



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Riverside County Board of Supervisors Votes to Sign onto “We Will Lift: Regional Pledge for Housing and Opportunity”

PALM DESERT, CA — The Riverside County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday took a unanimous vote to sign onto We Will Lift: Regional Pledge for Housing and Opportunity.

“We Will Lift,” a pledge launched by Coachella Valley nonprofit Lift to Rise, is a show of support for a multi-pronged plan that aims to address the root causes of the lack of affordable housing in the region. Governments, community partners and residents who sign the pledge are signaling their commitment to Lift to Rise’s vision to bring together the community and institutional leaders to collaboratively address underlying causes of poverty and inequality.

The Riverside County Board of Supervisors is among the first government bodies to sign onto the We Will Lift pledge.

“An affordability crisis is everywhere, but our district is leading the way toward solutions. This work is anchored in residents’ will to radically increase the supply and availability of affordability housing,” said Fourth District Supervisor V. Manuel Perez. “Addressing the underlying causes and consequences of housing and economic instability is challenging work, but it is vital that we do so, and that we do so together.”

“We have worked with the Riverside County Department of Housing, Homelessness and Workforce Solutions over the past three years to lay the groundwork for a transformational regional housing agenda. Shifting systems and forging public-private partnerships is demanding work and we’re grateful for this commitment from the Riverside County Board of Supervisors for leading the way for dozens of other organizations as we work together to achieve resident priorities,” said Lift to Rise founder and CEO Heather Vaikona.

Many families in the Coachella Valley are struggling as a result of systemic inequities, and the coronavirus pandemic has worsened conditions with widespread unemployment and sudden income

loss. Half of residents earn at or below 200% of the federal poverty line, based on pre-coronavirus data, and wages are half what they need to be for a household to afford a two-bedroom apartment. More than half of households are rent-burdened, meaning they pay a third or more of their income to pay for rent, and people of color face higher rates of rent-burden, eviction, and homelessness.

The “We Will Lift” pledge signals support for shared, concrete and forward-thinking plan to address this that includes:

- Advancing a pipeline of planned affordable housing projects that will result in 2,000 units in the next two years
- Work with local, county and state governments to implement policies that will make affordable housing easier to develop and finish
- A fund of flexible, low-cost capital that can be tapped to catalyze the development of affordable housing
- Building pathways to economic mobility and security for residents experiencing poverty.

The city councils of Coachella, Cathedral City and Palm Springs are also slated to vote on the pledge this week. Community organizations and residents will be able to join the pledge in the coming months.

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About Lift to Rise

Lift to Rise is a cross-sector, community-driven movement to improve life in Southern California’s Coachella Valley for the majority of residents who do not experience the opulence and luxury for which the area is known. With input from more than 50 collaborative partners and countless community members Lift to Rise created a 2020-2022 Action Plan—a roadmap to radically increase housing stability and advance economic opportunity for all Coachella Valley residents. We envision a future where all Coachella Valley families are healthy, stable, and thriving.