Principles for Evaluation of Climate Action Implementation Choices

The San Diego County Taxpayers Association (SDCTA) has consistently been a public advocate for good governance and effective public management, and local governments are facing numerous policy options to adapt to climate change. In order to assist elected leaders in the decision making process when it comes to policy options for the implementation of climate action plans, SDCTA has compiled the following list of “Principles for Evaluation of Climate Action Implementation Choices.” It is our vision that through the implementation of these principles, elected leaders will have the tools to make the most effective policy decisions to meet climate action goals.

Before implementing a climate action policy decision, a public agency must complete a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) of the climate action policy choice that demonstrates these principles:

1. The CBA should demonstrate that any choice is likely to provide the greatest return on investment in terms of actual and additional global greenhouse gas emissions reduction and public health benefits versus local fiscal and economic impact, including job creation and loss.

2. The CBA should quantify actual costs anticipated to be expended by the agency and benefits anticipated to be derived using peer-reviewed and broadly-applicable methodology and apply these methodologies consistently.

3. The CBA should take a long-range view that accounts for technological progress, municipal risk over time, and uncertainty and flexibility.

4. The CBA should account for the pursuit of regional solutions, collaboration, and the leveraging of external funding sources, whenever possible.

5. The CBA should account for reliability and resiliency.

It is the intent of SDCTA to issue a fuller listing of these principles with an endorsement review process for government agencies so they can actively work with SDCTA to attain a thorough and objective review when considering policy choices for the implementation of climate action plans.