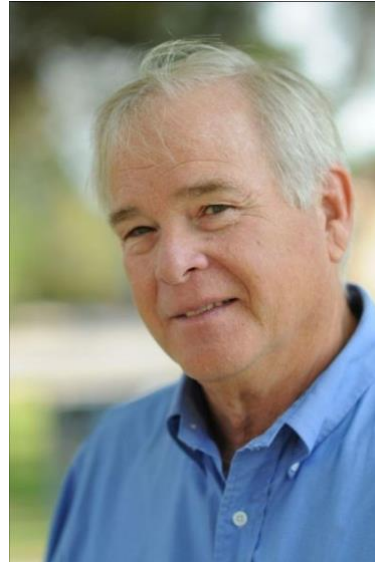




GILL SORG

Las Cruces City Councilor, New Mexico
First Elected 2009



WHAT ARE YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT OR IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS AN ELECTED LEADER?

As a scientist, MS in Biology, I have been advocating for preventing and mitigation of climate change and global warming. In Las Cruces, we have an aggressive solar PV program to reduce our greenhouse gas production. Our goal is to be 25% carbon-free electric use, 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2045. We have done a greenhouse gas inventory for the city. The largest producer of greenhouse gas is transportation. We have implemented other green infrastructure building codes. We will soon have an aggressive electric vehicle program. We have implemented a new comprehensive plan called Elevate Las Cruces with many green aspects. I have also completed many infrastructure projects that were incomplete when I was first elected.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

The biggest challenge is to help with income and wealth inequality. We have high poverty in Las Cruces. We got a start with the increase in minimum wages in Las Cruces, but we continue to have this problem. There are social issues connected to law enforcement, also. Often times, our officers are called out for domestic violence and mental health problems when a social worker or even psychologist are the people needed. Las Cruces is in the process of contracting with these types of services soon.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE CONSIDERING RUNNING FOR OFFICE FOR THE FIRST TIME?

Work hard. Meet as many of your potential constituents as possible. If that means going door to door, you need to do it. Ask them what they are concerned about in the district and listen, listen, listen.

IS THERE A CONSERVATION, CLIMATE, OR DEMOCRACY-RELATED RULE, POLICY, OR IDEA YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IMPLEMENTED AT THE LOCAL, STATE, AND/OR NATIONAL LEVEL?

I would like to see as much habitat for wildlife preserved as possible. We have a new comprehensive plan that values open space and preserving natural areas and habitat. We also passed a resolution in support of the 30x30 bill in the U.S. Senate, sponsored by Senator Tom Udall, to preserve 30% of land and water habitat in the country and the world by 2030. We have the Land and Water Conservation Fund permanently funded now, and we need to keep that going, and even increase it. We need to use it for preserving natural open space and habitat. We are losing our life on earth.

AS A LOCAL LEADER, ARE THERE ANY LESSONS LEARNED/ADVICE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH FELLOW LOCAL OFFICIALS ON RESPONDING TO THE CURRENT PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES?

The COVID-19 pandemic is a lifetime event. There is a simple method to control the spread – wear mouth/nose coverings. If everyone would wear them in public, the virus would be limited in its spreading. Look at the Asian countries. Taiwan has virtually no coronavirus, because they all wear masks. When someone gets it, they isolate and trace. That is what we need to do until the vaccine is ready for everyone.

