



7TH EDITION

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN REPORT CARD



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	01
The Playbook	03
About	09
Top Actors	10
Final Scores	11
City Highlights	12
CAP Status and Updates	22
Detailed Score Breakdowns	23
Grading Criteria	24
Acknowledgments	27
List of Abbreviations	28
Term Definitions	29
References	31
Support Climate Action	33

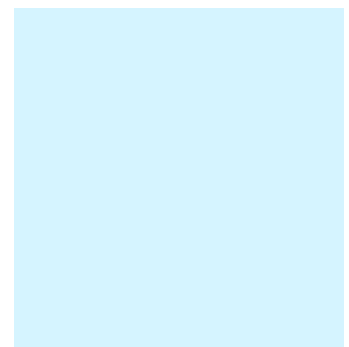
Executive Summary

Our communities are now facing a dangerous new normal: devastating floods, wildfires, eroding coastlines, blistering heat, and a cost-of-living crisis.

San Diego just endured its hottest stretch on record. In September, a punishing heat wave pushed parts of the county to 112 degrees, shattering a 133-year-old record. At the same time, San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) logged 30 unplanned power outages in 24 hours as statewide electricity demand hit its highest level of the year, leaving thousands of customers in the dark. The county's own public health data confirms that heat waves are growing longer and more frequent — and that communities with the least access to air conditioning suffer the highest rates of heat-related hospitalizations.

In January 2024, floods displaced over 1,200 San Diegans from their homes. Many families have yet to recover fully, and a high-intensity, rapidly strengthening El Niño is forecasted to bring the next round this winter. The city's infrastructure funding gap has climbed to nearly \$8 billion over five years, driven largely by failing stormwater systems. Neighboring Los Angeles County offered a preview of what's at stake: in January 2025, it experienced the most destructive wildfire in its history, killing 28 people and destroying 16,000 structures. In Carlsbad, an unstable coastal bluff forced the city to declare a local emergency and close a stretch of Carlsbad Boulevard in September, as rising seas and worsening storms continue to erode the region's coastline.

The cost of protecting our communities from these disasters keeps mounting, from upgrading failing stormwater systems to strengthening the grid against wildfires, preparing for extreme heat, and protecting our coastlines. As San Diegans weather these catastrophes, skyrocketing energy costs are straining family budgets even further. SDG&E's average residential electric rates have risen 98% over the past decade, and roughly one in five residential customers is now at least a month behind on their bills. Frontline communities, also known as Communities of Concern (CoC), are hit first and worst by both. And high energy bills are stalling the local policies our region needs most urgently — like helping families swap gas stoves and heaters for cleaner, more efficient electric appliances and electric vehicles.



Local governments' primary responsibility is to protect residents, which requires bold action to lower bills and meet local and state zero-emission targets. Climate Action Campaign's 7th Edition Climate Action Plan (CAP)

Report Card finds that, as San Diego families face some of the highest power bills in the country, bringing down energy costs is now climate policy. Cities need to push for lower bills by reducing utility profits and curbing rampant utility overspending, and help homes and businesses switch to clean electric appliances—while also acting on transportation, land use, and more.

Encinitas, La Mesa, and Carlsbad earned the top three implementation scores in this year's Report Card, proving that climate plans can move from paper to practice. Encinitas led the region with an 88, followed by La Mesa at 83 and Carlsbad at 78. These cities show what's possible when local leaders follow through on their commitments.

Climate change doesn't stop at city limits, and neither should the solutions.

Closing San Diego's emissions gap will take more than any one city acting alone, especially as federal rollbacks and state budget cuts pull funding away from local climate work. Regional agencies like SANDAG, the Port of San Diego, and the San Diego Air Pollution Control District also need to carry out their own climate plans. With less outside support coming, elected leaders across the region need to meet regularly, face the climate crisis we're already living through, and agree on shared solutions.





The Playbook

FOR LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

Our communities face crippling affordability and a worsening climate crisis. Bold action is needed at all levels of government.

Sustainability managers and city staff work tirelessly to implement climate solutions, track data, and turn policy into action, and we appreciate their dedication.

At the same time, elected leaders set the pace of progress by deciding what gets funded, prioritized, and passed. As a watchdog organization, CAC holds these officials accountable for keeping their promises and protecting our region's future. While accountability can create necessary tension, it is essential to ensuring a climate-safe, climate-ready future for all children and families.

STATE ADVOCACY

To deliver on that accountability, local elected officials must support state action through two pillars: their political voice and their constituents' voices.

We're encouraged by the bold actions taken this year by the County and City of San Diego, alongside Chula Vista, to demand lower energy bills. By backing state legislation requiring utility reform and accountability, these local leaders are stepping up to protect families and keep costs down. We encourage all cities in the region to do the same.

USE YOUR POLITICAL VOICE:

- **Update your legislative platform:** Prioritize legislation that lowers energy bills and accelerates the clean energy transition — especially bills that reduce costs for frontline communities.
- **Send in the City Attorney:** Your city has the right to "intervene" in state rate-setting meetings. Tell your legal team to challenge the utilities every time they ask for a price hike.
- **Pass Local Resolutions:** Formally support state reform bills to create visible political pressure.

ORGANIZE YOUR COMMUNITY:

- **Host a Town Hall:** Bring residents together to discuss their bills and send their stories to state regulators. Prioritize turnout from CoC neighborhoods.
- **Mobilize Voices:** Organize public comment drives during open CPUC dockets to show regulators widespread community dissatisfaction.
- **Partner Up:** Join forces with other cities, climate groups, consumer advocates, and labor. A "united front" of local governments is much harder for utilities to ignore.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL ADVOCACY

State advocacy is half the equation. The other half is the climate work cities can lead, and the regional coordination no single city can do alone.

Where the Power Is:

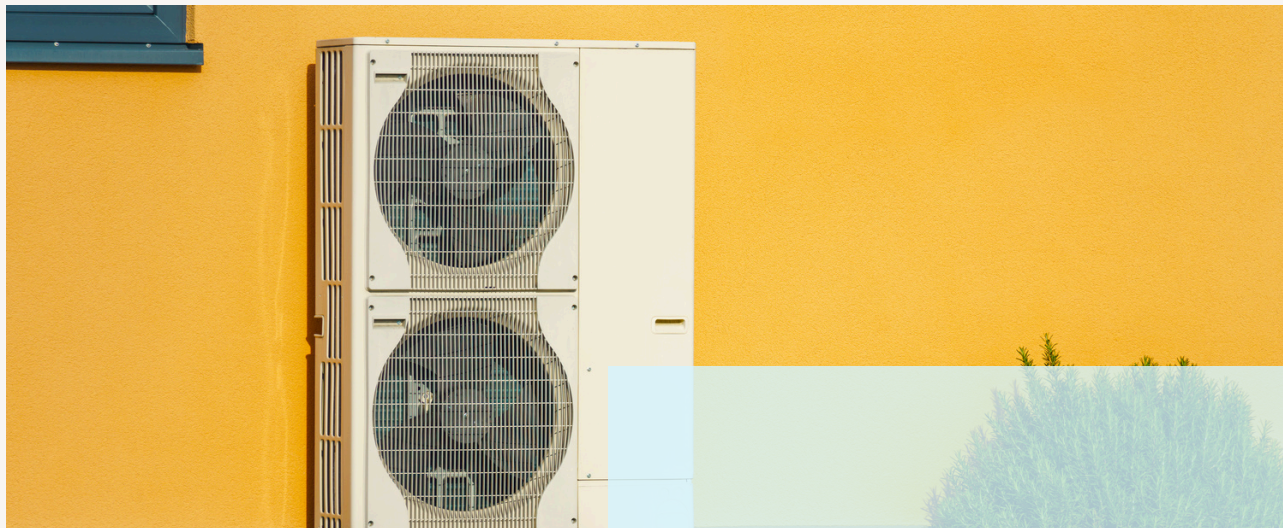
The federal government is rolling back climate commitments. The state is tightening budgets. That puts more weight, and more responsibility, on cities. The cities that move now will shape the next generation of climate policy in San Diego. The cities that wait will leave money and time on the table.

1 CUT EMISSIONS FROM BUILDINGS

A study by USD's Energy Policy Initiatives Center (EPIC) modeled every emissions-reduction strategy in San Diego-region Climate Action Plans; reach codes for existing buildings come out far ahead. In fact, reach codes cut nearly 50% more emissions than the second-place strategy—electric vehicle (EV) adoption—after which emissions reductions drop off significantly. Reach codes are local regulations that require higher energy efficiency and electric appliances beyond standard state baselines.

Cities evaluating their options should look at the cost-effectiveness studies published for the 2025 energy code cycle. Two approaches stand out:

- **FlexPath** lets property owners pick from a menu of upgrades—electrification, efficiency, health improvements—whenever they do a major renovation.
- **AC2HP** is a ready-made ordinance that requires a heat pump instead of a standard AC unit when an air conditioner is replaced, or a gas furnace reaches the end of its life.

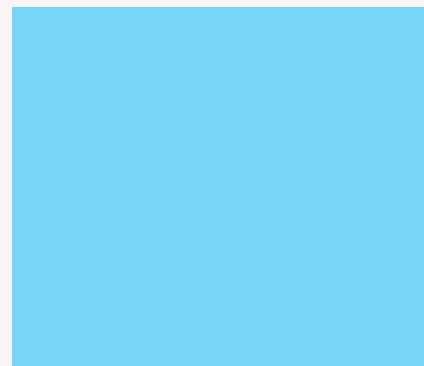


2 LOWER BILLS THROUGH ELECTRIFICATION

Two state-funded programs are already bringing free home electrification to San Diego households. Your city doesn't have to build anything new. The job is to make sure residents know about it and can use it.

- The state's **Equitable Building Decarbonization Program** has completed its first San Diego-area retrofit and is on track to reach 12,000–15,000 households statewide.
- **The San Diego Regional Energy Network (SDREN)**, run by San Diego Community Power and the County and approved by the CPUC, is bringing \$124.3 million in energy-efficiency programs to the region through 2027, and a follow-on plan for 2028–2035 has already been filed. That includes electrification retrofits for homeowners, renters, and property managers across single-family and multifamily housing.

Cities don't need to build any of this from scratch. The job now is to actively promote enrollment and make sure CAP retrofit goals point residents to dollars already on the table.



3 BUILD BEYOND CARS

While EVs are a great step towards reducing emissions, we need more affordable transportation options like biking, walking, and transit.

EVs alone won't get us there. Federal EV tax credits expired earlier than planned, slowing adoption. And even with the EV transition underway, EPIC's analysis shows regional vehicle miles traveled has dropped only about 10% since 2012 — meaning cleaner cars have done nearly all the work so far.

The good news: the alternatives to driving also lower bills, reduce traffic, and make neighborhoods healthier.

4 LEAD ON CLEAN ENERGY

Community Choice Energy programs like San Diego Community Power (SDCP) and Clean Energy Alliance (CEA) now include 14 of San Diego's 18 cities, with Coronado joining SDCP this year, along with the County's unincorporated communities. Their base products are significantly more renewable than SDG&E's, at 50% or higher for both SDCP and CEA. Additionally, both offer a 100% renewable product residents can opt into. Currently, the City of Encinitas remains the only jurisdiction that auto-enrolls residents in the 100% clean energy option. That leaves a large opportunity for the other cities to encourage residents to opt up.

5 LEAD WITH EQUITY

CAPs must have climate justice or equity frameworks for CAP strategies.

The County of San Diego's Board of Supervisors set the equity standard by requiring that 20% of CAP investments go to underinvested or frontline communities. That's paired with a standing County Environmental Justice Workgroup that meets regularly to give feedback on CAP actions. It's one of the more concrete, measurable equity commitments in the region. Most cities describe equity intentions, but the County is one of the few tracking a hard investment number on its recently developed annual report dashboard.



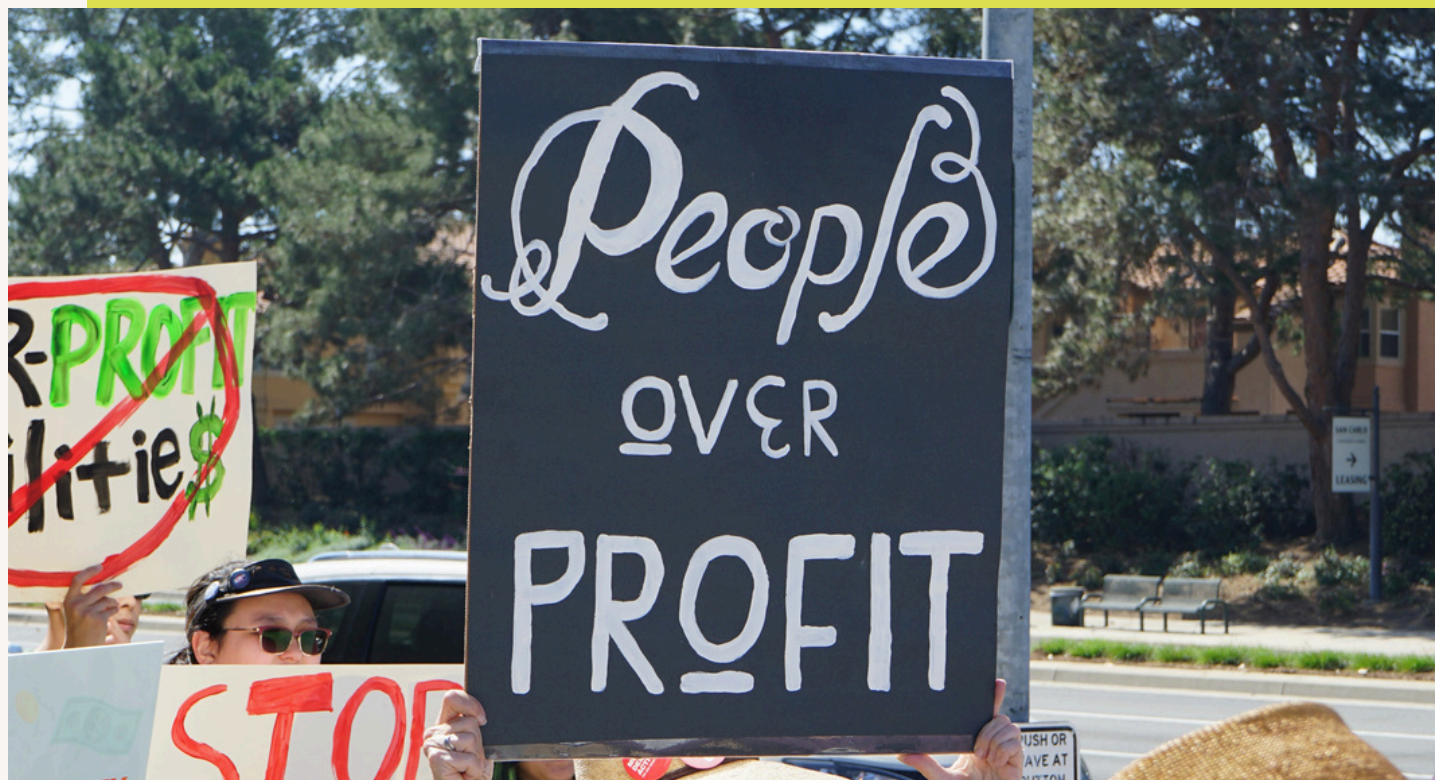
6 PLAN REGIONALLY

We need and deserve regional action and solutions.

Climate calamities are worsening in frequency and intensity, and the region can benefit from the institutional infrastructure necessary to collectively plan, coordinate, and prepare for extreme weather events such as floods, fires, erosion, and extreme heat. Thankfully, we have some great working examples:

- **SANDAG** is building a regional system where bike and pedestrian projects in one city can count toward another city's development requirements, so smaller cities aren't stuck solving transportation emissions alone.
- **San Diego Regional Climate Collective** is developing municipal Extreme Heat Action Plans with the cities of San Diego, La Mesa, and Chula Vista to identify cooling-solution projects and heat-mitigation strategies.
- **ICLEI USA, Local Governments for Sustainability**, offers tools and training for cities that know what they need to do but aren't sure how to pay for it, including a free "Climate Action Planning to Finance-Ready Implementation" series.

Cities that act on both tracks — state and local/regional — move faster and protect more families. Cities that act on only one level are leaving money and time on the table.



Climate Action Campaign (CAC) is a community-based organization building an affordable, 100% clean-energy, climate-safe future through effective and equitable policy action. We believe change happens from the ground up: by uniting community coalitions and investing in the communities most affected by climate impacts, local governments can model bold policy solutions that scale far beyond San Diego.

Sierra Club San Diego Chapter is a grassroots environmental organization whose mission is to explore, enjoy, and protect the planet. The San Diego chapter's priorities include advancing local climate action, environmental justice, and habitat preservation through community-driven advocacy. This local chapter supported this edition of the report card by providing its expertise to help grade the report.

A Climate Action Plan (CAP) is a local government's roadmap for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. CAPs quantify current emissions, set reduction targets, and outline the strategies and measures needed to meet them across the energy, transportation, land use, solid waste, water, and carbon sequestration sectors. Each CAP should be paired with a detailed Implementation Plan describing how those strategies will be funded, executed, and reported on.

Our CAP Report Card assesses climate planning and action across the San Diego region to help the public and local governments take transformative climate action, share best practices, surface regional patterns and trends, and increase transparency and accountability. It arms residents with a tool to hold their governments accountable for the pollution driving the climate crisis, while giving cities data-driven benchmarks for improvement.

This 7th Edition evaluates the CAPs of the ten most populous cities, including the county in the San Diego region, since these governments have the greatest opportunity and responsibility to reduce regional GHG emissions. This edition reevaluates the most recently adopted versions of their CAPs as well as their latest annual monitoring reports with a more streamlined rubric. Implementation remains our focus, as a legally binding CAP is only as good as the action behind it. Graded cities received their scores before the report's release and had the opportunity to provide feedback that led to appropriate score adjustments. Scores in this edition are compared against each jurisdiction's prior CAP and Implementation scores to track year-over-year progress.

The Region's Top Actors

A Climate Action Plan's value comes from being implemented; otherwise, it is a plan on a shelf. Encinitas, La Mesa, and Carlsbad earned the region's top three implementation scores by turning their commitments into real results for their communities.

1

ENCINITAS

CLEAN ENERGY LEADERSHIP

- The only city that automatically enrolls every customer in 100% clean energy
- A reach code requiring upgrades during major home remodels led to 174 energy-efficiency retrofits
- Met its 2030 water-use goal five years early

2

LA MESA

BUILDING A CLIMATE-SMART COMMUNITY

- 147 fully affordable apartments near trolley and bus stops
- Won state funding to develop a Heat Action Plan to protect residents from extreme heat
- 1.28 million pounds of food kept out of the landfill

3

CARLSBAD

GREENER, SAFER NEIGHBORHOOD

- Met its goal of planting 3,000 trees
- Adopted Safe Routes to School plans for two schools
- Added buffers to 3 miles of bike lanes

Proven solutions are ready to scale. What's working in these three cities can work across the region. See how every city scored on the next page.



Final Scores

We congratulate implementation leaders in Encinitas, La Mesa, and Carlsbad because a plan is only as strong as its execution.

Gold



No city received a gold medal.

Silver



Jurisdiction

2026
Implementation Score

Encinitas

88

La Mesa

83

Carlsbad

78

Bronze



Jurisdiction

2026
Implementation Score

County of San Diego

74

City of San Diego

72.5

Vista

69

No Medal Earned

Jurisdiction

2026
Implementation Score

Oceanside

62.5

San Marcos

54

Chula Vista

53.5

Escondido

46.5



Carlsbad

2026 IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 78

2026 CAP SCORE: 108.5

WHAT'S GOING WELL

- **Clean Energy:** In 2025, the city switched all its own accounts to Clean Energy Alliance's 100% renewable energy option.
- **Zero Carbon:** Carlsbad's 2024 CAP commits to cutting emissions 50% by 2035 and 85% by 2045, compared to 2016 levels.
- **Building Electrification:** Carlsbad is working with SDREN on a free survey of the city's building stock, the first step toward setting goals for upgrading existing homes and businesses.
- **Transportation:** In 2025, the City Council adopted Safe Routes to School plans for Jefferson Elementary and Sage Creek High School, with a plan for Kelly Elementary underway. The city also added buffers to 3 miles of bike lanes and improved sidewalks and curb ramps.
- **Trees:** The city met its goal of planting 3,000 trees and updated its tree canopy assessment to guide where to plant next.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Clean Energy:** Under 1% of Carlsbad's Clean Energy Alliance customers use the 100% renewable option. The city should make it the default, as its CAP commits to, or run an opt-up campaign.
- **Smart Growth:** The city approved new housing in the Village, near transit and jobs. Carlsbad should build on this by adding smart growth goals to its CAP to bring more affordable homes near transit.
- **Climate Equity:** The CAP lists equity considerations for every measure, but the annual report doesn't track them. The city should report how its climate actions reach Communities of Concern.
- **Zero Waste:** The city should move its 90% waste diversion goal from 2045 up to 2035.

Chula Vista

2026 IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 53.5

2026 CAP SCORE: 64.5

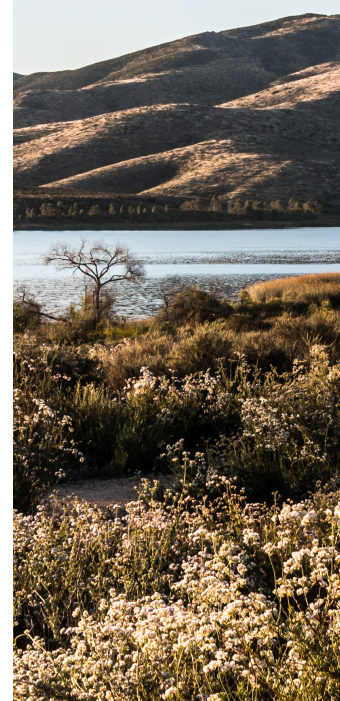
**Chula Vista did not submit a new monitoring report for this edition, so its implementation score reflects the same documentation graded in the 6th Edition.*

WHAT'S GOING WELL

- **Building Electrification:** The city's Building Energy Saving Ordinance requires large multifamily, commercial, and industrial buildings to report their energy use each year, with audits and upgrades required over time.
- **Zero Waste:** The city is implementing its 2022 Zero Waste Plan to reach 90% waste diversion by 2035.
- **Climate Equity:** In 2021, Chula Vista created a Climate Equity Index, one of the few local tools in the region that maps which neighborhoods face the greatest climate risks.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Zero Carbon:** In 2022, Chula Vista set a goal of net zero emissions by 2045. The city should add this goal to its next CAP and make the plan legally binding.
- **Clean Energy:** The city should make Power100 the default or run an opt-up campaign to reach its 100% clean energy goal.
- **Building Electrification:** The city should adopt a reach code for new buildings and connect residents to upgrade programs like SDREN.
- **Transportation:** The city should set goals to get 50% of trips by walking, biking, or transit by 2035.
- **Reporting:** Chula Vista should publish an annual monitoring report so residents can track progress.



City of San Diego

2026 IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 72.5

2026 CAP SCORE: 102.5

WHAT'S GOING WELL

- **Zero Carbon:** The 2022 CAP commits to net zero emissions by 2035, ten years ahead of state law.
- **Smart Growth:** In 2025, 95% of new homes and 99% of new affordable homes were permitted near transit and jobs.
- **Building Electrification:** In January 2026, City Council approved a \$112 million plan to retrofit 40 city facilities, decarbonize 23 of them, and upgrade 39,000 streetlights. The plan pays for itself through energy savings, at no upfront cost to the city.
- **Transportation:** In 2025, the city launched Southeastern Connect, a new micromobility service, and installed 5 roundabouts. That brings the total to 21 since 2021, already past its 2030 goal of 13. The city also retimed 358 traffic signals.
- **Trees:** The city planted 5,381 trees in 2025, nearly triple the year before. Ready, Set, Grow San Diego has planted over 5,000 trees in Communities of Concern since 2024.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Climate Equity:** The city put no new money into the Climate Equity Fund for FY27, and its Equity Stakeholder Working Group no longer meets regularly. The city should restore both.
- **Clean Energy:** Under 1% of the city's San Diego Community Power customers use Power100. The city should make it the default or run an opt-up campaign.
- **Zero Emission Vehicles:** The city is far behind its 2030 goal to electrify its fleet. It should commit to making every city vehicle electric, including trucks and emergency vehicles.
- **Transportation:** Driving has increased citywide. The city should report progress using the same measures its CAP sets, so residents can see if its goals are on track.
- **Building Electrification:** The city should adopt a reach code for existing buildings, such as AC2HP or FlexPath, and connect residents to upgrade programs like SDREN.
- **Zero Waste:** The city's waste diversion rate hasn't meaningfully improved in over a decade and must rise 18% by 2030.

County of San Diego

2026 IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 74

2026 CAP SCORE: 116

WHAT'S GOING WELL

- **Zero Carbon:** The 2024 CAP earned the highest CAP score in the region and commits to net zero emissions by 2045.
- **Climate Equity:** The County committed at least 20% of CAP investments to frontline communities. An Environmental Justice Workgroup of community organizations meets quarterly to advise on how the plan is carried out.
- **Transportation:** The County is ahead of its 2030 goals for new sidewalks and bikeways. It also launched a countywide Safe Routes to School program to make walking and biking to school safer, and has already beaten its 2030 target.
- **Zero Emission Vehicles:** The County has 356 electric vehicles in its fleet, 71% of the way to its 2027 goal.
- **Clean Energy:** The County is installing free solar on homes of income-qualified residents in unincorporated communities.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Clean Energy:** Under 1% of unincorporated San Diego Community Power customers use Power100. The County should make it the default or run an opt-up campaign.
- **Building Electrification:** The County committed to reach codes and a building performance standard by 2026, but both are still in development. It should develop and adopt them, and expand outreach for upgrade programs like SDREN.
- **Smart Growth:** On September 11, 2024, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to carry out the Fire Safe and VMT Efficient smart growth plan, which steers new homes toward jobs and transit and away from high-fire-risk areas. The County has shared few public updates since. It should set a clear timeline to put the plan into action.
- **Zero Waste:** The County should move its 90% waste diversion goal from 2045 to 2035.



Encinitas

2026 IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 88

2026 CAP SCORE: 100

WHAT'S GOING WELL

- **Clean Energy:** Encinitas remains the only city to auto-enroll all customers, including municipal accounts, in the 100% clean energy option.
- **Building Electrification:** The city re-adopted its reach codes in 2025. Its energy upgrade requirement has led to retrofits in 174 homes, on pace for the CAP's 2030 goal of about 250.
- **Transportation:** In 2025, the city added 2.59 miles of bike lanes, 0.42 miles of sidewalks and walkways, 23 crosswalks, and 224 accessible crossing buttons. It was also named Agency of the Year by the San Diego chapter of the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals.
- **Zero Emission Vehicles:** 59% of the city's own cars and light trucks are now electric, and residents have installed 427 home EV chargers, already beating the city's 2030 goal of 370.
- **Water:** Average water use fell to 137 gallons per person per day in 2025, meeting the CAP's 2030 goal five years early.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Zero Carbon:** The current CAP sets no goals past 2030. The city's 2026 CAP update should commit to net zero emissions by 2045.
- **Climate Equity:** The city's 2026 CAP update should identify Communities of Concern, build equity into every section, and give those communities a voice in how the plan is carried out.
- **Transportation:** The city should drop its plan to remove the protected bike lane on Santa Fe Drive and set goals to get 50% of trips by walking, biking, or transit by 2035.
- **Zero Waste:** Encinitas keeps 66% of its waste out of landfills, short of its 80% goal for 2030. The city should set a goal of 90% by 2035.

Escondido

2026 IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 46.5

2026 CAP SCORE: 92

**Escondido is actively preparing its next annual report, so its implementation score reflects the same documentation graded in the 6th Edition.*

WHAT'S GOING WELL

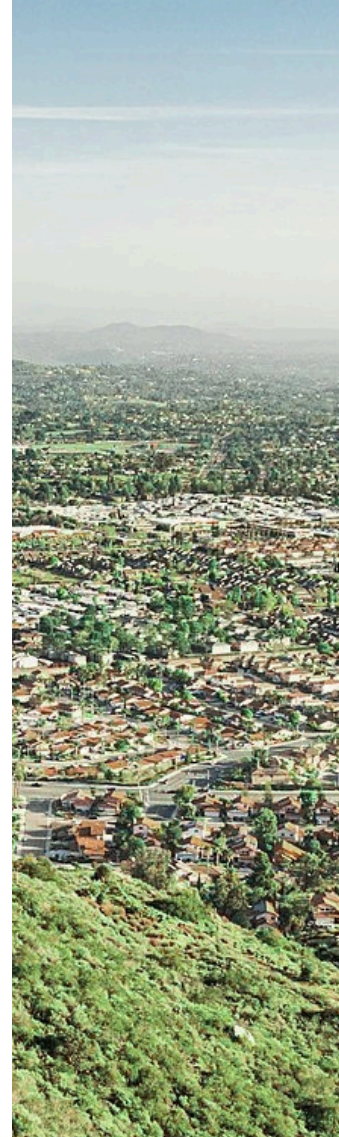
- **Clean Energy:** Escondido joined the Clean Energy Alliance in 2023, giving residents cleaner electricity than SDG&E.
- **Energy Efficiency:** The city upgraded 1,010 streetlights to efficient lighting, more than double its 2035 goal.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Zero Carbon:** The city's next CAP should commit to net zero emissions by 2045.
- **Clean Energy:** Residents are automatically enrolled in Clean Energy Alliance's 50% renewable option. The city should make 100% renewable the default or run an opt-up campaign, starting with its own buildings.
- **Building Electrification:** The city promised an ordinance requiring electric water heaters in new homes by 2023 but hasn't adopted it. It should adopt it and connect residents to upgrade programs like SDREN.
- **Transportation:** The city should set goals to get 50% of trips by walking, biking, or transit by 2035.
- **Climate Equity:** The city should launch its promised Clean Energy Equity Plan and Climate Ambassadors program to reach its most vulnerable neighborhoods.
- **Reporting:** Escondido should publish an annual monitoring report so residents can track progress.

Note: Escondido's CAP score decrease is largely attributable to rubric changes, including a revised median household income adjustment and the removal of the green jobs and agriculture categories, rather than backsliding.

PHOTO: MARK SKOVORODKO PHOTOGRAPHY
CREATIVE COMMONS ATTRIBUTION-SHARE Alike 4.0
INTERNATIONAL LICENSE. ALTERED SATURATION.



La Mesa

2026 IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 83

2026 CAP SCORE: 108

WHAT'S GOING WELL

- **Zero Carbon:** The 2024 CAP update commits La Mesa to the state's goal of carbon neutrality by 2045.
- **Smart Growth:** In 2025, the city completed 8181 Allison Avenue, a 147-unit, 100% affordable housing project near trolley and bus stops.
- **Clean Energy:** All city accounts run on Power100, and city outreach drove 265 new Power100 sign-ups in 2025, a 2,100% jump over 2024.
- **Transportation:** In 2025, La Mesa installed its first protected bike lane on Murray Avenue and launched an e-bike voucher program. Pedestrian injuries have dropped 31% and bike injuries 22% since 2023.
- **Zero Waste:** In 2025, the city partnered with Solana Center and ProduceGood to keep 1.28 million pounds of food out of the landfill.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Clean Energy:** The CAP doesn't set a citywide 100% clean energy goal by a specific date. The city should add one and make Power100 the default.
- **Building Electrification:** The city should adopt a reach code for existing buildings, such as AC2HP or FlexPath, and connect residents to upgrade programs like SDREN.
- **Transportation:** The city tracks bike and pedestrian counts but hasn't set mode shift goals. It should set goals to get 50% of trips by walking, biking, or transit by 2035.
- **Zero Waste:** La Mesa keeps just 26% of its waste out of landfills, and its goal of 75% by 2035 trails peer cities. The city should set a goal of 90% by 2035.

Oceanside

2026 IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 62.5

2026 CAP SCORE: 85

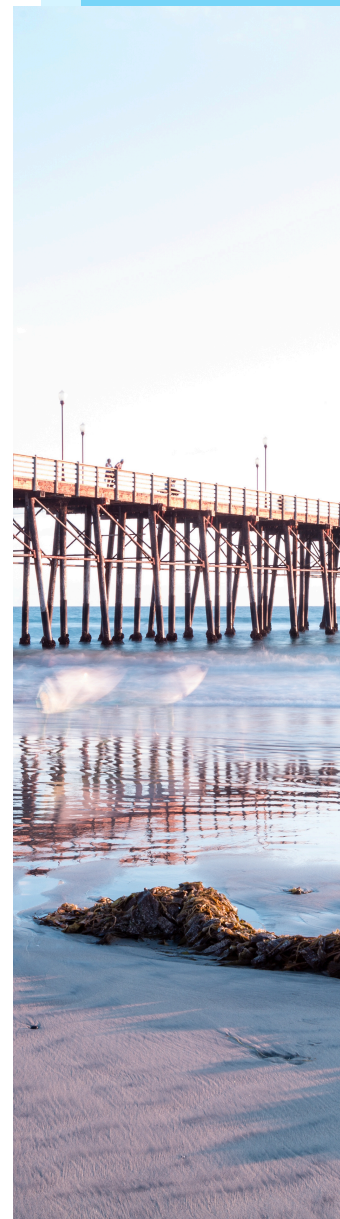
**Oceanside's CAP score reflects its newly adopted 2026 CAP. Its implementation score is based on its 2022 monitoring report under the previous CAP.*

WHAT'S GOING WELL

- **Zero Carbon:** The new 2026 CAP commits to cutting emissions 90% below 2018 levels by 2045.
- **Clean Energy:** The new CAP commits to 100% renewable energy through the Clean Energy Alliance by 2030, with 95% of customers participating.
- **Smart Growth:** The new CAP aims to build 60% of new homes and commercial space in designated infill areas, like the Coast Highway corridor, through 2045.
- **Transportation:** The city completed a Safe Routes to School plan covering 26 schools and runs GOSide, an all-electric downtown shuttle.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Climate Equity:** The new CAP has no equity section and no commitment to ongoing engagement with Communities of Concern. The city should add both.
- **Building Electrification:** The new CAP only explores solar and electric-ready standards for new buildings. The city should adopt a reach code for existing buildings, such as AC2HP or FlexPath, and connect residents to upgrade programs like SDREN.
- **Transportation:** The new CAP has no mode shift goals. The city should set goals to get 50% of trips by walking, biking, or transit by 2035.
- **Reporting:** Oceanside should publish an annual monitoring report so residents can track progress on its new CAP.





San Marcos

2026 IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 54
A 62

WHAT'S GOING WELL

- **Transportation:** The city adopted its first Active Transportation Plan, connected 137 intersections to its traffic management system, and launched the NCTD+ on-demand shuttle pilot.
- **Smart Growth:** Since 2020, the city has approved 463 homes near transit with 50% fewer parking spaces.
- **Building Electrification:** New homes must install alternative-fuel water heaters instead of gas. Projects approved so far will add 1,277 of them.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Zero Carbon:** The city's next CAP should commit to net zero emissions by 2045.
- **Clean Energy:** Residents and city buildings are automatically enrolled in Clean Energy Alliance's 50% renewable option. The city should make 100% renewable the default or run an opt-up campaign, starting with its own buildings.
- **Building Electrification:** The city should adopt a reach code for existing buildings, such as AC2HP or FlexPath, and connect residents to upgrade programs like SDREN.
- **Transportation:** The city should set goals to get 50% of trips by walking, biking, or transit by 2035.
- **Climate Equity:** The city's annual report doesn't show how climate actions reach Communities of Concern or involve them in decisions. The city's next CAP should build equity into every measure.

Vista

2026 IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 69

2026 CAP SCORE: 58

**Vista had competing priorities this cycle, so its scores reflect our grading without city feedback.*

WHAT'S GOING WELL

- **Smart Growth:** The city completed the Vista Palomar and Vista Melrose mixed-use projects in 2024. It also chose a General Plan 2050 approach that adds housing along major transit corridors and downtown.
- **Clean Energy:** All city facilities run on Clean Energy Alliance's 100% renewable option, Green Impact.
- **Energy Efficiency:** The city has already met its 2030 goals to cut energy use at city facilities by 1 million kWh and install 400 kW of solar.
- **Transportation:** In 2025, Vista added physical protection to bike lanes across the city and relaunched its e-bike rebate and safety training program.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Zero Carbon:** The city's next CAP should commit to net zero emissions by 2045.
- **Clean Energy:** Most residents are on Clean Energy Alliance's 50% renewable default, and the CAP aims for only 90% renewable energy by 2030. The city should set a 100% goal and make 100% renewable the default or run an opt-up campaign.
- **Building Electrification:** The CAP only encourages voluntary energy efficiency and sets no electrification requirements for homes and businesses. The city should adopt a reach code for existing buildings, such as AC2HP or FlexPath, and connect residents to upgrade programs like SDREN.
- **Transportation:** The city removed protective barriers from parts of Melrose Drive and Sycamore Avenue months after installing them. It should keep the remaining protected lanes and set goals to get 50% of trips by walking, biking, or transit by 2035.
- **Zero Waste:** The CAP has no plan for food waste or single-use plastics. The city should add both.



CAP Status and Updates

LEGALLY BINDING CAP, LATEST VERSION ADOPTED

County of San Diego - 2024	Carlsbad - 2024
Oceanside - 2026	San Marcos - 2020
Escondido - 2021	La Mesa - 2024

CAP UPDATES IN PROGRESS

City of San Diego - 2022	Imperial Beach - 2019
Del Mar - 2016	Vista - 2021
Encinitas - 2018 revised in 2020	

NON-LEGALLY BINDING CAP ADOPTED

Chula Vista - 2024	Lemon Grove - 2020
Coronado - 2022	Solana Beach - 2024

NO COMMITMENT

Poway

FATALLY FLAWED CAPS

Santee - 2019
El Cajon - 2019

- SANDAG has paused free jurisdiction-level GHG inventories, putting CAP progress tracking at risk. Its 2025 regional inventory covers 2022 data but isn't broken out by city. SANDAG should disaggregate it so jurisdictions can track their own performance.
- Seven jurisdictions — Encinitas, Solana Beach, Oceanside, Escondido, Chula Vista, La Mesa, and the County — won SANDAG Smart Growth Incentive Program grants to update their inventories. The City of San Diego updated separately.

Detailed Scores Breakdown

Climate Action Plan (CAP) scores are out of **130**, and implementation scores are out of **100**. Carlsbad, the City of San Diego, Oceanside, and La Mesa saw big gains in CAP scores after adopting updated plans.

Jurisdiction	Previous CAP Score	2026 CAP Score	Previous Implementation Score	2026 Implementation Score
Encinitas	92	100	82	88
La Mesa	85	108	85	83
Carlsbad	65.5	108.5	70	78
County of San Diego	N/A	116	N/A	74
City of San Diego	78	102.5	63	72.5
Vista	62.5	58	62.5	69
Oceanside	62.5	85	62.5	62.5
San Marcos	59.5	62	59	54
Chula Vista	68.5	64.5	57	53.5
Escondido	97.5	92	49.5	46.5

Climate Action Plan

Grading Criteria

Each jurisdiction receives two grades. The CAP rubric (130 points) evaluates the strength of the plan as written: whether it is enforceable, aligned with state climate targets, and built on effective emissions reduction strategies. The implementation rubric (100 points) evaluates the city's progress on that plan, based on its most recent annual monitoring report. Both rubrics score the structural elements and key strategies below, which together define a gold-standard CAP: ambitious enough to meet the scale of the climate crisis, and grounded in strategies proven to be feasible and effective.



STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

What: On the CAP rubric, the plan must be adopted and legally binding (CEQA-qualified), align with SB 32 and carbon neutrality by 2045 (AB 1279), and assign implementation roles, benchmarks, and monitoring. On the implementation rubric, the city must publish an annual monitoring report with a clear executive summary and progress metrics for each measure.

Why: A strong, enforceable plan sets the bar for action. Transparent annual reporting shows whether the city is on track and gives community members a tool to hold it accountable.



EQUITY

What: The CAP commits to outreach, benefits, and meaningful participation for Communities of Concern and environmental justice groups. Cities report metrics showing progress on each.

Why: Communities of Concern are on the front lines of the climate crisis, burdened by increased air pollution and other adverse health impacts, and have fewer resources to protect against a hotter and drier San Diego.



CLEAN ENERGY

What: The CAP sets a 100% clean energy goal, uses CCE as a key strategy, and includes measures to transition off methane gas and electrify buildings. Cities show steady progress on each.

Why: CCE is one of the most effective ways to reduce GHG emissions, achieve 100% clean energy, and foster local control of energy decisions. CCE allows municipalities to provide clean energy for families and businesses at a competitive cost compared to a monopoly utility. It also allows families to choose their electricity provider and brings significant revenue to the participating municipality. The region's third-largest source of GHG emissions is our built environment utilizing methane gas; it is critical that we retrofit and build new buildings with sustainable electricity.



TRANSPORTATION AND SMART GROWTH

What: The CAP commits to, and cities report on-track progress toward, electrifying 100% of the municipal fleet by 2030; a citywide EV strategy that prioritizes Communities of Concern; mode shift goals for biking, walking, and transit; a Mobility Action Plan; smart growth and infill development; an Active Transportation Plan; and a Complete Streets Policy.

Why: Transportation is the greatest source of GHG emissions in our region. Shifting away from reliance on cars as the primary mode of transportation reduces GHG emissions and has co-benefits of improved public health, safety, and air quality. Mode shift goals also help municipalities plan and budget to shift away from car-centric growth and advocate for assistance to build better transit infrastructure. Smart land-use policies are essential to support commuters' ability to choose non-car transportation. Dense development should be located near transit, walking, and biking infrastructure. Affordable urban housing enables people to use non-car transportation rather than depending on a car for daily commutes.



ZERO WASTE

What: The CAP includes zero-waste strategies, and the city's diversion rate shows on-track implementation .

Why: Waste decaying in landfills emits methane, a potent GHG. Waste typically generates 3% to 11% of municipal GHG emissions.



TREES

What: The CAP sets a tree canopy target and an Urban Forestry Plan, and the city is implementing the plan and is on track to meet the target.

Why: Trees provide shade, filter the air, and absorb carbon.

Acknowledgments

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who made this report possible.

Your commitment to a sustainable future fuels our work, and together, we are making significant strides toward a zero-carbon, equitable future for the San Diego region. Thank you for standing with us and empowering our mission to create meaningful change for generations to come.

City Staff

Katie Hentrich, City of Carlsbad

Cory Downs, City of Chula Vista

Crystal Najera, City of Encinitas

Joel Cvetko, City of Escondido

Hilary Ego, City of La Mesa

Justin Gamble, City of Oceanside

Andrew Martin, City of San Diego

Meghan Kelly, County of San Diego

Sean del Solar, City of San Marcos

Cassidy McCarthy, City of Vista

Graphic Designer

Catherine Walker, Climate Action Campaign

Staff Authors

Anthony Dang, Climate Action Campaign

Staff Reviewers

Catherine Walker, Climate Action Campaign

Nicole Capretz, Climate Action Campaign

Charles Rilli, Sierra Club San Diego

Lucy Terry, Sierra Club San Diego

List of Abbreviations

AB - Assembly Bill

AC2HP - Air Conditioner to Heat Pump

CAC - Climate Action Campaign

CAP - Climate Action Plan

CCE - Community Choice Energy

CEA - Clean Energy Alliance

CEQA - California Environmental Quality Act

CoC - Communities of Concern

CPUC - California Public Utilities Commission

EO - Executive Order

EPIC - Energy Policy Initiatives Center

EV - electric vehicle

FY - fiscal year

GHG - greenhouse gas

ICLEI - ICLEI USA, Local Governments for Sustainability

kW - kilowatt

kWh - kilowatt-hour

NCTD - North County Transit District
SANDAG - San Diego Association of Governments

SB - Senate Bill

SDCP - San Diego Community Power

SDG&E - San Diego Gas & Electric

SDREN - San Diego Regional Energy Network

VMT - vehicle miles traveled

Term Definitions

Active Transportation Plan

A plan for a safe, connected network for walking, biking, and rolling.

Annual Monitoring Report

A yearly report tracking a city's progress on its CAP measures and GHG reduction targets.

Building Electrification

Replacing gas appliances, such as furnaces, water heaters, and stoves, with efficient electric alternatives like heat pumps. It cuts building emissions and improves indoor air quality.

Building Performance Standard

A local policy requiring existing buildings to meet energy or emissions targets that tighten over time.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

California's broadest environmental law. It requires public agencies to identify and reduce the environmental impacts of projects they carry out or approve.

Carbon Neutrality / Net Zero

The point at which greenhouse gases emitted are balanced by greenhouse gases removed from the atmosphere.

Communities of Concern

Neighborhoods, often low-income communities and communities of color, that bear the greatest burden from pollution and climate impacts and have the fewest resources to respond.

Community Choice Energy

A local, not-for-profit electricity provider, such as San Diego Community Power or Clean Energy Alliance, that buys power for residents and businesses while the utility delivers it. Customers are auto-enrolled in a default product. Cities can make 100% renewable the default, or run campaigns encouraging customers to "opt up."

Complete Streets Policy

A policy requiring streets to be designed for safe travel by all users of all ages and abilities, whether walking, biking, taking transit, or driving.

Greenhouse Gas Inventory

A snapshot of a community's greenhouse gas emissions in a given year. It sets a baseline for tracking progress.

Heat Pump

An efficient electric appliance that heats and cools homes or heats water by moving heat instead of burning gas. It replaces gas furnaces, gas water heaters, and standard air conditioners.

Legally Binding CAP

A CAP that meets CEQA requirements for a qualified greenhouse gas reduction plan, making its measures enforceable.

Mode Shift

Moving trips from driving alone to walking, biking, and transit. Mode shift goals set targets for each, and a Mobility Action Plan lays out how to reach them.

Power100

San Diego Community Power's 100% renewable electricity option. Clean Energy Alliance's equivalent is Green Impact.

Reach Code

A local building code that goes beyond state minimum energy requirements, such as requiring all-electric construction or efficiency upgrades.

Reduction Targets

GHG reduction goals aligned with state law. SB 32 requires reducing emissions 40% below 1990 levels by 2030. AB 1279 requires carbon neutrality by 2045, with emissions at least 85% below 1990 levels.

Smart Growth and Infill Development

Building homes and businesses in existing neighborhoods near transit and jobs, which shortens trips and reduces driving.

Urban Forestry Plan

A plan to grow and maintain a city's tree canopy, prioritizing areas that need shade and cooling most.

Waste Diversion Rate

The share of a community's waste kept out of landfills through recycling, composting, and reuse.

References

Ava Berger, This Summer Was Hot. August Shattered Global Heat Records, NPR via KPBS (Sept. 10, 2026), <https://www.kpbs.org/news/science-technology/2026/09/10/this-summer-was-hot-august-shattered-global-heat-records>.

CBS 8, Kelvin Wave Expected to Raise Sea Levels Along San Diego Coast (Sept. 18, 2026), <https://www.cbs8.com/article/tech/science/environment/kelvin-wave-raise-sea-levels-california-coast/509-720f01e2-6557-4360-be0d-754e839c589a>. (Date inferred from embedded photo timestamp.)

CBS 8, More Than 20k SDG&E Customers Lose Power Amid Record Heat (Sept. 10, 2026), <https://www.cbs8.com/article/weather/severe-weather/20k-sdge-customers-lose-power-record-heat/509-09c4ec63-70c2-48d1-8f2f-fc785ac3a87a>. (Date inferred from embedded photo timestamp.)

CBS 8, San Diego's Two-Month Heat Wave May Be Affecting Mental Health, Doctors Say (Sept. 9, 2026), <https://www.cbs8.com/article/news/local/san-diegos-heat-wave-affecting-mental-health/509-ac0aea0f-abd5-4882-9c7f-f16abb8334c8>. (Date inferred from embedded photo timestamp.)

California Public Utilities Commission, Public Advocates Office, The Consumer Advocate at the California Public Utilities Commission: 2022 Annual Report (2022), <https://www.publicadvocates.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cal-advocates-website/files/press-room/reports-and-analyses/annual-reports/2022-annual-report.pdf>, at 3.

California Public Utilities Commission, Public Advocates Office, Q4 2025 Electric Rates Report (Feb. 2026).

Clean Energy Alliance, <https://thecleanenergyalliance.org/>.

Energy Policy Initiatives Center (EPIC), University of San Diego, San Diego Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions Outlook and Gap Analysis, <https://www.sandiego.edu/epic/gap-analysis/>.

Jacob Aere, How to Weather San Diego County's Increasing Extreme Heat, KPBS (July 23, 2026), <https://www.kpbs.org/news/economy/2026/07/23/how-to-weather-san-diego-countys-increasing-extreme-heat>.

Kevin Trevellyan, SDG&E Presents 2028 Rate Increase Proposal to Energy Stakeholders, KPBS (July 8, 2026), <https://www.kpbs.org/news/quality-of-life/2026/07/08/sdg-e-presents-2028-rate-increase-proposal-to-energy-stakeholders>.

References

Malena Carollo, One Reason Your Power Bill is High: Baked-In Profits That Critics Call Excessive, KPBS (Feb. 3, 2025).

NBC San Diego Staff & City News Service, Heat Warning Extended for San Diego County as Some Temps Surpass 100 (Sept. 9, 2026, updated Sept. 10, 2026), <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/stifling-heat-wave-prompts-warnings-advisories-for-all-of-san-diego-county/4070652/>.

NBC San Diego, Carlsbad Declares Local Emergency to Stabilize Bluffs Ahead of El Niño (Sept. 11, 2026), <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/carlsbad-emergency-to-expedite-bluff-stabilization/4072174/>.

NBC San Diego, San Diego Flood Victims, City Leaders Recount Progress Since January 2024 Flooding (Jan. 18, 2025), <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/san-diego-leaders-flood-victims-recount-progress/3727545/>.

Rob Nikolewski, Yes, It Really Was That Hot Last Week. SDG&E Sets a Record for Electricity Demand, San Diego Union-Tribune (Sept. 15, 2026), <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/2026/09/15/yes-it-really-was-that-hot-last-week-sdge-sets-a-record-for-electricity-demand/>.

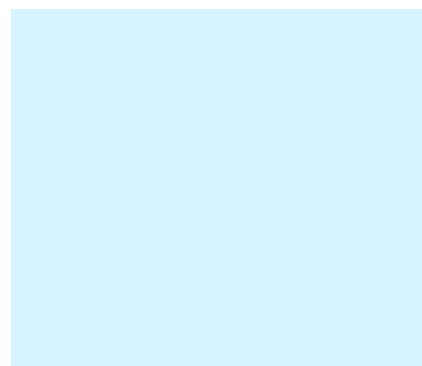
Ruthie Lazenby, Sylvie Ashford & Mohit Chhabra, Power Struggle: California's Electric Utility Ownership Dilemma, Policy Brief No. 20 (UCLA Sch. of Law, June 2025), at 8.

San Diego Community Power, <https://sdcommunitypower.org/>.

San Diego Regional Energy Network (SDREN), <https://sdren.org/>.

Sempra, Sempra Reports 2024 Financial and Business Results.

Shane Phillips, The Palisades and Eaton Fires: Neighborhood Data and Potential Housing Market Effects, UCLA Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies (Feb. 2025), <https://lewis.ucla.edu/research/the-palisades-and-eaton-fires-neighborhood-data-and-potential-housing-market-effects/>.



Support Climate Action

Releasing this report reflects immense dedication and effort from our teams. We've been working behind the scenes to ensure you receive all the important details about your city's climate action efforts. Your support is crucial to sustaining this vital work.

If you believe in the power of transparency and accountability and would like to help us release these updates, we'd greatly appreciate your donation.

For more information, visit our websites at climateactioncampaign.org/donate and sandiegosierraclub.org/donate.

