

# Climate Education Partners and The San Diego Foundation Release “San Diego, 2050 Is Calling. How Will We Answer?”

Report on the impacts of climate change represents first-ever, in the nation, collaboration among community leaders and world-renowned scientists guiding regional efforts to explore options for managing climate impacts

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Photo: Climate Education Partners

Climate Education Partners (San Diego Region) and its partner organization, The San Diego Foundation, released a first-of-its-kind report, “*San Diego, 2050 Is Calling. How Will We Answer?*” connecting the work of scientists at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC San Diego, and other local research centers with regional leaders, working hand-in-hand on efforts to manage the impacts from the region’s changing climate.

The report provides a practical, solutions-oriented approach to the issue. It balances up-to-date local climate science with thoughts and perspectives from leaders across a wide diversity of communities and sectors, including healthcare, fire preparedness and public safety, water, transportation and the economy.

The report includes science-based information related to the impacts of climate change affecting the San Diego region linked with a wide range of practical opportunities for local leaders to explore. Several testimonials about actions currently taken by leaders and the results they’ve experienced are highlighted in the report. Notable civic leaders contributing to the report include city of San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer, San Diego Convention Center President and CEO Carol Wallace, Port of San Diego Commissioner Rafael Castellanos, and San Diego County Farm Bureau President Julie Walker.

The opening letter in the report from former city of San Diego Mayor and now San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Jerry Sanders welcomes readers to the report and sets the tone for what makes this report different than any other similar work done on climate change.

“We can’t assume future generations will inherit our high quality of life unless San Diegans take a vital leadership role today,” said Sanders. “*San Diego, 2050 Is Calling. How Will We Answer?*” underscores the challenges from changing climate ... affecting our temperate climate, precious resources, natural areas and regional economy. The evidence is clear, and our Convention Center, cities and county, regional agencies and businesses are planning now.”

The “*San Diego, 2050 Is Calling.*” report cites recent public opinion surveys, which have found that an overwhelming majority—84 percent—of San Diego County residents believe climate change is happening and almost as many expect the impacts to affect them, their families and future generations.

“Actions we take now to reduce emissions of heat-trapping gases can slow warming by 2050 and beyond,” said Margaret Leinen, director of Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego. “In fact, what leaders at all levels decide to do in coming years will determine the climate and quality of life that our children and grandchildren inherit.”

“*San Diego, 2050 Is Calling.*” addresses the importance of the regional economy and how preparing for the impacts of a changing climate will help the region stay ahead of the challenges it and other communities throughout the nation are facing. Recent fires in the San Diego region, fanned by high winds and unusually high temperatures and low humidity, demonstrate some of the impacts on our region’s quality of life, economy and real-world issues like loss of homes.

In fact, the report suggests that San Diego County may face longer and more extreme fire seasons by 2050.

“As wildfire conditions worsen in coming decades, we need to better integrate fire risk assessment into our land use planning decisions along and near the wildland-urban interface,” said CAL FIRE’s Assistant Southern Region Chief Thom Porter.

In addition, after three consecutive dry winters, California’s water supplies are well below normal. By 2050, deeper and more frequent droughts could occur, with a projected 12 percent decrease in the runoff and stream flow that replenishes San Diego County’s major water sources.

“We recognize that climate change could have substantial impacts on the reliability of our region’s water supply, and we have incorporated adaptation strategies into our region’s long-term water management plan,” said Maureen Stapleton, general manager of the San Diego County Water Authority. “Our strategy to diversify our water supply sources through conservation, water transfers, recycling, seawater desalination, and storage and conveyance projects is providing our region with increased protection from climate related impacts such as droughts.”

By mid-century, hotter and more humid heat waves are expected, with as many as seven times more days of extreme heat per year than today.

“Low income communities will disproportionately bear the burdens of hotter weather and other climate impacts,” said Diane Takvorian, executive director at the Environmental Health Coalition. “They have less access to services and adequate health care, and suffer most from a weaker economy. By working together to address climate change impacts and invest in clean and efficient energy use and public transit, we can help create new job opportunities that ensure both a strong economy and healthy environment, and ensure better access to resources necessary to prepare for climate change impacts.”

In addition to the report, Climate Education Partners created a website ([www.sandiego.edu/2050](http://www.sandiego.edu/2050) (<http://www.sandiego.edu/2050>)) for those seeking to download the report, as well as more information, data and research behind the science included in the report. Also included on the site are a wider range of options for community leaders to consider. Copies of the report are available at [www.sandiego.edu/2050](http://www.sandiego.edu/2050) (<http://www.sandiego.edu/2050>). The website for Climate Education Partners and more in-depth information can be found at [www.sandiego.edu/climate/](http://www.sandiego.edu/climate/) (<http://www.sandiego.edu/climate/>).

The San Diego Foundation produced its first report on this topic in 2008, titled, “*San Diego’s Changing Climate: A Regional Wake-up Call.*” This new report was developed under the leadership of The San Diego Foundation as a key educational resource of Climate Education Partners, one of only six National Science Foundation-funded projects dedicated to exploring new ways to communicate climate change science to diverse audiences. Climate Education Partners has focused its efforts on regional leaders so they can work hand-in-hand with scientists to dialogue and discuss potential solutions and strategies to deal with regional climate change impacts. Climate Education Partners includes scientists and educators from the University of San Diego (USD) and Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego, social and behavioral psychologists from California State University San Marcos, strategic community planners from The San Diego Foundation and strategic communication experts from The Steve Alexander Group.

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#### **About Climate Education Partners**

*Climate Education Partners is a collaboration of professors, scientists, researchers, educators, communications professionals, and community leaders who think San Diego is a special place and believe that future generations deserve to enjoy the San Diego we know and love, with its natural beauty and ideal weather. The partnership consists of representatives from the University of San Diego (USD), Energy Policy Initiatives Center (EPIC), California State University San Marcos, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, The San Diego Foundation, and The Steve Alexander Group. The group works with local civic, business, government, and education leaders to communicate the causes of climate change, its impacts in our region, and options for how to adapt to or prevent those impacts. For more information about this project, visit [www.sandiego.edu/climate](http://www.sandiego.edu/climate) (<http://www.sandiego.edu/climate>).*

#### **About USD**

*The University of San Diego (USD) is a Catholic institution of higher learning committed to teaching, the liberal arts, the formation of values and the creation of ethical leaders. Chartered in 1949, the school enrolls approximately 8,300 undergraduate and graduate full-time equivalent students. USD has a long history of public service and was recently recognized as a Changemaker Campus by Ashoka, the global association of the world’s leading social entrepreneurs. The university’s eight academic divisions include the College of Arts and Sciences, the schools of Business Administration, Engineering, Law, Leadership and Education Sciences, Nursing and Health Sciences, Peace, and the Division of Professional and Continuing Education. For more information about the University of San Diego, go to [www.sandiego.edu](http://www.sandiego.edu) (<http://www.sandiego.edu>).*

#### **About The San Diego Foundation**

*Founded in 1975, The San Diego Foundation’s purpose is to promote and increase effective and responsible charitable giving. The Foundation manages more than \$660 million in assets, more than half of which reside in permanent endowment funds that extend the impact of today’s gifts to future generations. Since its inception, The Foundation has granted more than \$873 million to the San Diego region’s nonprofit community. For additional information, please visit The San Diego Foundation at [www.sdfoundation.org](http://www.sdfoundation.org) (<http://www.sdfoundation.org>).*

#### **About California State University San Marcos**

*California State University San Marcos is a new kind of CSU — fully engaged in the community, technologically sophisticated, and dedicated to teaching future generations through a relevant curriculum with a global perspective. CSUSM includes high quality, close instruction at three colleges and a school of nursing, a technology-rich campus, more than 80 student clubs and organizations, the Clarke Field House and an active Associated Students, Inc. and 304 rolling acres nestled into the foothills above the city of San Marcos, and a short distance to the beaches of the Pacific Ocean and the Mexican border. For more information on California State University San Marcos, visit [www.csusm.edu](http://www.csusm.edu) (<http://www.csusm.edu>).*

#### **About Scripps Institution of Oceanography**

*Scripps Institution of Oceanography is one of the oldest, largest, and most important centers for ocean and earth science research, education, and public service in the world. Research at Scripps Institution of Oceanography encompasses physical, chemical, biological, geological, and geophysical studies of the oceans and earth. For more information on Scripps Institution of Oceanography, visit [www.sio.ucsd.edu](http://www.sio.ucsd.edu) (<http://www.sio.ucsd.edu>).*

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The Steve Alexander Group includes the talented professionals who bring decades of award-winning experience in creative strategic planning, strategic communications, board and leadership development, conflict resolution, collaborative problem solving and team-building, facilitation and mediation and media training and crisis communications. For more information on The Steve Alexander Group, visit [www.alexanderpa.com](http://www.alexanderpa.com) (<http://www.alexanderpa.com/>).

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**About Scripps Institution of Oceanography** Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego, is one of the oldest, largest, and most important centers for global science research and education in the world. Now in its second century of discovery, the scientific scope of the institution has grown to include biological, physical, chemical, geological, geophysical, and atmospheric studies of the earth as a system. Hundreds of research programs covering a wide range of scientific areas are under way today on every continent and in every ocean. The institution has a staff of about 1,400 and annual expenditures of approximately \$170 million from federal, state, and private sources. Scripps operates robotic networks and one of the largest U.S. academic fleets with four oceanographic research ships and one research platform for worldwide exploration. Birch Aquarium at Scripps serves as the interpretive center of the institution and showcases Scripps research and a diverse array of marine life through exhibits and programming for more than 425,000 visitors each year. Learn more at [scripps.ucsd.edu](http://scripps.ucsd.edu) (<http://sio.ucsd.edu/>).

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