

# San Diego's Climate Action Plan Makes California History

San Diego became the first California city on Dec. 15 to endorse the use of a screening system that identifies polluted neighborhoods and will use the tool to direct investments to communities in need, the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) reported.

The City Council approval earned immediate praise from residents and grassroots advocates concerned about pollution and the environment.

In particular, environmental advocates in San Diego have long been concerned about pollution in the city's Barrio Logan area, a racially-diverse community that has a history of industrial businesses, working families and [higher-than-average asthma rates](#).

"My neighborhood has desperately needed policies and actions to address the harmful impacts of climate change in our backyards," Maria Martinez, a Barrio Logan resident, said in a statement released Tuesday from EHC. "Today, we celebrate a plan that ensures a healthy San Diego for all communities is on the horizon."

The statewide tool, [CalEnviroScreen](#), shows pollution levels throughout California. State environmental officials, who administer the tool, have used it [to determine communities](#) that are "disadvantaged" under California law. Investments are then used to help these communities improve public health, economic activity and quality of life, state officials have said. There is also an effort to reduce pollution in these areas.

In San Diego, the neighborhoods most affected by climate change are Barrio Logan, City Heights, Sherman Heights, Logan Heights, San Ysidro and Southeastern, said Georgette Gomez, EHC associate director. They are, as she said, communities that "suffer from damaging air quality, burdensome energy bills and inaccessible public transit."

As part of the campaign to convince the San Diego City Council to adopt this plan and environmental tool, nearly 1,000 residents and 15 organizations joined in supporting EHC. They asked elected leaders to ensure that equity was represented in the policy.

Grassroots advocates and residents in San Diego hope other California cities will follow suit and approve a climate action plan and use CalEnviroScreen.

*[Environmental Health Coalition](#) works to achieve environmental and social justice by empowering communities to make social change. The group, based in National City, Calif., works to protect public health and the environment from toxic pollution.*