

Climate Equity and Resilience Investment in Conservation and Development: \$500,000 (On-going)

The Department of Conservation and Development (DCD) has identified investments in sustainability planning staff that would advance Contra Costa County's commitment to addressing climate change. These investments will expand the County's impact on climate action and sustainability through an on-going investment of \$500,000/year to support additional staff in DCD. Additional staff are needed to support new community planning initiatives that will advance the County's progress and leadership on these issues. These staff will be housed in DCD.

This investment in DCD sustainability planning staff will allow the County to undertake the following.

- Take action to address Sea Level Rise. The County has data from the *Adapting to Rising Tides* studies of east and west Contra Costa County, the Vulnerability Assessment prepared for the on-going update to the *County's General Plan*, and other planning documents, including the preparation of a *Groundwater Sustainability Plan* for the East Contra Costa Groundwater Subbasin. Concurrently, State and Federal agencies – potential partners – are preparing planning documents the County may leverage to help our communities, infrastructure, and ecosystems thrive in the face of climate change. There is ample data outlining the threats to health, safety, and community well-being from sea level rise from the Bay to the Delta. Potential measures to improve resiliency are also being identified but must be implemented across jurisdictional lines on a multi-partner basis. We need additional staff for the County to lead work to address these challenges.
- Develop community facing clean energy projects and programs, including community solar installations for Impacted Communities, community resilience centers that serve as gathering spaces during disasters and public safety power shutoffs, and opportunities to advance the deployment of electric vehicles. This work is expected to occur in collaboration with MCE, PG&E, and other stakeholders.
- Support on-going work by the Board of Supervisors on the climate-related aspects of planning for a Just Transition away from an economy based on fossil fuels, as identified in the September 2020 Climate Emergency Resolution adopted by the Board of Supervisors. As the work proceeds, there will be on-going need for staff to research the many issues involved, track similar efforts in other areas, provide logistical support for meetings, monitor legislation, and support the work of elected officials to develop plans and programs to implement the emerging vision. Currently there is no one on County staff tasked with supporting this work.
- Financing programs for clean energy and energy efficiency, with emphasis on low- and moderate-income homeowners. Retrofitting existing buildings to use resources more efficiently and lower utility bills is complicated and expensive. The County can help by facilitating programs that are accessible to low- and moderate-income homeowners.
- Developing strategies to sequester carbon in the many land use types in Contra Costa County. The County is launching a feasibility study right now through a Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation grant from the California Strategic Growth Council. That study will identify opportunities for different actions the County can support in every community. A next step after

the feasibility study is complete will be to develop and implement a Countywide tree master plan, and to collaborate on urban agriculture projects with other County departments and community stakeholders.

Recommendation:

The County Administrator's recommendation is that these efforts fully funded with an on-going annual allocation of \$500,000.