

Two California Cities' Call to Action

By Elaine Murphy / Fri, December 07, 2012



Earlier this month, two California cities officially declared support for the fight against climate change. Representing both the northern and southern halves of the states, San Francisco and Culver City have both announced support for climate change prevention measures, joining other American cities in the call to action. In doing so, these cities have fought for their and the earth's future and joined the Center for Biological Diversity's Clean Air Cities campaign.

More than three dozen cities nationwide have expressed support for legislation against climate change, and have encouraged the federal government to use the Clean Air Act as a means of fighting climate change by reducing greenhouse gases such as carbon.

Because of San Francisco's proximity to the ocean, the city is especially vulnerable to the effects of rising sea levels. Experts predict that the California coast will see a three-foot sea level rise within this century, a change that could affect San Francisco's airport, water treatment plants, highways, and other essential public facilities, as well as the region's coastal wetland environments and wildlife.

"I'm proud of our city's leaders for acknowledging climate change's dangers and supporting use of the Clean Air Act to fight carbon pollution," said Kaylah Sterling, a San Francisco resident who advocated for the initiative. "San Francisco has joined communities around the country, from Los Angeles to Miami, in pressing the federal government for quick action. To head off catastrophic climate change, we have to move fast. I am also very grateful to the Center for Biological Diversity, which is working diligently to care for the Earth's environment and its inhabitants."

"San Francisco's Climate Action Plan has made our city a leader in the battle against global warming, but we also support strong federal action to combat the problem," said president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors David Chiu, who introduced the Clean Air Cities resolution. "We're proud to join Los Angeles and more than 35 other cities in backing use of the Clean Air Act to reduce greenhouse gas pollution."

Culver City is located in a region of the state that is highly affected by smog and air pollution, and will see more of this pollution if climate change continues unfettered. Air pollution from carbon and other toxins has contributed to a rising number of children and adults diagnosed with asthma – a condition that affects 1.25 million Los Angeles County residents – as well as higher temperatures and a higher level of ground ozone. Culver City's environmental safety and public health standards are also affected by fracking, a harmful measure of extracting gas from the earth that leads to increased air pollution, water pollution, and higher temperatures due to its release of methane, a toxic greenhouse gas.

"Climate change will bring more extreme heat days to Southern California and with them more ground-level ozone, which is linked to increased asthma and other respiratory illnesses," said Meghan Sahli-Wells, a Culver City councilmember who introduced the Clean Air Cities reso-

lution. “The Clean Air Act is a powerful tool in our toolbox to address this crisis now. But we need to use it urgently and ambitiously.”

Other California cities that have joined the call to action include Berkeley, Los Angeles, Santa Cruz, and Santa Monica. Similar notices have been issued in other states all across the country such as New York, Wyoming, North Carolina, Indiana, New Mexico, and Oregon. To ensure that public health and environmental health are secure for the future, start a campaign with your friends and family and write to your city council asking them to support climate change prevention under the Clean Air Act.