



County Of Santa Cruz

COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

701 OCEAN STREET, ROOM 330, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

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COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

ANNUAL REPORT – 2008

1. Role of the Commission on the Environment

The Commission on the Environment acts as an advisory body to, and resource for, the County Board of Supervisors. The Commission is charged with recommending policies and action programs designed to improve and protect the environment.

In accordance with its purpose as presented in Chapter 2.54.050 of the County Code, the Commission shall:

- A. Advise the Board of Supervisors and make recommendations on ways to improve and protect the environment to ensure the long term environmental sustainability of the County;
- B. Advise the Board of Supervisors and work with other commissions in reviewing the updating County policies to provide a comprehensive course of action to support these goals in both the public and private spheres;
- C. Serve as an information clearing house to the Board of Supervisors and other county commission about proposed and pending legislation, both state and federal, which may impact the environment;
- D. Advise the Board of Supervisors on potential areas of cooperation with other public and private agencies and organizations to plan and implement effective environmental policies in Santa Cruz County; and
- E. Exercise any other responsibilities that may be set forth in the commission's bylaws, or may be directed by the Board of Supervisors.

2. Meeting Dates, Time and Location

The Commission met in 2008 on January 23, February 27, March 26, April 23, May 28, June 25, July 23, August 27, September 24, October 22, and December 10 at 701 Ocean Street. The Commission generally meets on the on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 5:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors Chambers located at 701 Ocean Street, Fifth Floor, Santa Cruz, CA.

3. Commission Structure

The Commission is composed of ten members who are residents of the County. Each member of the Board of Supervisors appoints two commissioners.

They are as follows:

- District 1 Mr. Len Beyea, term expires April 1, 2009
 Mr. Dan Haifley, term expires April 1, 2009
- District 2 Ms. Sharon Sarris, term expires April 1, 2009
 Mr. Kenneth Adelman, term expires April 1, 2009
- District 3 Mr. Alan Schlenger (Vice-Chairperson), term expires April 1, 2011
 Ms. Donna Meyers (resigned February 2008)
 Ms. Laura Kasa, appointed February 2008, term expires April 1, 2011
- District 4 Mr. Robert Stokes, term expires April 1, 2011
 Mr. Tom Rosewall, term expires April 1, 2011
- District 5 Ms. Virginia Johnson (Chairperson), term expires April 1, 2009
 Dr. Betsy Herbert, term expires April 1, 2009

4. Commission Staff

The Commission is staffed by the General Services Department.

5. Attendance

Commissioner attendance for 2008 is itemized on the attached roster.

6. Annual Goals and Accomplishments

In 2008, the Commission focused on issues pertaining to “climate change” within the County by reviewing the history of various local environmental efforts and implementing an appropriate work plan for the new Commission. Progress was made on all of the work plan objectives:

Discovery Process

The Commission coordinated a discovery process, both internal and external, to identify existing resources, initiatives, current sources of information and local cooperative opportunities regarding how to address climate change. Study sessions and agency organizational presentations were conducted during regular meetings on several topics:

March 26th

Robert Ketley, Environmental Program Coordinator, City of Watsonville

Mr. Ketley delivered a summary of all of the programs currently underway in the City of Watsonville including the use of bio-diesel in all of City’s garbage trucks.

April 23rd

Ross Clark, Climate Action Coordinator, City of Santa Cruz

Mr. Clark provided a detailed account of the progress made towards the three goals of the City of Santa Cruz’ Climate Action Plan; conservation, sustainability and renewables and how each of these effects the three target sectors; municipal, business and resident/visitor.

May 28th

Tom Burns, Planning Director, County of Santa Cruz

Mr. Burns’ presentation centered on Green House Gases, Land Use, and Green Building. The County Planning Department is working to get back into projects that balance design with site impacts. The planning department is determined to carefully consider all of the options when instituting a green building program.

July 23rd

Bryan Wall, Director SC County ROP, Santa Cruz County Office of Education, and

Carol Polhamus, Director Career Technical Education Project, Santa Cruz County Office of Education -- Mr. Wall and Ms. Polhamus presented information related to work currently underway to create high school programs related to green careers environmental sustainability and green construction.

August 27th

Bruce Riordan, Consultant, Expert on AB 32

Mr. Riordan gave a brief overview of the AB 32 draft scoping document that cites transportation and land use as having the greatest impact, followed by behavior change. When questioned about compliance with AB 32, Riordan emphasized that current County activities and efforts should be considered work in progress under voluntary compliance with AB 32 and that SB 375 would likely result in stronger regulation of land use and transportation.

September 24th

Sharon Anderson, Lezlie Kimura, Tabettha Willmon, Office of Climate Change, California Air Resources Board--CARB staff presented the draft scoping plan for AB 32 implementation and gave a status report on preliminary recommendations, additional measures under consideration, scoping plan evaluation process and land use and local government items.

October 22nd

Wendy Sarsfield and Rob Morse, PGE Regional Energy Program Managers

PGE presented local energy efficiency and renewable energy projects funded by public goods funds that benefit local residents and businesses.

Regional Cooperation and the Climate Action Compact

The Commission sent representatives to 31 local stakeholder meetings to discuss cooperative opportunities that would address climate change. With the Climate Action Compact partners, (the City of Santa Cruz and the University of California, Santa Cruz), and other potential regional partners, the Commission participated in developing eleven local projects and initiatives, six of which are already being implemented:

Santa Cruz Region Green Building Task Force

The intent of the task force is to achieve countywide emissions reductions in the building sector through the creation and adoption of consistent green building ordinances and corresponding sets of checklists in each of the five local jurisdictions. At a minimum, the partners seek better cooperation and information sharing among the different jurisdictions regarding their green building programs.

Emissions Inventory – Development of Transportation Climate Action Plan

An initial action for municipalities to address greenhouse gas emissions is the completion of an emissions inventory. The Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District has just completed a countywide mobile emission inventory and provided the information to County Public Works and Ecology Action. EA will be working with the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission to develop the transportation chapter that may be included in the County's Climate Action Plan, which the County is required to develop per AB 32.

Zip Car Expansion

UC Santa Cruz has launched the most successful campus Zip Car program in the country. The Climate Action Partners are collaborating with Zip Car to provide the community with an expanding and cutting edge car share program that will offer employers, employees and the public at large with different opportunities to utilize Zip Cars.

Climate Action Teams

This project empowers and supports the residents of the City and County of Santa Cruz to make specific and targeted changes in their daily lifestyles in order to reduce their annual carbon dioxide emissions by 5000 pounds per household. The project cultivates a sense of community, personal responsibility, and environmental stewardship among county residents.

Green Drinks

Ecology Action and local sponsoring businesses are partnering on Green Drinks/Cool Ideas, a monthly forum for creative solutions and critical thinking about climate change and sustainability. Each event features a local scientist, policy maker, or green entrepreneur discussing a different facet of the climate challenge. Since its inception in November '07, attendance has grown to approximately 75 people each month.

Multi-Family Residential Complex Recycling

This program will provide increased beverage container recycling opportunities to the underserved multifamily facilities of the Monterey Bay Area by implementing convenient and consistent recycling program services to maximize CRV diversion. A \$2.5 million Department of Conservation proposal has been approved for the Monterey Bay Region and will benefit all of the Cities, Counties as well as the UCSC and CSU Monterey Bay campus housing complexes.

The stakeholder committee continues to seek stakeholder participation and funding support for these initiatives:

Electric Vehicle Plug-In Demonstration Project

Plug-in electric vehicles may provide a significant opportunity to increase fuel efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Such technology could reduce emissions by 50% over current hybrid vehicles. Identifying potential options to greater use, such as greater number of recharging stations and including EV as portions of business fleets would increase the utility of these vehicles and provide greater opportunities for those who use electric vehicles to travel throughout the County.

On Water Bill Financing for Installation of Solar Hot Water Heaters

The Santa Cruz Solar Hot Water Program would offer residents, rental properties and small businesses the opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy use by providing interest free loans to install solar hot water systems.

On-Tax-Bill Financing for Efficiency Upgrades and Renewable Energy Installation

This program would create a voluntary Sustainable Energy Assessment District where property owners (residential and commercial) could install solar systems and make energy efficiency improvements to their buildings and pay for the cost as a 20-year assessment on their property tax bills.

Cool Business Program

The goal of this program would be to update, upgrade, re-invigorate and build upon the success of the existing Monterey Bay Green Business Program.

Sky Tags Community Climate Fund

Many local businesses and institutions, including the University, purchase renewable energy credits (RECs) to offset the greenhouse gases they produce. Local offsets may be more attractive than investing in REC's that originate far from Santa Cruz, because they are 1) verifiable, 2) transparent, and 3) as effective (in terms of removing GHGs or preventing their release) as projects anywhere in the world. Additionally, a local offset program that offers REC's for sale would contribute to our local economy by encouraging green businesses to do projects that provide REC's.

County Greenhouse Gas Inventory

In early February, the Board of Supervisors approved the Commission's recommendation to contract with ICLEI to do an internal greenhouse gas inventory for all County operations. The General Services Department is currently working with ICLEI to coordinate the inventory, expected to occur in early 2009.

Convener—Santa Cruz Region Green Building Task Force

On October 3rd, 2008 the Commission hosted a meeting of building officials and planning directors to investigate the creation of a Regional Green Building Task Force. In attendance were:

Kristin Sullivan Chair of the Capitola Commission on the Environment, **Virginia Johnson** Chair of the Santa Cruz County Commission on the Environment, **Sharon Sarris** Commissioner on the Santa Cruz County Commission on the Environment, **Colin Clark**

(continued) Climate Team Program Specialist, Ecology Action, **John Doughty** Watsonville Community Development Director, **April Wooden** City of Scotts Valley Community Development Director, **Joe Strasser** City of Scotts Valley Building Official, **Daniel Kostelec** City of Capitola Chief Building Official, **Juliana Rebagliati** City of Santa Cruz Director of Planning and Community Development, **Dick Stubendorff** City of Santa Cruz Chief Building Official, **John Ancic** City of Santa Cruz Green Building Program Coordinator, **Tom Burns** County of Santa Cruz Director of Planning, **Mark Deming** County of Santa Cruz, Assistant Director of Planning, **Jennifer Hutchinson** County of Santa Cruz Chief Building Inspector, **Charlie Eadie** Hamilton Swift, Consultant to Ecology Action, **Bill Holl** AIA, Consultant to Ecology Action.

Each jurisdiction gave a brief overview of their GB Programs, after which a detailed roundtable discussion ensued. Some of the discussed topics were:

- Value of maintaining a consistent program with all regional jurisdictions;
- Issues around enforcement and verification; and
- Justification for points applied to certain program features.

The group decided that it would be valuable to form a regional Green Building Task Force, the region defined as all jurisdictions within the County. Planning Directors and Building Officials agreed to meet quarterly.

Track pending state legislation, proposed regulations, and executive orders regarding climate change

The Commission's Legislative Committee kept the Commission apprised of proposed major state legislation as it progressed. The quantity and continual changes to pending legislation made it logistically problematic for the Commission to make meaningful recommendations to the Board. During 2009, the Commission intends to develop a more feasible approach to advising the Board on these matters.

Other matters taken under consideration as directed by the Board or requested by County staff:

The EcoCruz website:

EcoCruz is a collaborative effort among the County, Cities and various local non-profit agencies currently underway to establish a website to serve as a portal to environmental groups and interests. This site is envisioned to serve as an open forum and provide outreach and public information/visitor linkages, including volunteer recruitment. The Commission unanimously endorsed the participation and contribution of the County Public Works Department in the project and forwarded its recommendation to the Board.

Plasma Arc Gasification:

Over the course of the year, the Commission received several informational reports on the proposed Plasma Arc Gasification project proposed for installation at the Buena Vista Landfill. At the August meeting, Brian Turpin of County Public Works gave a brief overview of the proposed project and reported the next steps for the Board to consider. The Commission requested that future reports given to the Board be forwarded to the Commission.

Internal County Operation Efficiency Measures :

The Commission received suggestions from County staff on internal conservation measures that could be implemented. In August, Nancy Carr Gordon of County General Services reported on the feasibility of implementing the proposed measures. The COE will continue to work with General Services to vet ideas on how to decrease the County's environmental impact.

7. Future Goals

The Commission is preparing its 2009 work plan for the Board's consideration at a presentation in early 2009. In summary, it the Commission's intent to continue its efforts to inform the Board on the implementation of AB32 and related executive orders and legislation, impacts on the local environment due to climate change, and the ongoing work of the Climate Action Compact with specific recommendations for local projects that are feasible and effective.

ATTENDANCE BY COMMISSIONERS – 2008

District 1 Commissioner Len Beyea
 Commissioner Dan Haifley

District 2 Commissioner Sharon Sarris
 Commissioner Ken Adelman

District 3 Commissioner Alan Schlenger
 Commissioner Donna Meyers (resigned Feb 2008)
 Commissioner Laura Kasa (took office Feb 2008)

District 4 Commissioner Robert Stokes
 Commissioner Tom Rosewall

District 5 Commissioner Virginia Johnson
 Commissioner Betsy Herbert

DISTRICT	1	2	3	4	5
January	B –X	Sa-A	Sc-X	St-X	J-X

Ha - X A-X M-A R -X Hb-X

February

B -X Sa- X Sc- X St- X J- X
Ha - X A- X K- X R - X Hb- X

March

B - X Sa- X Sc- X St- X J- X
Ha - X A- A K-A R - X Hb-X

April

B - A Sa- X Sc-X St-X J-X
Ha - X A-X K-A R -X Hb-X

May

B -X Sa-X Sc-X St-X J-X
Ha -X A-X K-A R -X Hb-X

June

B -X Sa-X Sc-X St-X J-X
Ha - X A- A K-X R -X Hb-X

July

B - X Sa- X Sc- X St- X J- X
Ha - X A- X K- X R - X Hb- A

August	B – A	Sa- X	Sc-X	St- X	J- X
	Ha – X	A- X	K- X	R - X	Hb- X
Sept	B –X	Sa-A	Sc-X	St- X	J- X
	Ha – A	A- X	K- X	R - X	Hb- X
October	B – A	Sa- X	Sc-X	St-X	J- X
	Ha – X	A- X	K-X	R -X	Hb-X
November	meeting combined with December				
December	B – X	Sa- A	Sc- A	St- X	J- X
	Ha – X	A- X	K- X	R - X	Hb- X

X Present at the meeting

r Resigned

A Excused absence from the meeting a Unexcused absence from the meeting

V Seat vacant