

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Reporters can attend a virtual press conference today at 9 a.m. PST via [zoom](#).

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At COP 27 Amid U.S. Midterms Uncertainty, Local Leaders Pledge to “Step Up” Where Congress Could Fall Short

Urged to Join the “Race to Zero” with Dramatic Reductions in Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Grid, Vehicles, and Buildings by 2030

SAN JOSÉ, CA - At COP27 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, global leaders convene to tackle the daunting challenges of climate change. Meanwhile, mid-term election results in the United States threaten a fragile political balance in Congress that barely enabled passage of two critical laws confronting climate change: the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. Regardless of the final vote tally, this Congress will almost certainly have substantially less commitment to climate action than the one before it.

At the intersection of these two events, [ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability \(ICLEI\) USA](#), [Climate Mayors](#), and the [City of San Jose](#) have partnered to encourage every U.S. city and county to remind the world that “we’re all in.” Local communities are urged to use this moment to step up on climate by declaring measurable, verifiable, 2030 science-based climate goals that will put them on a path to zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050. Consistent with the ICLEI “Race to Zero” initiative, cities and counties are urged to commit to high-impact actions in three areas fundamental to achieve the goal: electricity generation, transportation, and building.

Just as hundreds of U.S. local governments emphasized their commitment to climate action after the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement under then-President Trump, local communities will continue to lead. **Once again, U.S. cities and counties must step up.**

“Cities have shown that they will step up where Congress won’t,” said **Mayor Sam Liccardo of the City of San José**. “Here at COP27, U.S. mayors can reassure a concerned world that U.S.

local leaders are doubling down on their commitment to the Paris Agreement at a time when many will question Congressional commitment.”

“An equitable and resilient Cities Race to Zero emissions is ambitious but achievable. The necessary technology and policy instruments are available. New federal investments in climate solutions stand to power this movement over the finish line.” said **Angie Fyfe, ICLEI USA Executive Director**. “A lack of leadership at all levels of government could impede progress. That’s why Mayor Liccardo’s “G5” framing of the Race to Zero and the continued commitment of his ICLEI USA and Climate Leaders network peers is crucial.”

ICLEI USA provided 150 U.S. cities and counties with [science-based climate targets](#) aligned to meet the Paris Agreement goals as an element of the [Race to Zero](#) initiative. The City of San José was among the first cities to join the Race to Zero, which grew to more than 1,000 cities and counties worldwide ahead of last year’s COP26 in Glasgow.

“I stand beside leaders like Mayor Liccardo, as we collectively step up and fight climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It is our communities that are on the front line, bearing the brunt of climate disasters and creating new ways to be better prepared,” said **Brigid Shea, ICLEI USA Board Chair and Travis County TX Commissioner**. “We are full partners with the US and other nations of the world in tackling this enormous challenge.”

For purposes of this COP27 commitment, Mayor Liccardo proposes a pledge for his city of what he calls **San José’s “G5” Strategy: “Green the Grid, and Get rid of Gas Guzzlers.”** These targets focus on achieving by 2030—in about seven years—**(a) the generation of all electricity used by San Jose residents and businesses will create a net zero GhG emissions, (b) electric vehicles will comprise 95% of all new passenger auto purchases, (c) 100% of all new building construction will be all-electric, and (d) 20% of San José residents (approximately 200,000 people) save at least 10% on their monthly utility bills through home energy retrofits.** San José has already achieved a 95% GHG-free supply of electricity for residents and businesses through the creation of its own procurement utility, San Jose Clean Energy. In 2020, San Jose became the largest U.S. city to require all-electric new construction of residential and commercial buildings, and this year, approximately 30% of new auto registrations are electric vehicles.

“Mayors have continuously led the charge in addressing climate change, it’s critical that we maintain momentum. Ramping up local ambitions is a powerful display of commitment that can be made by cities in efforts to meet the goals outlined in the 2015 Paris Agreement,” said **Climate Mayors’ Executive Director, Kate Wright**. “With guidance from Climate Mayors and ICLEI USA, we hope to see many cities rise to the challenge and pledge to reach carbon neutrality by 2050.”

“As board chair of Climate Mayors and former CSO for Mayor of Los Angeles, I know the importance of mayors not only setting bold climate policies but inviting the innovation needed to achieve these critical goals,” said **Matt Petersen, CEO of LACI**. “The solutions for accelerating equitable climate action come from entrepreneurs in U.S. cities across this nation, creating green jobs and economic growth as well as reduced emissions.”

Local governments that Step Up to the ICLEI USA & Climate Mayors Challenge can look to the San José G5 model as one mode to guide their efforts. ICLEI USA’s technical experts work with U.S. members to [reduce per-capita emissions by 63% or more by 2030](#) by calculating science-based targets and modeling the climate scenario for the three high-impact areas.

“When it comes to confronting the climate crisis, cities aren’t waiting for solutions to show up on our doorstep – we’re forging a path for governments around the world to follow,” said **Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti**. “Through the Cities Race to Zero, over 1,100 cities have already charted a course to cut their emissions in half by 2030, and I’m proud to support Mayor Liccardo’s challenge to help raise our ambition on climate action and pledge emissions reductions in our most polluting sectors.”

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About the City of San José

With more than 1 million residents, San José is the 10th largest city in the United States, and one of its most diverse cities. San José’s transformation into a global innovation center in the heart of Silicon Valley has resulted in the world’s greatest concentration of technology talent and development. San Jose’s Climate Leadership: San Jose launched San Jose Clean Energy, which now provides 95% ghg-free power to its residents and businesses, banned natural gas in all new construction, is a national leader in solar and EV adoption, and preserved 3,200 acres in Coyote Valley for open space, habitat, and agriculture. Learn more at <https://www.sanjoseca.gov>.

About ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability

[ICLEI](#) is a global network of more than 2,500 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 125+ countries, ICLEI influences sustainability policy and drives local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development. ICLEI is the focal organization to the United Nations on cities and regions through its role in the [Local Governments and Municipal Authorities](#) (LGMA) major group. As the USA office of ICLEI, [ICLEI USA](#) is an acknowledged leader in local government technical assistance, providing the tools, standards, and programs for local governments to measurably reduce carbon emissions.

About Climate Mayors

Representing over 74 million Americans from 48 states, Climate Mayors is a peer-to-peer network of over 500 U.S. city mayors who have committed to fighting climate change. Originally founded in 2014 by 3 mayors, the network's ranks swelled to almost 400 mayors in response to the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in June 2017. Climate Mayors is committed to accelerating equitable climate action to help each member city achieve their climate goals, while working together city-to-city, with states, and the Biden administration to increase national climate ambition. For more information, please visit WWW.CLIMATEMAYORS.ORG.