roll out clean power to City of San Diego residential customers.

The adoption and transition to clean energy is urgent as San Diego is already experiencing the effects of climate change in more frequent wildfires, more intense storms, and poorer air quality.

Studies suggest that SDCP can reduce local carbon emissions by an estimated 2.8 billion pounds—equal to planting about 33 million trees or taking 270,000 cars off the road—in one year alone.

Divestment

In November 2021, I lead the motion for the City to divest from fossil fuels. This removed any assets the City held in fossil fuels, including \$17 million of holdings in Chevron, and prohibits future investment in fossil fuels. A Climate Action Plan designed to accelerate clean energy adoption cannot support the proliferation of the fossil fuels it seeks to eliminate.

This policy officially took effect January 1, 2022.



Youth v. Oil

On April 20, [Youth v. Oil](#) delivered a petition signed by over 1,200 individuals to City Hall demanding California cease drilling and fracking.

Their voice was heard loud and clear.

As Chair of the Environment Committee, I was proud to join Councilmember Marni von Wilpert in introducing a resolution to the Environment Committee supporting the work of Youth v. Oil and urging our California Governor and State legislature to begin the process of justly phasing out oil and gas extraction and move jobs in a just transition to a greener economy.

Drilling and fracking are poisoning our air and water and disproportionately impacting vulnerable communities. Ending this practice is one of many paths forward to create a safe and sustainable California.

Even as gas prices climb, we must remain steadfast in environmental protections. We are in a climate emergency; we have no choice but to act with urgency. Reducing our dependency on oil can also protect our wallets.

Transportation Improvements

Public Transit

To enable more transit options, we must first build a robust, reliable public transportation network. This includes investing in safe and efficient alternatives to driving. The UCSD Health Blue Line Trolley, which opened late 2021, is a great example of how public transportation can enhance a community while providing an alternative to higher emission options. The region's largest transportation project, this extension provides safe and competitive transit access to jobs, education, healthcare, retail, and recreation.

Additionally, beginning May 1, those 18-years-old and younger can ride transit for free in San Diego County through the SANDAG Youth Opportunity Pass pilot program. Youth can get unlimited rides on the bus, Trolley, COASTER, and SPRINTER through June 2023 with a Youth PRONTO account.

Learn more and register at: <https://youthopportunitypass.sandag.org/>



Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Electric vehicles (EVs) are the future of personal transportation. California regulations require 35% of new car sales to be zero-emission vehicles by 2026. To support and encourage EV adoption, the City must build out an electric vehicle charging network that maximizes the use of publicly owned land, balances energy demand, and allows for charging when and where drivers need it.

To achieve this, I am working with local partners to secure federal infrastructure funding, and prioritizing this for the Fiscal Year 2023 budget.

Preservation of Natural Resources

Protecting our precious natural resources preserves the region's unique wildlife and provides unique outdoor experiences for our residents and visitors. Many of these environmental preservation efforts are called for in the City's [Climate Resilient SD Plan](#), our framework for protecting residents, businesses, and our public infrastructure.



Wetlands

Preserving and restoring our wetlands can mitigate sea level rise, prevent inland flooding, aid in carbon capture, and provides a haven native and migrating birds.

The [De Anza project](#) is an effort lead by the City of San Diego to revitalize the northeast corner of Mission Bay to provide for the highest and best use of the area, serving local and regional needs. The ReWild project is being led by the San Diego Audubon Society to restore wetlands along Pacific Beach Drive and both sides of Rose Creek.

Urban Forestry – Plant a Free Tree

Maintaining a robust urban forest can help lower urban temperature, capture carbon, increase enjoyability of neighborhoods. Through [Free Tree SD](#), residents can request a street tree. This program allows residents and the City to work together to increase San Diego's tree canopy cover, creating a more livable and sustainable community for all.

Open Space

The City of San Diego Park & Recreation Department's Open Space Division manages over 24,000 acres of open space, including open space canyons and parklands (map [here](#).) These swaths of land, like Rose Canyon in District 1, preserve habitats and protect native species while allowing for safe recreation by the community.

Maintaining these areas can prevent flooding and protect businesses, residents, and infrastructure. One example is the [Los Peñasquitos Lagoon project](#), which will restore native habitat and wetlands and also provide flood mitigation for Sorrento Valley businesses.



Drought Resilience

[Pure Water San Diego](#) is the City of San Diego's multi-phased program that will deliver more than 50% of San Diego's water supply locally by 2035. Pure Water is a cost-effective investment and will provide a reliable, sustainable water supply.

Pure Water's Phase 1 is underway in the northern part of the City with the plant located in District 1's University City. Totalling over one billion dollars, Phase 1 is the city's largest ever infrastructure project

and a testament to our city's ability to deliver large-scale, complex projects.

 **Organic Waste**



Waste Reduction

California State Senate Bill 1383 (SB 1383) mandates a statewide reduction of organic waste disposed of in landfills. Organic waste is food scraps and food-soiled paper from kitchens and food operations and yard waste such as garden and landscape waste, organic textiles and carpets and wood waste.

This fall the City will begin rolling out kitchen bins to all households and, to those households that don't already have them, green bins. More details coming soon.

Council District 1 | <https://www.sandiego.gov/citycouncil/cd1>

