



USGBC-LA Releases White Paper & Hosts Panel on “Carbon Offset Playbook for the Greater L.A. Region”

Third in White Paper Pandemic Series, Produced by USGBC-LA and its Committee of LA’s Top Sustainability Executives

Los Angeles, CA (July 21, 2021) – With time running out on the major impacts of climate change, and with technological and financial limitations to immediately cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions today, companies are seeking tools to achieve their climate commitments around net zero emissions or zero carbon...and carbon offsets have emerged as a key tool. But what are your options as you get into the offset market, and how do you verify performance? It’s complex, and based on discussions within the USGBC-LA Los Angeles Sustainability Roundtable (LASER), Los Angeles companies are interested in different types of carbon offsets, but real challenges remain in navigating the offset market and eliminating source emissions must remain a priority.

At 4:00 pm PT on Thursday, July 22, the [Los Angeles Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council](#) (USGBC-LA) will host a panel presenting findings and a guide in a white paper, “Carbon Offset Playbook for the Greater L.A. Region.” The expert panel will be followed by a breakout Q&A session. **Please [register here](#)**. Panelists include Craig Ebert, President, Climate Action Reserve; Natalie Teear, SVP, Innovation, Sustainability & Social Impact, Hudson Pacific Properties; and Tim Bushman, Science Analyst, Carbon Direct.

This will be the third paper/event in USGBC-LA’s **White Paper Pandemic Series** since February 2021, produced in collaboration with the organization’s LASER committee--comprised of the region’s top corporate sustainability executives and leaders. USGBC-LA looks to provide regional environmental leadership around these issues of telecommuting (released Feb. 25), plastic waste (released April 29), and carbon offsets (July 22).

The [playbook](#) strives to demystify the fundamentals of carbon offsets and then explore their use in practice through case studies and current issues, focusing specifically on the greater Los Angeles region. Many companies are interested in purchasing more local offset projects that benefit local communities and ecosystems, this playbook also explores the options surrounding

this idea. As the public and private sectors finally align on fighting climate change, Los Angeles is in a unique position to expand carbon offset options in innovative and collaborative ways that have not been done before. With this in mind, the white paper, and the panel, will dive into:

- What are carbon offsets, including differences between Carbon Offsets, Carbon Credits, Renewable Energy Certificates and the Low Carbon Fuel Standard
- Carbon offset existing programs, project examples, and co-benefits
- Types of offsets drawing interest, and challenges and opportunities for local SoCal projects

Highlights:

- The difference between carbon offsets and carbon credits, whether mandatory (compliance) or voluntary, *Renewable Energy Credits/Certificates* (RECs), the Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS); and finally, how do Carbon Offset Projects (from forests to mine methane capture) fit into this mix.
- How the Carbon Offset Co-Benefits from projects can also lead to improvements in the quality of life for a local population, through environmental, economic and social benefits (from jobs and water/air quality to biodiversity and community engagement).
- How a ‘collective portfolio approach’ to sponsoring offset projects or purchasing carbon credits can be financially beneficial for both the purchaser and project developer of those credits, and facilitate collective learning about the processes and requirements associated with marketable carbon credit procurement
- Building related projects section, including the bundling of building retrofits for older buildings such as Class B and Class C commercial office, retail, and multifamily assets; and how fuel switching from gas to electric across portfolios of multi-family or single-family homes could likely generate valuable offsets.

“We are at an important moment for increased corporate interest in sustainability with mounting pressure to make net zero commitments across a company’s portfolio of operations, and carbon offsets could have an important role to play in helping us achieve them,” states Ben Stapleton, USGBC-LA Executive Director. “Yet, real challenges remain in verifying accuracy for offset projects and there is a need to make sure these projects have more local, tangible environmental and social impacts. We cannot stress enough how important it is that companies focus first on their operations to reduce their emissions as carbon offsets are not a panacea for solving corporate contributions to climate change.”

Download the white paper [HERE](#), and register for the July 22 panel [HERE](#).

To learn more about the prior plastic waste white paper, please click [HERE](#).
To learn more about the prior Telecommuting white paper, please click [HERE](#).

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About U.S. Green Building Council-Los Angeles

Founded in 2002, USGBC-LA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization committed to creating a prosperous and sustainable future within one generation. Our mission is to accelerate all aspects of sustainability in the built environment by delivering access to knowledge, resources, recognition and networking. *Learn, Share and Lead Green.* (www.usgbc-la.org)