

San Diego weighing plan to have 100% green energy by 2035

By **Joshua Emerson Smith**

DECEMBER 2, 2015, 8:01 PM

SAN DIEGO — As international climate-change talks got underway this week in Paris, a key committee in San Diego pushed ahead with a blueprint for cutting greenhouse-gas emissions and powering the city using only green energy within two decades.

Members of the City Council's environment committee unanimously approved the proposed Climate Action Plan, which was first drafted nearly two years ago.

The document is scheduled to be reviewed by the full council on Dec. 15, where it's expected to garner strong support. Mayor **Kevin Faulconer** and other elected officials, along with a range of business and community advocacy groups, have voiced their backing as well.

San Diego is on the verge of committing to 100% renewable energy by 2035. That goal exceeds the state mandate, which calls for green energy to account for 50% of all power usage in California by 2030.

Similar efforts to go all-renewable have been launched in San Francisco, San Jose and Las Vegas. Burlington, Vt., and Aspen, Colo., say they already run a 100% renewable-energy grid.

In San Diego County, more than a dozen cities are considering or have adopted climate-change plans.

San Diego's Climate Action Plan calls for exploring a program called community choice aggregation, or CCA, to help the city meet its aim of 100% renewable energy usage. Under the program, a nonprofit board of elected officials, supported by a staff of energy experts, would determine where the city gets its electricity.

Currently, San Diego Gas & Electric buys and sells all power to the city. The investor-owned utility has recently taken steps that would allow its parent company, Sempra Energy, to lobby against community choice aggregation. The City Council will have to consider whether to adopt a schedule that could lead to a final decision on the program by as early as April.

The San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce criticized what it saw as a hasty timeline.

"Rushing into multibillion-dollar decisions, without time to fully study the impacts, places San Diego residents and businesses at risk of overpaying for unknown climate benefits," **Jerry Sanders**, the group's

president, said in the statement.

Nicole Capretz, executive director of the nonprofit advocacy group Climate Action Campaign, praised the committee's actions.

"We are modeling success that can be replicated in every city around the world," she said. "We are calling on the mayor and the council to develop a detailed implementation plan with full funding."

Although the plan is widely embraced, concerns about its cost loom. And some grass-roots activists voiced frustration at the committee meeting that the document doesn't give enough priority to low-income neighborhoods that have long suffered from poor air quality.

"We have to include equity and funding for implementation in this climate plan," said Diane Takvorian, executive director of the Environmental Health Coalition.

The city intends to form a working group that would report to the environment committee on how to execute the plan, said Councilman David Alvarez, who is chairman of the committee.

joshua.smith@sduniontribune.com

Twitter: @jemersmith

Smith writes for the San Diego Union-Tribune.

Copyright © 2016, Los Angeles Times

A version of this article appeared in print on December 03, 2015, in the News section of the Los Angeles Times with the headline "San Diego plan would use 100% green energy by '35" — Today's paper | [Subscribe](#)

This article is related to: [Jerry Sanders](#), [Kevin Faulconer](#)