CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Add "Plant-Based" to EP^3 as the 13th Environmentally Preferable characteristic.

THE ASK: By January 31, 2027

1) Add "m. Plant-Based" to §4.1.3; Define as "food containing no animal-derived ingredients."
2) Include plant-based food purchases in the annual EP^3 report.
3) Revisit CECC-4.2b's equity score of 1 out of 10.

Three reasons the City should amend EP^3 (A.R. 35.80):

1 ADDING "PLANT-BASED" ACCELERATES THE CAP AND BRINGS FOOD INTO EP^3

- EP^3's "Bio-based" characteristic excludes products used as food or feed.[1]
- Adding plant-based closes this gap and supports CAP Action CECC-4.2b, which calls for sustainable food purchasing requirements.[2]
- The change uses an existing regulation without requiring specific purchases or new funding.

CECC-4.2b is a Foundational action in the CAP; its status is Not Started.[2]

25% of global GHG emissions are associated with food supply chains.[3]

2 PLANT-BASED FOODS USE LESS LAND AND WATER, AND GENERATE FEWER GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

- Global dietary-shift scenarios estimate 3.1 billion hectares less agricultural land, 19% less freshwater withdrawal, 50% less acidification and 49% less eutrophication.[4]
- Livestock systems account for approximately 80% of agricultural methane emissions.[5]
- Supports CECC-4.2b's target to reduce the carbon and water footprint of specified animal-product purchases by 20%.[2]

6.5 Gt CO_2-eq per year potential reduction in global food-related emissions under dietary-shift scenarios.[4]

UP TO 75% less agricultural land would be required globally under a shift away from animal products.[4]

3 IT SUPPORTS LOCAL AND INCLUSIVE HEALTH, NUTRITION, AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD PURCHASING

- Directing crops to human consumption avoids losses from feeding crops to livestock.[6]
- Aligns with County EAT Well Practices[7] and Board Policy B-75.[8]
- Supports CECC-4.2b's second target (local, healthy, and sustainable foods at 20% of purchases).[2]
- Plant-based options can accommodate diverse dietary traditions and lactose intolerance.[9]

+70% potential increase in available food calories if crops were directed to human consumption.[6]

1 BILLION additional people the U.S. agricultural system could potentially feed through direct use of crop calories.[6]

[1] City of San Diego, Administrative Regulation 35.80, Exh. 1(B).
[2] City of San Diego, Climate Action Plan, CECC-4.2b.
[3] WEF (2021), Net-Zero Challenge.
[4] Poore & Nemecek (2018), as cited in IPCC AR6 WGIII Ch. 7IPCC (2022).
[5] Reisinger et al. (2021)
[6] Cassidy et al. (2013)
[7] County EAT Well Practices (2016).
[8] County Board Policy B-75.
[9] NIDDK Definition & Facts for Lactose Intolerance (2025).

SAN DIEGO FOOD SYSTEM ALLIANCE · SANTOSHA · SIERRA CLUB SAN DIEGO CHAPTER · TRACY'S REAL FOODS · PLANT BASED TREATY · SAN DIEGO 350 CLIMATE ACTION · CIVIC PLATE · Plant Diego · SIS SUSTAINABILITY IS SEXY · Better Food FOUNDATION · SXFA Strategic Action for Animals · Healthy Kids Happy Planet!