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Inaugural Environmental Leadership Summit A Success

100 environmental, community, labor, housing, justice, climate leaders address local challenges, forge solutions, commit to collaboration.

October 14, 2017 -- One hundred leaders from local NGO, labor, housing, and community organizations gathered for the first Environmental Leadership Summit. The leaders heard presentations on a wide range of issues including housing, water quality, habitat conservation planning, labor, transportation, social and environmental justice issues.

The Summit was opened by Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher who inspired the group listing successes of the past legislative year. She challenged the attendees to continue pressure to ensure successful implementation of a legislative landmark victory, the passage of AB805.

Housing was a major topic at the summit with a compelling presentation by Dr. Murtaza Baxamusa, Director of Planning and Development for the San Diego Building Trades Council Family Housing Corporation. His presentation on the history of redlining in our communities and the need for social equity in our housing decisions was one highlight of the event. Leading environmental and coastal attorney, Marco Gonzalez, challenged the group to consider full support of infill housing projects near transit where it is a means to reduce pressure on open spaces and wildlands and reduce climate change.

Climate action merited two panels at the event with community choice energy, coastal planning, and wetlands restoration of Mission Bay as key priorities. Nicole Capretz, Director of the Climate Action Campaign reminded the group to stay the course on implementation of clean energy plans and that our region will set a new standard as a national clean energy leader if we persist.

Transportation justice was also a key element of the Summit and there was much interest and support for proposals for free transit passes for youth, innovative parking strategies, and strong implementation of protective air quality thresholds by the Air Resources Board.

San Diego County policies were also a focus area with major commitments to the need to protect the County General Plan from damaging amendments. In addition, groups sought support to defeat sprawl developments like Safari Highland Ranch, Lilac Hills, and Newland Sierra, improve the County Climate Action Plan, continue progress on regional habitat planning, and secure funding for conservation.
Labor leader Brigette Browning of UNITE HERE Local 30 reminded all attendees of the significant gains that have been made in the region when labor, environmental, and justice organizations collaborate and work together in coalition.

A 2018 Environmental Vision is intended to be released soon that seeks to reflect the needs of the environment, working people, residents, climate risks, and supports regional sustainability.

The Leadership summit was organized by the Environmental Center of San Diego and sponsored by Coastal Environmental Rights Foundation, Briggs Law Corporation, IBEW Local 569, UNITE HERE Local 30, San Diego County Democrats for Environmental Action, Preserve Calavera, San Pasqual Valley Preservation Alliance and the Environmental Center of San Diego

The Summit was held at the Wyndham San Diego Bayside Hotel, a union hotel.

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