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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SANDAG Approves Plan, Locks in Harmful Future of Freeways
Environmental Health Coalition says plan ignores community input, makes unhealthy communities worse

SAN DIEGO, October 9, 2015—As the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) approved the \$204-billion Regional Transportation Plan for 2015-2019, [Environmental Health Coalition](#) (EHC) and residents say the freeway-centric plan ignores years of community requests for prioritized improvements to transit, biking and walking infrastructure. EHC, an organization fighting toxic pollution in communities south of the I-8, says this plan blatantly jeopardizes the health and safety of residents in low-income communities and keeps San Diego from meeting its Climate Action Plan goals.

“Community members have repeatedly implored SANDAG to prioritize alternate transportation options that don’t create more air pollution or contribute to the effects of climate change,” says Monique López, policy advocate at EHC. “This plan had a great opportunity to lead San Diego toward a healthier future and instead, it’s taken the entire region backwards.”

This year, the City of San Diego will finalize its Climate Action Plan and citywide goals to reduce the harmful impacts of climate change. The plan has a goal to get six percent of residents commuting by bike and 12 percent using transit by the year 2020. In direct contradiction, this morning City of San Diego representatives supported a plan that expands freeways through the heart of the City.

SANDAG updates the Regional Transportation Plan every four years to reflect changing transportation needs region wide. According to EHC, the 2015 list of freeway lane additions in the plan looks nearly identical to the freeway-centric 2011 plan. The plan calls for the expansion of four major freeways, I-5, I-805, SR-94 and I-15, all of which run directly through low-income communities south of the I-8. Research from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency shows that these communities already struggle with [some of the highest levels of air pollution in the state](#). [Another study shows](#) that residents in these communities are ten times more likely to get hit by a car than other San Diego neighborhoods.

“We need safe bike lanes, smooth sidewalks and more transit stops that allow us to move around our community way we want to,” says Alma Alcantar, resident of Sherman Heights. “A plan that adds lanes to the freeways doesn’t benefit my family or my community, yet we’ll be the ones struggling with the unwanted air pollution, noise pollution and health hazards.”

EHC states the Regional Transportation Plan will not improve mobility in the long run and falls far short of community needs. Sadly, says López, SANDAG's vision is limited.

For more information on Environmental Health Coalition and its work for transportation justice in the San Diego region, please visit www.environmentalhealth.org.

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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COALITION: Founded in 1980, Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) builds grassroots campaigns to confront the unjust consequences of toxic pollution, discriminatory land use and unsustainable energy policies. Visit us online at <http://www.environmentalhealth.org>.