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SAN ANTONIANS CALL FOR UTILITY ACCOUNTABILITY AFTER CITY'S APPROVAL OF CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

SAN ANTONIO, TX. - Today, the San Antonio City Council approved by a 10-1 vote San Antonio's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP). The CAAP sets climate pollution reduction targets in line with recent IPCC reports—promising to eliminate 41 percent of our climate pollution by 2030 and get to carbon-neutral by 2050. However, it is woefully short on implementation commitments.

The 2030 and 2050 targets are set at levels that still represent unacceptable risk of climate catastrophe. These targets also fail to account for the fact that U.S. cities, such as San Antonio, hold a larger responsibility for the climate crisis and are better positioned than cities in developing countries to reduce emissions quickly by shifting to clean technologies. The plan also lacks clear and strong language on several key emissions reduction strategies that will be needed and can reduce costs - including a transition to renewable energy and electric vehicles.

Members of Climate Action San Antonio, a coalition of dozens of local community organizations, gathered outside the council chambers following the vote, describing the plan as just the beginning of the local response to the climate crisis.

“The CAAP is a work in progress. It’s a start,” said Jessica Guerrero of Vecinos de Mission Trails. “The real work of getting San Antonio climate ready comes after the Council approves it and starts an equitable implementation that puts people first and holds polluting industries accountable.”

According to Climate Action SA members, the plan ignores the obvious need to hold city-owned utility, CPS Energy, accountable. While the CPS Energy Board of Trustees voted to support the climate plan, the utility's executive leadership continues to suggest the utility will burn coal as late as the 2060s.

“Obstruction from CPS Energy, Valero, and other powerful forces in our city removed much of the best language from the CAAP’s first draft,” said Terry Burns, president of the Alamo Group of the Sierra Club. “However, San Antonio moves in the right direction with the passage of CAAP and we will continue to push for CPS coal plant closures, decreased fossil fuel use in transportation, and other ways to improve our environmental health.”

Historical inequities mean lower-income residents, mostly people of color, bear the brunt of climate change's growing impacts. Forecasts hold that if we fail to respond to the climate crisis, our residents could be suffering through life-threatening temps over 100 degrees for months on end. Stronger storms present a rising threat in flood-prone San Antonio. Dependency on fossil fuel contributes to our rising temperatures, intense storms, and increasingly frequent floods happening locally and throughout the nation.

"We are calling on the City to pursue climate justice based policies that deliver co-benefits across the spectrum," said Diana Lopez, executive director of the Southwest Workers Union. "These community improvements should include local green jobs, cost savings for struggling families, neighborhood green spaces, and community centered economic revitalization, and in health benefits from reduced pollution in disproportionately impacted communities."

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