

EHC Applauds Port of San Diego for Confronting Climate Change

At Friday's board meeting, Commissioners moved to reduce pollution and ensure the Port can adapt to unavoidable impacts

San Diego – June 3, 2013 – On Friday, the [San Diego Unified Port District](#) became a regional leader in addressing climate change when it requested staff to draft a measurable and enforceable greenhouse gas reduction plan. This plan will set a course of action to lower the Port's greenhouse gas emissions—the pollution responsible for causing climate change. Future workshops will address how the Port will prepare infrastructure, natural resources and businesses along the Port to adapt to unavoidable impacts of climate change, like sea level rise.

[Environmental Health Coalition](#) (EHC), which fights toxic pollution in the communities most impacted by climate change, applauds the Port Board of Commissioners for unanimously directing staff to develop the Port's action plan to meet state goals and protect tidelands and surrounding communities. "The science is clear on the looming threat climate change poses to humankind, especially to the Port and adjacent low-income communities of color who have long born the brunt of the Port's pollution," said Kayla Race, policy advocate for EHC. "We credit the Port Commissioners for taking action to define a road map to cleaner air quality."

Specifically, the commissioners directed its staff to:

1. Provide the board with a draft implementation plan to meet the Port's identified greenhouse gas emission reduction goals with prioritized reduction strategies based on cost-effectiveness and enforceability, and
2. Annually monitor and report progress on greenhouse gas reductions.

The commissioners clarified that having a draft plan was a first step and more public discussion would follow. They will hold a second public climate workshop in early summer to discuss how the Port should adapt for some of the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

From rising sea levels, increasing temperatures, worsening air quality, more frequent wildfires, and dwindling rainfall, these impacts pose the biggest threats to San Diego's low-income communities that have already high levels of pollution and respiratory diseases and reduced access to health services. San Diego's rapid growth could cause greater problems if the region does not reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"Trying to adapt to climate change without reducing pollution would be like trying to bail water out the boat without plugging the leak," said Race. "We're pleased the Port is fixing the source of the problem."

The Port, which acts as landlord to its 600 bayfront tenants and operates four marine terminals, is required by the California Environmental Quality Act (a statewide environmental law) to analyze and reduce its greenhouse gas emissions in order to achieve state reduction goals by 2050.

EHC expects the Port will release its draft implementation plan to lower greenhouse gas emissions later this summer, followed by further public and board discussion, and ultimately adoption.

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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COALITION: Founded in 1980, Environmental Health Coalition builds grassroots campaigns to confront the unjust consequences of toxic pollution, discriminatory land use, and unsustainable energy policies. www.environmentalhealth.org