



County of Santa Cruz

COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

BY-LAWS

1. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Commission on the Environment is established under the authority of Government Code Section 31000.1 and pursuant to Sections 2.38.060 and 2.54 of the County Code.

The Commission shall:

- Advise the Board of Supervisors and make recommendations on ways to implement the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) to reduce the causes of climate change and adapt to climate change hazards that affect the County;
- Advise the Board of Supervisors and work with other commissions in reviewing and updating County policies to provide a comprehensive course of action to support these goals in both the public and private spheres;
- Serve as an information clearinghouse to the Board of Supervisors and other County commissions about proposed and pending legislation, both State and federal, regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- Advise the Board of Supervisors on potential areas of cooperation with other public and private agencies and organizations to plan and implement effective climate action and adaptation policies in Santa Cruz County; and
- Advise the Board of Supervisors and make recommendations on ways to realize climate justice and equity defined in the CAAP as both protection from environmental impacts and hazards as well as access to environmental benefits for all, regardless of income, gender, race, age and other characteristics;
- Exercise any other responsibilities concerning environmental issues and initiatives that may be directed by the Board of Supervisors.

2. MEETINGS

- A. Regular meetings of the Commission shall be held six times a year. They will be scheduled generally on the fourth Wednesday of each month, convening at 5:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, 5th Floor, Governmental Center, 701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, California.
- B. No meeting of this Commission shall be held in any facility that prohibits the admittance of any person, or persons, on the basis of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual preference, gender identity, gender expression, age, or any other protected characteristic. All commission

meetings shall be held at locations which are accessible to the public and which are functional for, usable, and accessible to persons with a disability.

- C. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or by a majority vote of the Commission in accordance with Brown Act requirements.
- D. Public participation in Commission meetings shall be allowed as follows:
 - 1. An opportunity for members of the public to directly address the Commission on any item on the agenda of interest to the public shall be provided before or during the Commission's consideration of the item.
 - 2. In addition, the agenda will provide for community oral communications (public comment) on items not on the agenda, which are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission, at the beginning of each regular meeting agenda.
 - 3. The Chairperson of the Commission may establish reasonable limits on the amount of time allotted to each speaker on a particular item, and the Commission may establish reasonable limits on the total amount of time allotted for public testimony on a particular item or the total amount of time allotted for community oral communications. When further discussion is required, the Commission may vote to allot time in the agenda of the following meeting.
- E. At least seventy-two (72) hours prior to each regular meeting, an agenda for the regular meeting shall be sent to each Commission member, to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, representatives of the local news media and to each other person who has submitted a written request to the Commission for notification of meetings and shall be posted at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the regular meeting on the Commission website and at a location that is freely accessible to the public. The agenda shall contain a brief general description of each item of business to be transacted or discussed at the meeting.
- F. No action or discussion shall be undertaken on any item not appearing on the posted agenda except that members of the Commission may briefly respond to statements made or questions posed by persons exercising their public testimony rights or ask a question for clarification, refer the matter to staff or to other resources for factual information, or request staff to report back at a subsequent meeting concerning any matter. Notwithstanding the foregoing, action may be taken on an item of business not appearing on the posted agenda upon a determination by two-thirds vote of the membership of the Commission, or if less than two-thirds of the members are present, by unanimous vote of those members present, that there is need to take

immediate action and the need for action came to the attention of the County subsequent to the agenda being posted; or when an item appeared on the agenda of, and was continued from, a meeting held not more than five days earlier; or if, by majority vote, the Commission determines that the matter in question constitutes an emergency pursuant to the Brown Act.

- G. At least twenty-four (24) hours prior to each special meeting, an agenda for the special meeting shall be mailed to each Commission member, to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, to each representative of the news media and to each other person who has submitted a written request to the Commission for notification of meetings; and shall be posted at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the special meeting at a location that is freely accessible to members of the public. No business other than that listed on the agenda shall be considered at a special meeting.
- H. All subcommittees shall comply with the notice and agenda requirements otherwise applicable to the Commission in these by-laws, except for subcommittees composed solely of less than a quorum of the members of the Commission which are not standing subcommittees of the Commission with either a continuing subject matter jurisdiction or a meeting schedule fixed by resolution or other formal action of the Commission.
- I. A person shall not be required to register their name or fulfill any other obligation as a condition to attendance at any meeting of this Commission but may volunteer such information for inclusion in the Commission's minutes.
- J. The meetings will be conducted in accordance with Rosenberg's Rules of Order.
- K. Smoking shall be prohibited at all meetings of the Commission.

3. VOTING

- A. A majority of the membership of the Commission shall constitute a quorum and no act of the Commission shall be valid unless at least a majority of those members constituting a quorum concur therein.
- B. All official acts of the Commission shall comply with Santa Cruz County Code Section 2.38.150.

4. OFFICERS

- A. The officers of the Commission are the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson. The Commission may also elect a Co-Chairperson in lieu of a Vice-Chairperson.

- B. The duties of the Chairperson are to preside over meetings, discuss agendas with Commission staff, represent the Commission, and be responsible for communication with the Board of Supervisors. The Vice-Chairperson shall assume these same duties in the absence of the Chairperson.
- C. Elections of officers shall take place in May of odd numbered years at a regular meeting.
- D. Officers may serve for up to two consecutive years and shall be eligible to serve again after a one-year "sit-out" period.

5. AGENDAS

- A. Commission staff shall prepare the agenda for each meeting and may consult with or seek input from the Chair of the body, or in the Chair's absence or unavailability, the Vice Chair or Co-Chairperson, during the preparation of the agenda. Staff is also responsible for ensuring the official meeting agenda is properly noticed and posted according to law.
- B. Commission members who wish to place an item on the agenda shall give those items to the Chair of the Commission and staff at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting.
- C. At the beginning of the meeting, staff shall inform the Commission of any additions or corrections to the agenda and inform the Commission of any requests for continuances of scheduled items. (procedures for adding items to the agenda can be found under Section 2(F) of these by-laws). The Commission may elect to continue items at this time or to consider the requests at the scheduled time for the item.

6. SUBCOMMITTEES

- A. Subcommittees may be appointed, as needed, by the Chairperson with the majority approval of the Commission. The Chairperson, with the majority approval of the Commission shall terminate the subcommittee when its function is no longer necessary.
- B. The establishment and dissolution of all subcommittees shall be reported in writing to the Board of Supervisors by the Commission. Members of any subcommittee need not be Commission members, except that the Commission Chairperson shall designate a Commission member to serve on the subcommittee.
- C. Ad hoc committees may be appointed by the Chair.

D. In accordance with SCCC 2.38.230, all subcommittees shall comply with the notice and agenda requirements otherwise applicable to the Commission in these by-laws, except for subcommittees composed solely of less than a quorum of the members of the Commission which are not standing subcommittees of the Commission with either a continuing subject jurisdiction or a meeting schedule fixed by resolution or other formal action of the Commission.

7. APPROVAL OF BY-LAWS

These By-laws and any subsequent amendments thereto, shall be approved by the Board of Supervisors pursuant to Santa Cruz County Code Section 2.38.140.

8. AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS

Amendments to these By-laws may be recommended to the Board of Supervisors by a majority vote of the Commission.

9. STAFF SUPPORT

County staff support shall be provided to the Commission in accordance with Santa Cruz County Code Sections 2.38.190 and 2.54.040(B).

DATE ADOPTED BY COMMISSION: July 31, 2024

DATE APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: August 27, 2024