

Green grades rise for San Diego City Council

By Mike Lee

Originally published 10:44 a.m., April 20, 2011, updated 2:30 p.m., April 20, 2011

Grades for San Diego city councilmembers ranged from D+ to A+ during 2010, according to a coalition of leading conservation groups across the region that assessed 18 key votes with environmental implications.

The annual scorecard, issued Wednesday morning, shows an overall increase in green grades from last year, when Cs, Ds and Fs were more common than As and Bs. Overall, councilmembers and Mayor Jerry Sanders sided with the environmental groups 88 percent of the time in 2010, up from 72 percent of the time the year before.

Votes counted by the report card included wastewater recycling, renewable energy, vernal pool protections, sustainable building policies and climate change adaptation. Councilmembers were graded on their voting record and Sanders was graded on formal recommendations by his staff to the City Council.

"This is really great news for San Diego, that city officials are really starting to turn around on their environmental policies," said Colin Parent, who sits on the board of The League of Conservation Voters San Diego. "The grades in 2010 weren't painful. ... It shows that if the City Council and the mayor want to be environmental, it's absolutely within their power to do so."

Here's how city leaders fared:

Sherri Lightner: C+ (C in 2009)

Kevin Faulconer: B- (D in 2009)

Todd Gloria: A (A- in 2009)

Tony Young: A- (D in 2009)

Carl DeMaio: D+ (F in 2009)

Donna Frye: A+ (A in 2009)

Marti Emerald: A- (C- in 2009)

Ben Hueso: A (C- in 2009)



PEGGY PEATTIE /P>

Wastewater treatment and reuse -- including the future of the Point Loma Wastewater Treatment - is one of the biggest environmental issues facing San Diego.

Mayor Jerry Sanders: B+ (D- in 2009)

Frye has been a favorite of conservationists for years but she has been termed off the council. Former council president Hueso is now in the state Assembly.

DeMaio has championed fiscal reform at the city, including the city's utilities department, but environmental groups said he cast more votes against their agenda than any other councilmember.

DeMaio's office issued the following statement: "Councilmember DeMaio is fighting for environmental priorities that matter to San Diegans, such as eliminating fees on solar energy project, attracting clean tech jobs to our region, and reforming the city's high water rates to encourage water conservation."

Lightner also issued a statement on Wednesday, highlighting her "leadership on environmental issues." She referenced efforts to oppose the Regents Road Bridge which threatened Rose Canyon open space, and to back the city's Climate Mitigation Action Plan.

"The 'grade' is based on a handful of subjectively selected council votes. Most of the important environmental challenges facing our region are not put to vote at City Council, but rely on the work we do outside the council chambers," Lightner said.

Parent credited the scorecard with helping to increase pro-environment thinking. "Getting a bad vote one year encourages people to get a good vote the following year," he said.

The Environmental Quality Report Card started in 2001 as the Water Quality Report Card published by San Diego Coastkeeper. In 2009, several other groups joined and the review was expanded to include a wide variety of environmental issues.

Local conservation groups said they followed the protocol for the National Environmental Scorecard, which national organizations use to assess members of Congress.

This year's report card was issued by The League of Conservation

Voters San Diego, San Diego Sierra Club, San Diego Coastkeeper, California Native Plant Society, Surfrider San Diego, Center On Policy Initiatives, Coastal Environmental Rights Foundation, Environmental Health Coalition, Friends of Rose Canyon, San Diego Audubon Society and San Diego Canyonlands.

Mike Lee: (619)293-2034; mike.lee@uniontrib.com. Follow on Twitter @sdutlee.

Find this article at:

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/2011/apr/20/1m21enviro>

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

© Copyright 2011 The San Diego Union-Tribune LLC.



COUNT ON CHEVY EVENT

MALIBU LS
Low mileage lease example for very well qualified lessees

\$179/MONTH FOR 39 MONTHS WITH \$2,499 DUE AT SIGNING
No security deposit required. Tax, title, license and dealer fees extra.
Mileage charge of \$.20/mile over 39,000 miles. [> SEE DETAILS](#)