



Regional Power In Action

2022 Community Report

A Message from Board President Jeremy Meyer

2022 was a year of transition and change for CAUSE. After 21 years since co-founding the organization, our beloved Executive Director Maricela Morales moved on at the end of last year. We're incredibly grateful for her dedication, visionary leadership, and lasting legacy: CAUSE has never been stronger than we are today! As you glean some of our highlights from the past year here, I hope you stand proudly knowing that it's because of you - our growing community of supporters - that we're able stay grounded in the grassroots as we build a more just region that our communities deserve.



Thanks to supporters like you, our team and annual budget have doubled since Maricela stepped into the role of Executive Director in 2015. This tremendous growth has been absolutely necessary as we continue to build the power of working-class immigrant families and youth of color - often against incredible odds and the most powerful entrenched interests - to ensure a sustainable, vibrant, and thriving Central Coast.

Our new five year Strategic Plan lays out a vision for a sharp focus on tenants rights, environmental justice, and immigrant worker power in the years ahead. Last year, as the world continued to struggle towards recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, our team worked tirelessly to rebuild the massive grassroots organizing operation of CAUSE's door-to-door outreach, house meetings, classroom recruitment, summer youth program, and leadership training camp.

I'm excited to share that in 2023 CAUSE remains in good hands, with Maricela passing the baton to our new Co-Directors: Former Organizing Director Hazel Davalos and Former Policy Director Lucas Zucker. Both Hazel and Lucas have roots in our organization since their youth and have each been on full-time staff for over a decade from organizers to senior leadership. I encourage you to meet our new Co-Directors soon and stay tuned in to our vital work to building grassroots community power!

With Gratitude for Your Support,

Jeremy Meyer, MA
Board President

Building Immigrant Worker Power!

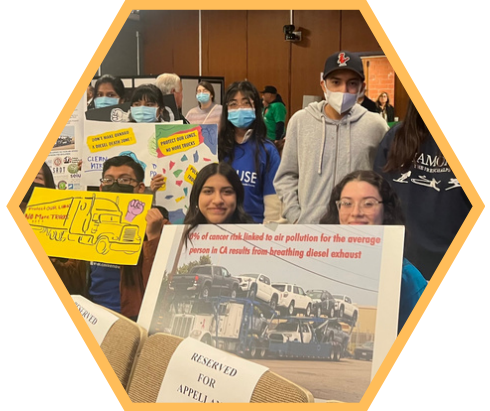
Farmworkers are organizing from Santa Maria to Oxnard, with hundreds of workers going on strike since the beginning of the pandemic to win better wages and working conditions. CAUSE worked with MICOP to support striking farmworkers in organizing, strategizing, and building sustained worker power. Yet farmworker organizing faces a threat from the explosive growth of the H-2A program: the modern version of the Bracero Program where seasonal Visa workers have their housing, food, transportation, and immigration status controlled by their employer. We worked with the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department to enforce food safety standards for H-2A workers after a CAUSE Santa Maria leader became a whistleblower when their company provided unsafe food to workers. We also organized Santa Maria residents to stop the Donati Project, which would have been the largest H-2A labor camp in California, bunking 3,600 temporary Visa farmworkers in a warehouse-style complex located on an industrial zone near the outskirts of town. CAUSE also launched the Dar a Luz Project, a collaboration with the Center for WorkLife Law supporting pregnant and postpartum farmworkers exposed to reproductive toxic pesticides in the fields to get paid disability leave from the State of California.

CAUSE continued to coordinate the 805 Immigrant coalition and advocate for the rights of immigrants throughout our region. In the culmination of one of the longest fights for the California immigrant rights movement, the longstanding goal of Health4All saw a huge win with the final passage of Medi-Cal access for low-income families regardless of immigration status. At our local county jails, the California VALUES Act has successfully reduced transfers of local residents to ICE, going from hundreds of transfers to less than a dozen in the past year. The fight continues until there is no longer collaboration between our local law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement. The Safety Net for All Coalition, which CAUSE helped to found in 2020, achieved a landmark victory with California legislators passing AB 2847, which was unfortunately vetoed by Governor Newsom. The bill would have created a pilot unemployment benefits program for undocumented workers excluded from federal assistance who have faced devastating impacts in our region from climate disasters to the COVID-19 pandemic. The fight for a safety net for all continues!



Environmental Justice for Our Communities!

In 2022, CAUSE youth leaders fought for environmental justice across the Central Coast. Despite the fierce opposition from powerful agribusiness interests fighting a pesticide buffer zone, CAUSE youth were at the heart of a community victory for open green space and access to the coast when the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to begin funding for a multipurpose trail along the Santa Maria River. In Ventura, CAUSE worked with the Westside Clean Air Coalition to fight the expansion of the dangerous SoCal Gas compressor, stationed next to an elementary school in the predominantly Latino Westside Neighborhood. We finally won commitments from state regulators to hold independent hearings on the project. We also engaged thousands of voters in the campaign to pass Measures A and B, led by Food and Water Watch, to regulate polluting old oilfields in Ventura County, coming within inches of victory despite \$8 million in deceptive ads from Big Oil. CAUSE and our partners spoke out against cancer-causing diesel exhaust from GLOVIS, a multibillion-dollar shipping corporation that imports foreign cars through the Port of Hueneme that get trucked through Oxnard. While the City approved a 34-acre expansion project in South Oxnard next to the Ormond Beach wetlands, our fight continues at the state and local levels to shift polluting diesel trucks to zero-emissions alternatives. Oxnard youth also joined our statewide partners to advocate for a stronger climate plan, causing state regulators to reverse their plan to build dozens of new gas plants and instead commit to clean power like offshore wind.



Equal Rights and Representation for All!

CAUSE organized coalitions throughout Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties to win fair representation and voting rights after the 2020 Census. Together, we ended a decades-long split of Oxnard between two state assembly districts ensuring more just representation for the Central Coast's largest and most diverse city. Now Oxnard will be the center of gravity as the first-ever assembly district in Ventura County with majority voters of color. In another historic first, thanks to our coalition advocacy, Ventura County will now have a second majority Latino voter supervisor district stretching from Oxnard to the Santa Clara Valley. In Santa Barbara County, with a new citizens commission drawing the lines, CAUSE successfully fought for a supermajority Latino voter district uniting the immigrant and farmworker neighborhoods of Santa Maria and Guadalupe. CAUSE worked to support redistricting in cities and school districts across the region, particularly engaging high school student voices in the drawing of district lines for school boards in Oxnard and Santa Maria. We also won a commitment from the City of Santa Paula to become one of the final cities in our region to transition to district elections.





Fighting for Housing as a Human Right!

Last year, CAUSE uplifted tenant voices in the cities of Oxnard, Santa Barbara, and Ventura to win stronger protections from the growing crisis of rising rents and unfair evictions. In Oxnard, we worked alongside MICOP and Lideres Campesinas to organize hundreds of farmworkers and other residents to make Oxnard the 6th largest California city with rent stabilization. Now, over 100,000 renters in Oxnard have the strongest tenant protections of any community in between the Bay Area and L.A. In Ventura, we worked with Manos Unidas to stand up against a mass eviction at the Casa del Pueblo apartments and doubled relocation assistance for future evictions. We formed the Ventura County Housing Coalition, bringing together affordable housing builders and advocates and won a historic \$30 million investment for affordable housing and homelessness from the County of Ventura. In Santa Barbara, we and the Santa Barbara Tenants Union won a vote to create a Housing Crisis Task Force to develop a rent stabilization ordinance. Our coalition also secured a historic \$3.6 million for a new Affordable Housing Trust Fund and a tenant legal aid pilot.

Your Support Makes a Difference!

Help CAUSE advance our work for economic, environmental, and social justice on the Central Coast by making a one-time or monthly tax-deductible donation to CAUSE at: causenow.org/donate

Additional Ways to Give:

Contact: Stanley@causenow.org

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