

Regeneración: Climate Action Pajaro Valley Climate of Hope Community Forum- 5/3/18
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Focus of Climate of Hope:

- Release of results from first of its kind survey in Santa Cruz County. The survey demonstrates how people are being affected by pollution and environmental changes and shows what initiatives are most relevant to the community for solving the challenges.
- Gathering of many art, culture and environmental organizations and agencies to share solutions and build a more resilient community.
- Testimony of the effects of the changing climate on local Latina farmworkers who will share their stories directly

Groundbreaking survey at a glance:

324 people surveyed: 186 in person, 138 online

25 survey volunteers - majority native Spanish speakers from Aptos high school, Cabrillo College, Revolunas women's collective, educators, along with general community members.

Respondents:

84% Mexican or Latinx with 57% speaking primarily Spanish at home.

53% rent, 19% stay with family or friends, 25% own homes

73% of respondents were participating in a community survey for the first time.

More than half respondents both live and work in the Pajaro Valley.

Survey sample closely matches Pajaro Valley demographics of adult population and documents the effects on and needs of people often absent from community program and policy conversations about solutions for climate change and pollution.

Our survey was under development for 9 months; 2 Community Roundtables were held to invite input along with many small group and individual conversations. Got Green's climate justice survey in Seattle provided inspiration.

Volunteers were trained by Dr. Shishir Mathur, Associate Dean of Research, College of Social Sciences, San Jose State University. Dr. Mathur oversaw the development of the survey questions and completed the data analysis.

Dozens of people contributed hundreds of hours of volunteer work to carry out the survey and prepare for this community gathering. This project has been fueled by a labor of love for our community in pursuit of our vision of all thriving in harmony with the natural world.

The 14 month survey project and the Climate of Hope gathering were supported by small grants from several foundations, sponsorship of community organizations and by the generosity of more than 100 individual donors.

Survey results

Our respondents demonstrated that both challenges and opportunities to meet the challenges of the changing climate are closely connected to the Pajaro Valley as an agricultural community.

Environmental changes are observed and experienced in the Pajaro Valley

- **Litter (62%), pesticides (59%) and car exhaust (43%)** were the most commonly cited pollution types reported to negatively affect the Pajaro Valley Community.
- **The top climate impacts experienced by respondents** were more days with very high temperatures (70%), heat waves in late autumn and winter (69%), and more frequent drought (51%). Food production and working conditions are already greatly influenced by changes in temperature and precipitation by these climate shifts.
- **The number one initiative favored to reduce pollution and/or greenhouse gas emissions was increasing access to local organic agriculture (4.48).** Pesticides ranked second highest as the form of pollution negatively affecting people (59%).
- **The Pajaro Valley is currently a car-dependent community (73%).** People want safe access for walking and bicycling and are interested in employer sponsored transportation and modern rail service on the coastal rail line.

Issues affect groups differently - and disproportionately

Many people don't understand what climate justice means. We know that those who are most vulnerable to economic crises are also most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. In addition, we are already seeing that those with fewer choices and resources are suffering in situations created by people with more choices and resources. Climate justice actions seek to correct that inequity in ways that are equitable to all. Worldwide and right here in the Pájaro Valley, impacts of climate change are disproportionately affecting people who did the least to cause the problem.

- Our survey reveals that almost twice as many agricultural workers (or their neighbors or families) are affected by extreme heat conditions at the workplace as non-agricultural workers. These effects include severe dehydration, fainting, trips to the emergency room, adjustment of work hours (primarily starting very early in the morning) and lost pay due to being sent home from work.
- Non-homeowners believe that they are being affected more than others in the Pajaro Valley by pollution and/or environmental changes at almost double the rate of homeowners, (39% vs 22%) and homeowners (40%) also believe that they themselves are not being affected more, but that some other people are, at a similar rate of almost twice as much as non-homeowners. (24%)

There is strong desire to take personal and collective action

The survey clearly confirms the community is aware of environmental problems from pollution and climate change and people are ready to take action. All initiatives named received strong support (3.8 or higher on a scale of 1-5.) Results show that people specifically request support from local agencies, government, and businesses for key initiatives and solutions they would prioritize and participate in.

Finally, the survey shows how all issues are connected; low wages, expensive housing, challenges with transportation, need for child care, desire for more organic local food sources, interest in affordable renewable energy, challenges for people who are homeless such as lack of public bathrooms - all came out in the survey.

At Regeneración - Pajaro Valley Climate Action, we believe that to reach full solutions to the environmental destruction we need to include perspectives of people from all vantage points in our community in developing solutions. Starting locally, we must eliminate the oppressions that have divided us, and unite people in a mass movement to preserve life.