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Special to La Prensa

## **The Green Valley Initiative: Opportunity Takes Root in the Inland Empire**

Imagine the Inland Empire for what it could be: a progressive region, with people working together to bring about a higher quality of life.

Imagine a new standard of living that includes:

- Shorter commutes, so that parents can come home to have dinner with their children
- Cleaner air, to help reduce the asthma and allergy rates among our children
- Higher-paying jobs, to boost the affluence of the region and the career opportunities of the people who live here

The effort to get there has already begun. On October 22, the Green Valley Initiative announced its recommendations to balance housing and jobs so people can work closer to home, to encourage smart infrastructure to reduce the amount of time we spend in our cars and to educate the public – and most important of all, our children – to be sensitive to the environment when making choices in their lives.

During this meeting Bridgett Luther, Director of the California Department of Conservation, announced that the Inland Empire has been chosen to host a pilot recycling program, providing resources that green practices will soon become a way of life for the region.

The dual-county economic development plan is designed to stimulate an economy built on green technologies. Similar to what happened with computers in California's Silicon Valley, the Green Valley Initiative has plans to establish the Inland Empire as the nation's leader in renewable energies, green building materials, alternative transportation options and alternative fuels.

Our region is the ideal place for this to happen. An unprecedented 2 million people will move into the area in the next 15 years, bringing with them a need for new buildings, new roads, new schools and a new perspective on our future.

We are located close to interstate freeways, rail, international airports and harbors that can support businesses here. We have the consumer base and workforce to feed a thriving green economy.

Some green companies already established in the Inland Empire include: Kramer Junction Solar Farms, Phoenix Electric Car Company, the Palm Springs Wind Farms, and a waste-to-energy plant at Romoland, to name a few.

With the work of dozens of stakeholders: from mayors of cities to county supervisors, environmental groups, financial and economic development experts, representatives of the region's cultural and educational institutions, and community members, we can clean up our region and attract businesses with high-paying jobs, products and services related to environmentally based technologies.

We invite everyone to get involved. For more information visit [www.GreenValleyNow.org](http://www.GreenValleyNow.org)

(Signatories below)

Ali Sahabi, President & CEO, SE Corporation

Dr. Albert Karnig, President, California State University, San Bernardino

William Carney, President & CEO Inland Empire Economic Partnership

Supervisor Paul Biane, County of San Bernardino

Jane Block, Member, Riverside Land Conservancy

John Withers, Board Member, Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board

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