



## 2021 California Climate Adaptation Strategy Inland Deserts Regional Workshop Summary June 24, 2021

### Welcome and Overview

Amanda Hansen, Deputy Secretary for Climate Change, California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and Nuin-Tara Key, Deputy Director for Climate Resilience, Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), opened the meeting and provided an overview of the California Climate Adaptation Strategy (Strategy). The Strategy is updated every three years.

Goals of the 2021 Strategy are to:

- Set strategic direction and identify needed outcomes.
- Identify clear and co-equal priorities to guide state climate adaptation and resilience policy, programs, and investments.
- Unify efforts across all sectors and regions, outlining how key state agency efforts fit together and support collective action.
- Help all Californians understand and contribute to California's climate resilience.

This document is intended to provide a summary of all stakeholder input received during the Inland Deserts Workshop on June 24, 2021. Responses to the questions discussed below are organized into themes; the four most common themes identified in the workshop and illustrative individual responses are included to provide a snapshot of the range of responses received. When there were fewer than ten responses, all responses are included in the summary. A full list of all input received is provided in the appendix. For more information on the Strategy update process, please visit <https://resources.ca.gov/Initiatives/Building-Climate-Resilience/2021-State-Adaptation-Strategy-Update>.

### Opening Questions

1. *What climate impacts are you most concerned about in your region?*

Common themes:

- Extreme heat and urban heat island effects
- Drought
- Landslides
- Wildfire

2. *What are some of your region's unique challenges in adapting to climate change?*

Responses:

- Increased expansion from urban areas into wildlands and resulting habitat impacts
- Land spreading sludge and contaminants
- Evaporation
- Funding
- Urbanization

3. *What gives you hope about your region's ability to adapt to climate change?*

Responses:

- Transportation powered by renewable energy (this includes bikes)
- Growing "eco-awareness" in local government and pushes for more green development
- Very talented public and private sector colleagues are engaged
- Grants
- Our current policies for methane reduction
- Conversation has started among governments, residents, business, NGOs, etc.
- Community involvement

## **Summary of Alignment Between Draft Statewide Priorities and Regional Priorities**

### **Draft Statewide Priority – Strengthen protections for climate vulnerable communities**

1. *How important is this priority for your region (high, medium, low, or not sure)?*

- High: 50% of respondents
- Medium: 33% of respondents
- Low: 0% of respondents
- Not sure: 17% of respondents

2. *What actions are needed to achieve this priority?*

Responses:

- Coordinate resource management and infrastructure development with local entities like Cities. Work on more large scale conservation efforts like Natural Community Conservation Plans or Habitat Conservation Plans.
- Fund building adaptations to their homes and schools.
- Funding, primarily. Giving climate vulnerable communities a voice in state and local government should be a priority as well. No one knows a community's needs like the members of said community.
- Habitat conservation
- Cooling centers
- Reduce sludge ground spreading that contaminates water

- Movement away from using CalEnviroScreen to determine state investments
- Water conservation

3. *How are you working to ensure equitable climate adaptation outcomes for this priority?*

Responses:

- Listening to community feedback
- Build a Gate 5 system in San Juan Capistrano Wastewater District that eliminates the sludge in a waste to energy system that can be adapted to Desert regions
- Environmental Justice policies adopted in General Plan and including data dashboards
- Building language into permits that requires projects to consider environmental impacts
- Enacting Environmental Justice Programs

### **Draft Statewide Priority – Advance public health and safety under a changing climate**

1. *How important is this priority for your region (high, medium, low, or not sure)?*

- High: 67% of respondents
- Medium: 0% of respondents
- Low: 0% of respondents
- Not sure: 33% of respondents

2. *What actions are needed to achieve this priority?*

Responses:

- Coordination between communities, and equitable distribution of resources
- Public and Public Officials education on the topic
- Develop a program to supply people with discounted or free GOOD air filters
- Better groundwater management

3. *How are you working to ensure equitable adaptation outcomes for this priority?*

Responses:

- Shade and tree programs
- Water conservation efforts, including education and donation of water use reducing

### **Draft Statewide Priority – Build a Climate Resilient Economy**

1. *How important is this priority for your region (high, medium, low, not sure)?*

- High: 67% of respondents
- Medium: 33% of respondents

- Low: 0% of respondents
- Not sure: 0% of respondents

2. *What actions are needed to achieve this priority?*

Responses:

- Developing/updating safety standards for outdoor workers
- Training in renewable energy technology and jobs

3. *How are you working to ensure equitable adaptation outcomes for this priority?*

Responses:

- Coordinating on environmental review and permitting
- Working with politicians and the public

**Draft Statewide Priority – Accelerate nature-based climate solutions**

1. *How important is this priority for your region (high, medium, low, not sure)?*

- High: 100% of respondents
- Medium: 0% of respondents
- Low: 0% of respondents
- Not sure: 0% of respondents

2. *What actions are needed to achieve this priority?*

Responses:

- Invest in nature-based solutions. It is easy to build a roadway into wildlands and almost impossible to get a city to fully mitigate the impacts
- Provide native plants for free for landscaping
- Use of bioswales
- Conservation of virgin desert, grasslands, and forests
- Protection of greenspaces and high quality habitat

3. *How are you working to ensure equitable adaptation outcomes for this priority?*

Responses:

- Coordinating on environmental review and permitting and educating City/County counterparts in the value of green space
- Working with communities to plant water-wise and natural landscapes in their yards
- Ensuring proper mitigation while pushing for avoidance of damage to natural spaces

**Draft Statewide Priority – Make decisions based on the best available climate science**

1. *How important is this priority for your region (high, medium, low, not sure)?*

- High: 100% of respondents

- Medium: 0% of respondents
- Low: 0% of respondents
- Not sure: 0% of respondents

2. *What actions are needed to achieve this priority?*

Responses:

- Partnerships and sharing of information between agencies and the public
- Outreach and education on climate science. Make climate resiliency a part of annual budgets
- Teaching the public and public officials how climate science works

3. *How are you working to ensure equitable adaptation outcomes for this priority?*

Responses:

- Supporting teaching climate science in schools and community education programs
- Coordination on environmental review and permitting

### **Draft Statewide Priority – Leverage resources to build climate resilience through partnerships and collaboration**

1. *How important is this priority for your region (high, medium, low, not sure)?*

- High: 100% of respondents
- Medium: 0% of respondents
- Low: 0% of respondents
- Not sure: 0% of respondents

2. *What actions are needed to achieve this priority?*

Responses:

- Coordination by someone or entity
- Outreach and education, and a significant expenditure of public funds to support the effort
- Initiative to move forward

3. *How are you working to ensure equitable adaptation outcomes for this priority?*

Responses:

- Coordination on environmental review and permitting, and increased outreach efforts
- Get as much public input as possible
- Hold outreach events

## Are there any critical regional priorities not covered by one of the six we've outlined?

Respondents did not identify any missing priorities.

## Summary of Input on Cross-Cutting Questions

Following the discussion on the draft statewide priorities, attendees were asked to provide input on cross-cutting questions. Common themes and illustrative examples are included below.

1. *What actions are needed to mitigate the impacts of increasing temperature and extreme heat in your region?*

Responses:

- Acquiring vast tracts of land to manage for habitat conservation, and to preclude development impacts
  - Increased vegetation in urban areas and reduced urban expansion into healthy desert habitats
  - Planting of drought tolerant trees
  - Seriously look at desalinization to create enough water to manage riparian habitats
  - Increasing shade overall and using reflective surfaces to reduce heat island impacts
2. *As you consider all of the priorities, are there knowledge gaps or information needs that you need answered in order for you to accelerate your work across these priorities? Examples include research needs or data and tools you think would be helpful to advance your work.*

Responses:

- Trip data and bicycle data overall
  - Specific needs of communities
  - Economic projections for likely costs for fire and flood insurance, and the negative impacts associated with not acting now. The future will be more expensive
  - Up-to-date aerial imagery
3. *How can the state support a regional approach to adaptation and resilience through the Strategy?*

Responses:

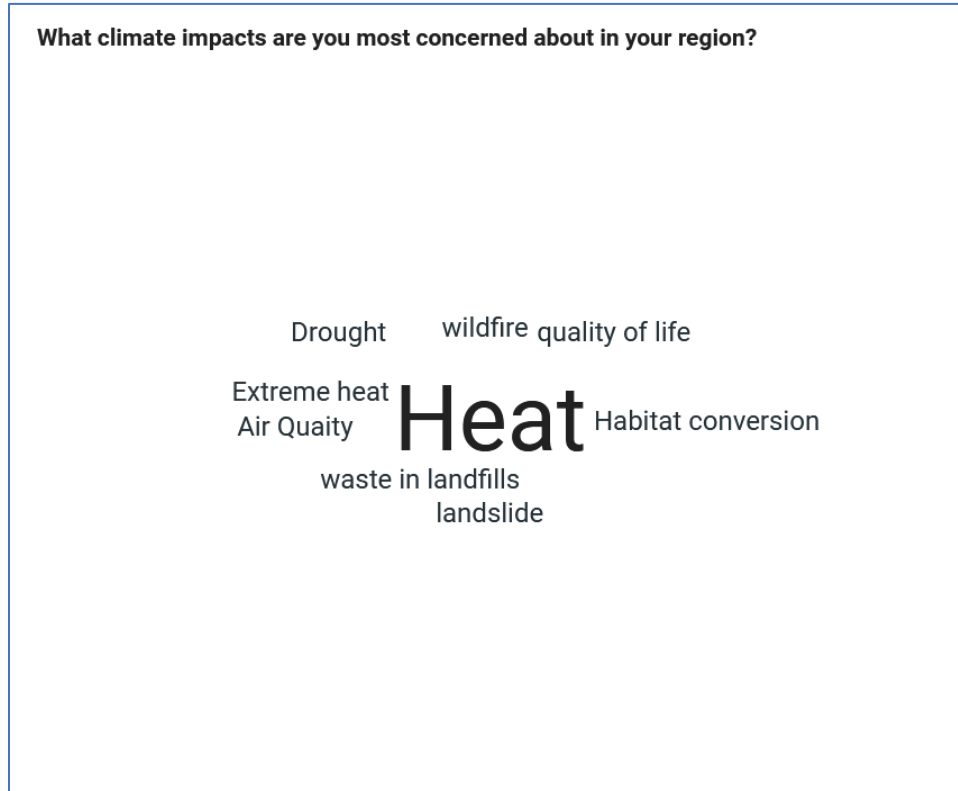
- Enforcement of mitigation measures approved in CEQA plan reviews
- Enhance and update CEQA, CESA, and other environmental review legislation

- Education materials and funding geared toward politicians and the public

### **Next Steps and Closing**

Deputy Director Key provided an overview of the Strategy timeline. Deputy Secretary Hansen thanked participants for attending, provided a link to an online survey if participants wished to share additional information, and shared agency contact information for any additional stakeholder questions.

**Question #1: What climate impacts are you most concerned about in your region?  
(Word cloud)**



Impact	Number of Responses
Heat	2
Quality of life	1
Waste in landfills	1
Habitat conversion	1
Drought	1
Extreme heat	1
Landslide	1
Wildfire	1
Air Quality	1

**Question #2: What are some of your region’s unique challenges in adapting to climate change? (Open answer)**

Response
Evaporation
Increased expansion from urban areas into wildlands and resulting habitat impacts
Urbanization



<b>Response</b>
Land spreading of sludge with contaminants
Funding

**Question #3: What gives you hope about your region's ability to adapt to climate change? (Open answer)**

<b>Response</b>
Transportation powered by renewable energy (this includes bikes)
Growing "eco-awareness" in local government and pushes for more green development
Very talented public and private sector colleagues are engaged
Grants
Our current policies for methane reduction
Conversation has started among governments, residents, business, NGOs, etc.!
Community involvement

**Question #4: What actions are most needed in this region to achieve each priority? (Open answer)**

<b>Priority 1: Protect climate vulnerable communities</b>
Coordinate resource management and infrastructure development with local entities like Cities. Work on more large scale conservation efforts like NCCP/HCPs.
Fund building adaptations to their homes and schools
Funding, primarily. Giving climate vulnerable communities a voice in state and local government should be a priority as well. No one knows a community's needs like the members of said community.
Habitat conservation
Cooling centers
Reduce sludge ground spreading that contaminates water
Movement away from using CalEnviroScreen to determine state investments
Water conservation
<b>Priority 2: Advance public health and safety</b>
Public and Public Officials education on the topic
Better groundwater management
Coordination between communities, and equitable distribution of resources
Develop a program to supply people with discounted or free GOOD air filters
<b>Priority 3: Build a climate resilient economy</b>
Developing/updating safety standards for outdoor workers
Training in renewable energy technology and jobs

<b>Priority 4: Accelerate nature-based climate solutions</b>
Invest in nature based solutions. It is easy to build a roadway into wildlands and almost impossible to get a City to fully mitigate the impacts.
Provide native plants for free for landscaping
Conservation of virgin desert, grasslands, and forests
Protection of greenspaces and high quality habitat
Use of bioswales
<b>Priority 5: Make decisions based on best available climate science</b>
Outreach and education on climate science. Make climate resiliency a part of annual budgets.
Partnerships and sharing of information between agencies and the public
Teaching the Public and Public Officials how climate science works
<b>Priority 6: Leverage resources for climate action through partnerships and collaboration</b>
Initiative to move forward
Outreach and education, and a significant expenditure of public funds to support the effort.
Coordination by someone or entity

**Question #5: How are you working to ensure equitable adaptation outcomes for this priority?**

<b>Priority 1: Protect climate vulnerable communities</b>
Building language into permits that requires projects to consider environmental impacts
Enacting Environmental Justice Programs
Environmental Justice policies adopted in General Plan and including data dashboards
Build a Gate 5 system in San Juan Capistrano Waste Water District that eliminates the sludge in a waste to energy system that can be adapted to Desert regions
Listening to community feedback
<b>Priority 2: Advance public health and safety</b>
Water conservation efforts, this includes education and donation of water use reducing technology
Shade and Tree Programs
<b>Priority 3: Build a climate resilient economy</b>
Working with politicians and the public
Coordinating on environmental review and permitting
<b>Priority 4: Accelerate nature-based climate solutions</b>
Ensuring proper mitigation while pushing for avoidance of damage to natural spaces
Coordinating on environmental review and permitting, and educating City/County counterparts in the value of green space
Working with communities to plant water wise and natural landscapes in their yards

<b>Priority 5: Make decisions based on best available climate science</b>
Coordination on environmental review and permitting
Supporting teaching Climate Science in Schools and community education programs
<b>Priority 6: Leverage resources for climate action through partnerships and collaboration</b>
Hold outreach events
Coordination on environmental review and permitting, and increased outreach efforts.
Get as much public input as possible

**Question #6: Are there any critical regional priorities not covered by one of the six we've outlined? (Open answer)**

No Responses

**Question #7: What actions are needed to mitigate the impacts of increasing temperature and extreme heat in your region? (Open answer)**

<b>Response</b>
Seriously look at desalinization to create enough water to manage riparian habitats
Increasing shade overall and using reflective surfaces to reduce heat island impacts
Increased vegetation in urban areas and reduced urban expansion into healthy desert habitats
Acquiring vast tracts of land to manage for habitat conservation, and to preclude development impacts
Planting of drought tolerant trees

**Question #8: As you consider all of the priorities, are there knowledge gaps or information needs that you need answered in order for you to accelerate your work across these priorities? Examples include research needs or data and tools you think would be helpful to advance your work. (Open answer)**

<b>Response</b>
Trip data
Bicycle Data overall
Up-to-date aerial imagery
Economic projections for likely costs for fire and flood insurance, and the negative impacts associated with not acting now. The future will be more expensive...
Specific needs of communities

**Question #9: How can the state support a regional approach to adaptation and resilience through the Strategy? (Open answer)**

<b>Response</b>
Enforcement of mitigation measures approved in CEQA plan reviews
Enhance and update CEQA, CESA, and other environmental review legislation
Education materials and funding geared toward politicians and the public