




**COUNCILMEMBER CHRIS CATE
CITY OF SAN DIEGO
SIXTH DISTRICT**

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: January 26, 2018
TO: Councilmember David Alvarez, Chair, Environment Committee
FROM: Councilmember Chris Cate 
SUBJECT: 2018 Environment Committee Priorities

I appreciate the opportunity to share my Environment Committee priorities for 2018. I look forward to addressing San Diego's critical environmental issues to ensure local resources are protected for the enjoyment of future generations.

WATER AND WASTEWATER

Finalize Rate Reform Analysis

During the review process of the 2015 Cost of Service Study (COSS), my office submitted an amendment that identified funding for a Rate Reform analysis. This analysis will outline a variety of options to ensure the protection of revenue for the operations of the Public Utilities Department (PUD) during times of drought, while incentivizing ratepayers to conserve water. Per PUD staff, the analysis is scheduled to be presented to the Environment Committee in June of this year. Prior to this meeting, a robust community outreach process needs to be conducted by engaging citizen groups, stakeholder organizations, and the City's Independent Rates Oversight Committee to determine which rate option will provide consistent revenue to PUD without subjecting San Diego ratepayers to uncertainty.

Review the City's Use of Weather Based Irrigation Controllers

One of the recommendations in the Climate Action Plan is to create an Outdoor Landscaping Ordinance that would require the use of Weather-Based Irrigation Controllers (WBIC). A commercial grade WBIC has been confirmed by the Environmental Protection Agency to save approximately 134,511 gallons of water per year. Prior to moving forward with this recommendation, the City should evaluate its own use of this technology. Currently, the City utilizes WBICs in Balboa and Mission Bay Parks, however, 85 to 90 percent of the parks in the Community Parks II Division are still in need. The Committee should receive an update from the Park and Recreation

installation costs corresponding with expected water savings. The cost-benefit analysis should reflect Executive Order B-37-16 with regard to potential penalties that may result from exceeding rationing allotments.

Monitor Statewide Drought Regulations

The City of San Diego has invested heavily to develop a locally-controlled and sustainable water supply through the Carlsbad Desalination Plant and its Pure Water program. These investments have and will continue to provide flexibility to the City, especially during times of drought. As the State conducts its public input process for Executive Order B-37-16, which proposes to institute rationing policies for water suppliers statewide, it is imperative that the City advocates strongly for the ability to make independent determinations with regard to its own water operations. The Committee should work with PUD, Mayor's office, and the City's State lobbyists to advocate on behalf of San Diego ratepayers.

Receive an Update on Water Agency Water Conservation and Rebate Programs

The City recently initiated an open application process from December 1, 2017 through December 15, 2017 to incentivize residential and business customers to replace their grass with drought tolerant landscaping. I request an update on the Grass Replacement Rebate Program from PUD. This update should include details concerning PUD's outreach strategy, program performance metrics, water savings analysis, and the utilization of this rebate compared to other City water conservation rebate programs. In addition, the Committee should receive an update from the San Diego County Water Authority and Metropolitan Water District regarding the status of various conservation programs and the funding available to City residents, as well as other rebate programs available to the City, such as the Local Resources Program, to fund various capital projects, including the Pure Water Program.

Receive an Update on Statewide CA Water Fix

The Committee has previously received a report regarding the Governor's proposed Delta Fix proposal, but has not had an update since that time. With more details and information available, the Committee should receive an update about the potential impacts to ratepayers and the delivery of water to residents.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION & ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Monitor the Implementation of Climate Action Plan

In 2015, the City Council unanimously approved a bipartisan and historic Climate Action Plan (CAP) that seeks to achieve 100 percent renewable energy by 2035. A crucial component of the adopted CAP mandates is that a cost-benefit analysis be conducted before any action is taken by the City Council. It is imperative that these analyses are done in a timely manner to provide the committee with more than sufficient time to review the respective ordinances. This review process is vital to ensuring the goals of the CAP are met while providing complete information and flexibility.

Receive an Update on Statewide 100 Percent Clean Energy Efforts

Review state legislation and opportunities to support the state going to 100 percent renewables as a planning standard, with a Renewable Portfolio Standard of 60 percent, which would include off-ramps in the case technology does not materialize to ensure ratepayers are not negatively impacted by rate shocks.

Consider a Street Cleanliness Assessment Pilot Program

Since taking office in 2014, my office has consistently received concerns regarding the cleanliness of streets and neighborhoods in the City of San Diego. These community concerns often involve illegal dumping, graffiti, and litter. In light of the recent creation of the "Clean SD" program, the City should move forward with a data-driven pilot program that utilizes technology to better map and monitor areas prone to the aforementioned public nuisance issues. This information should be utilized to create a robust citywide abatement program that operates on a proactive basis.

Receive an Urban Tree Canopy Update

In 2017, the City passed the ambitious Urban Forestry Program Five Year Plan with the goal of reaching a 35 percent urban tree canopy coverage by 2035. This plan not only helps our environment, it beautifies our neighborhoods as well. One of the programs the City has implemented to help obtain this goal is the Free Tree Program. The City also received a grant from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention to plant 500 street trees in urban neighborhoods. I request the Committee receive an update on the Five Year Plan and the aforementioned program to measure how well the City is performing. This update will allow the City to identify areas for improvement and examine new opportunities to supplement tree canopy coverage in not only low-income neighborhoods, but in communities that are built-out with higher concentrations of greenhouse gas emissions due to vehicle traffic.

Consider an Alternative Transportation Program

The City currently offers a subsidy for public transportation, but only to employees who do not purchase a monthly parking pass and commute at least three days per week. Further, the City offers mileage reimbursement for work travel, but does not reimburse for work travel taken by public transportation. The increase of public transportation is critical for the City to achieve its greenhouse gas reduction targets. The Committee should work to revise the City's alternative transportation policy to further incentivize employees to take public transportation by reimbursing work travel and daily commuting by public transportation. The program should be funded by revenue generated by monthly parking passes from the City's concourse. The projected revenue for FY18 is \$616,673. In addition, department budgets should be amended to absorb work travel reimbursements similar to the process of mileage reimbursement.