

I wish to welcome and congratulate our returning Mayor and new and returning City Council Members. Your elections are great examples of fair and honest local democracy at work. I wish you very productive and successful service to our city over the next two years. My name is Dr. Terry Burns, retired physician, pathologist, and Chair of the Alamo Sierra Club. The Sierra Club is our nation's oldest, largest and most effective grass roots volunteer environmental organization. Over more than a century the Sierra Club has expanded across the country, with over 3 million supporters and almost 3000 right here in San Antonio. The Sierra Club mission has changed focus over the years from outings and park preservation, to encompass the full scope of environmental issues, from air quality--I wear this shirt proudly--to toxins in our food and water, and climate change. In the last few decades the Sierra Club came to understand that social injustice is deeply tied to environmental abuse, and environmental injustice and social injustice are inextricably linked.

The Sierra Club, along with a Climate Action SA Coalition of dozens of other local social and environmental justice groups has spent hundreds of hours over the last two years to develop a strong Climate Action & Adaptation Plan that is based on science, practical strategies, and founded in equity. We chose to participate in this effort. The Mayor wanted all major interest groups at the table for this process, so that no one at the end could pretend to be surprised by the result. **WE PARTICIPATED!** Many of the most powerful business interests **CHOSE TO SIT OUT!** now complaining about the result. A good opinion piece in last Sunday's SAEN by Joni Carswell, CEO and president of Texan by Nature, points out how important it is for business and environmentalists to collaborate, for "a future where all citizens, all leaders embody an ethos where conservation is simply a part of every decision and action." This is what we need from you our city leaders, and from our business community. It is time to put obstruction aside and work for the common good. Change is coming and the costs of doing nothing, in order to protect old entrenched profit ways, will be **FAR GREATER** than the costs of preparedness.

I urge our newly elected leaders to do the following:

- 1) Maintain the **EQUITY LENS** in Budget and other City operations. This is hugely important.
- 2) Pass a strong Climate Action & Adaptation Plan **SOONER RATHER THAN LATER. AND** Please approve acceptance of Bloomberg Grant Money **TODAY.**
- 3) Business interests that made their choice to sit out should not be allowed to hijack the process as has happened too often in past city planning efforts. A strong CAAP must have a time table of **early** actions, as climate science demands. We can delay **NO LONGER.** This means insisting that CPS develop plans to shut down Spruce coal plants and remaining natural gas plants by 2030.
- 4) Our air is unhealthy due especially to our coal plants and vehicles. We are in **NON-attainment** for ozone, and another hot summer is upon us. We have little more than a year to achieve enough progress to avoid going from marginal non-attainment to moderate, which carries much more draconian consequences. Key to making significant progress will be what we can achieve with CPS and with ConnectSA. We need to shut down our coal plants and promote electric vehicle use and expand charging infrastructure. We need to get EV ready codes included in new construction. We need to get robust transit approved despite opposition from auto dealers, fossil fuel interests and the political far right . We cannot bulldoze more freeway construction through neighborhoods. I was pleased to read that former Councilman Saldana will be taking over at VIA. He understands these issues and is a transit advocate.
- 5) We have pushed for years for more transparency and accountability from **OUR PUBLIC** utilities. I applaud the Mayor for achieving major progress with the CPS Board recently, finally allowing citizens to be heard and live streaming of Board meetings, starting this afternoon. I urge much more. Major policy decisions by our utilities--like energy generation sources such as Spruce and water supplies like Vista Ridge--these billion dollar decisions should **NOT** be made without community and city council hearings, discussions and votes. Spruce and Vista Ridge both represent billions of dollars spent in our name, from our pockets, without our input. Even though Vista Ridge is almost a done deal, we believe we the public **DESERVE** a public accounting, an independent report of the Vista

Ridge project explaining where our money has gone. We urge Council to implement this review NOW.

- 6) I urge you also to take a much more active role in oversight of our utilities. SAWS Board Chairman Berto Guerra is termed out. In fact, his final term EXPIRED over a year ago, as did his protege Pat Merritt. I think he wants to stay on to drink the first Vista Ridge water. This is unacceptable, and undemocratic. What are term limits for otherwise?? I call on the Mayor to replace Mr. Guerra with Amy Hardberger as Chair, and to begin the replacement process for both Mr. Guerra and Ms. Merritt immediately. I likewise urge that process to be different from the past, open and transparent for dialogue with and questions from the public to Board candidates. It would be good to have some people on our boards who can advocate for our environment and our socially disadvantaged groups, and not just for big business.

I applaud your victories and your service. We live in difficult times. However, our science has never been better. We understand the climate threats well and they are real. Our technologic solutions are also better than ever, AND more cost effective. SI SE PUEDE!! We CAN AVERT CLIMATE CATASTROPHE, and make our life better and more equitable, just and healthy in the process. Groups like the SA Manufacturers, Chambers, and TPPF will tell us we can't, that it's all too expensive, because of course change threatens their bottom line. BUSINESS AS USUAL threatens much MORE than any bottom line. We already see mass climate related migrations due to drought in Central America, Syria, massive flooding, etc. Remember SI SE PUEDE! **What we need is POLITICAL WILL.** I call on you to provide us that. We have your back.