

Press Release: New collaboration helps California communities tackle climate change

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Sacramento, Calif. – The California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) and the Thriving Earth Exchange – a program of the [American Geophysical Union \(AGU\)](#) – today announced a new collaboration that will enable under-resourced California communities that are most vulnerable to climate change to work with leading Earth scientists to make their communities healthier, more resilient, and more sustainable in the face of accelerating climate impacts.

Under the collaboration, California communities will work with scientists to design and implement concrete projects that leverage Earth and space science to make a clear local impact. Community priorities will drive the projects, which will leverage the community's strengths and assets, while also drawing on current scientific understanding to help guide new, actionable research.

SGC, a cabinet-level body chaired by the Director of the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research, and AGU, the world's largest society of Earth and space scientists, announced the collaboration at SGC's [2019 Climate Change Research Symposium](#), where some 200 representatives of community-based organizations gathered with advocates and scientists to share experiences and learn from one another how to make Engagement in Research – the Symposium's subtitle – both substantive and meaningful, and why it matters.

“The California Strategic Growth Council's collaboration with AGU's Thriving Earth Exchange program will help expand the reach of the type of engaged research SGC's Climate Change Research Program supports,” said SGC Executive Director Louise Bedsworth. “More California communities will be able to work directly with scientists to design and carry out projects that will inform what actions they want and need to take in order to protect public health, protect the environment, and build resilience to the impacts of climate change.”

Under the collaboration, SGC will help identify eight California communities and AGU will pair these communities with scientists to participate in the Thriving Earth Exchange program. The

program begins with detailed interviews with local leaders to better understand the goals, aspirations, and strengths within their communities. Based on those interviews, Thriving Earth Exchange staff work with these interviewees to design a project that combines Earth and space science with local knowledge and expertise to advance one or more endemic efforts to strengthen local resilience, sustainability, or environmental health. After designing the project, Thriving Earth matches the community leaders with a vetted scientific partner, an AGU member, and the scientist-community team – supported by a facilitator and project manager – all of whom work in tandem to carry out the project.

“The Thriving Earth Exchange model of convening scientists and local community leaders means we are helping to address the area’s priorities in an ecologically responsible manner. Through our SGC partnership, we are pleased we will continue to expand our reach in California so that more communities will benefit from science,” said AGU Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer Chris McEntee.

Participants at SGC’s Climate Change Research Symposium spoke about the importance of the type of community-engaged research the SGC-AGU collaboration will foster. For example, under a grant from SGC’s [Climate Change Research Program](#), researchers at University of California Berkeley built into their budget a contract with Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) that involves the non-profit organization for the duration of a project researching how sea level rise will affect San Francisco Bay Area toxic sites and the people who live near them.

“Even at an early stage in our partnership with UC Berkeley, Asian Pacific Environmental Network has brought together community-based organizations that represent impacted communities to directly inform the research approach and scope of the project,” said Ameer Raval, Senior Policy Researcher at APEN. “We are excited that our involvement and partnership with UC Berkeley for the duration of the project can produce research results that our communities will be able to act on quickly.”

California Strategic Growth Council Press Contact:

Sandra Lupien, (916)-634-3359, sandra.lupien@sgc.ca.gov

AGU Press Contact:

Joshua Speiser, (202) 777-7444, news@agu.org

California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) is a cabinet-level body chaired by the Director of the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research tasked with coordinating and working collaboratively with public agencies, communities, and stakeholders to achieve sustainability, equity, economic prosperity, and quality of life for all Californians with a focus on the state's most disadvantaged communities. SGC implements its mission through four key activities: making investments in infrastructure and conservation programs; conducting outreach and providing technical assistance in support of communities seeking to access these investments, leading and supporting integrated policy initiatives that align with SGC's mission. SGC's Climate Change Research Program puts California cap-and-trade dollars to work to support science to action, engaging both researchers and community partners in all stages of the research process to advance California's climate change goals.

Founded in 1919, AGU is a not-for-profit scientific society dedicated to advancing Earth and space science for the benefit of humanity. We support 60,000 members, who reside in 135 countries, as well as our broader community, through high-quality scholarly publications, dynamic meetings, our dedication to science policy and science communications, and our commitment to building a diverse and inclusive workforce, as well as many other innovative programs. AGU is home to the award-winning news publication *Eos*, the [Thriving Earth Exchange](#), where scientists and community leaders work together to tackle local issues, and a [headquarters building](#) that represents Washington, D.C.'s first net zero energy commercial renovation. We are celebrating our [Centennial](#) in 2019. #AGU100