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Smoller, Moodian & King: Help Us Save the Earth

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Orange County Sustainability Decathlon

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Smoller, Moodian & King: Help Us Save the Earth

by [Fred Smoller](#), [Michael A. \(Mike\) Moodian](#) and [Richard King](#) Aug 26, 2021 Updated Sep 7, 2021



Climate change is real, it's much worse than you thought, and it's happening now, according to the report issued August 9, 2021, by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The evidence is undeniable: rising sea levels, unprecedented flooding, widespread drought, intense wildfires, record-breaking heat, gargantuan hurricanes, and other extreme weather events. UN Secretary General António Guterres said the report of this august body is a “code red for humanity.” Drastic action is needed immediately.

Orange County must do its part to help mitigate the climate emergency.

To this end, we recently received courtesy of state Senator Dave Min (SD-37), a \$5 million grant to organize the Orange County Sustainability Decathlon. This competition will be held in 2023 at a site in Orange County, California.

This exciting new competition aims to motivate and empower California’s best and brightest to lead the state’s transition to 100 percent renewable energy. The decathlon will also address housing affordability challenges in California.

The decathlon will challenge multidisciplinary teams of college students to design and build replicable housing units to accelerate sustainable development throughout the state and country. The 20 teams selected for this competition will display their homes for public viewing at the site. These homes will be judged and monitored for performance in order to determine winners of the ten contests. Awards will go to teams whose homes demonstrate design excellence, consumer appeal, sustainability, and affordability, as well as optimal renewable energy production and efficiency.



The competition will be open to colleges and universities. Post-secondary institutions may partner up, but at least one school on each team must be from California. Teams are also encouraged to partner with existing home-builders and developers in order to accelerate the application of innovative strategies in new and retrofit construction. Each team selected to participate in the competition will receive a stipend of \$100,000 as initial seed money to get started.

California leads the nation in solar installations, and the state has passed ambitious climate change legislation. Current and previous governors of both parties have made tackling climate change a top priority. The decathlon will have an immediate impact on the future direction of residential development, helping the state meet its own remarkable goal of being first in the nation with sustainable housing.

This new competition will include a sustainability exposition. Sustainability vendors will be on site to display and explain their products, services, and new technologies. The long-term goal is

to create a world's fair of sustainability, putting Orange County at the forefront of innovative, sustainable housing. The competition will build environmental awareness and motivate people to adopt sustainable practices in their everyday lives without sacrificing comfort or convenience.

We are thrilled to have the opportunity to help make Orange County the world's sustainability capital, and we look forward to sharing more in the coming months.



Fred Smoller and Michael A. (Mike) Moodian codirect the Orange County Annual Survey. Smoller was instrumental in bringing the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon to the Orange County Great Park in 2013 and 2015. Richard King, founder of the U.S. Department of

Energy Solar Decathlon, is the Director of the inaugural Orange County Sustainability Decathlon. For more information email: OCSD23@yahoo.com.

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