

San Diego Groups: Money for Clean Air and Transit Are Needed

A coalition of San Diego community organizations interested in fighting climate change sent a message on Monday to the regional association of governments: We'll work with you on a ballot measure but we want tax dollars invested in clean air, reliable transit and jobs.

At issue for the coalition of 20 organizations, which represent 150,000 residents, and the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) is a possible half-cent sales tax increase to support transportation projects.

The ballot measure could go before voters in November. SANDAG is drafting a list of projects to fund should voters approve the measure, the coalition said.

"The projects we decide on now will undeniably impact us for the rest of our lives," Monique López, policy advocate at Environmental Health Coalition, said in a statement. "SANDAG must respond to the clear demand from residents to build a region that will improve our quality of life."

Environmental Health Coalition is among the 20 organizations that are part of the umbrella group.

Coalition members want the association of governments to help achieve [San Diego's climate action plan](#), which made state history. In October 2015, SANDAG said it lacked money for transit and backed a plan to expand freeways in the region, according to the coalition. Coalition members, though, wanted investments in bike paths, walking options and transit.

"Our region has the potential to become a vibrant and inclusive economy that lifts up families, addresses climate change and creates healthier neighborhoods and good jobs instead of continuing down a path of increased air pollution, harmful effects of climate change and insufficient transportation options," said Gretchen Newsom of the [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers](#). "What our communities want should be SANDAG's priority."

Coalition members want to see the project list include the creation of good jobs, mass transit, bicycling and walking areas, the preservation of open space, affordable housing, the protection of water quality and a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

SANDAG will hold its next meeting on Feb. 5. San Diego-area residents can [offer feedback from Jan. 27 through March 5](#). SANDAG also has [information about the possible ballot measure](#).

[Environmental Health Coalition](#) works to achieve environmental and social justice by empowering communities to make social change. The group, based in National City, Calif., works to protect public

health and the environment from toxic pollution.