



9-9-21

TO: Members of the Measure X Advisory Board

RE: Comment and clarification on your discussion on climate and climate justice 9-8-21

Dear Members of the Measure X Advisory Board:

I was able to be in attendance for most of yesterday's session but could not stay for public comment due to another meeting. I am writing to provide some additional comments related to your discussion on how climate action and climate justice fit into your considerations.

Member Honig made the point that this was an important area for action and also commented that money needed to go to the community to address solutions. 350 Contra Costa requested funds to go to the County because, as in most policy and structural issues, the local government needs to act. We do need the community, of which we are part, to advocate strongly for action and climate justice action in addressing climate solutions—to hold the County to right action.

**And, we advocate for authentic engagement. In the spirit of Member Honig's remarks, we think your advocacy of climate action that is centered in equity or climate justice and includes resources for ensuring resident voice and influence as solutions roll out—including compensation for community groups to help ensure resident engagement—would be important.**

Our request was made because we need to elevate this issue in the County politically and structurally in ways that ensure those most affected and vulnerable are heard and helped as a priority of public policy. All will suffer and do suffer now due to our climate emergency, but marginalized communities and BIPOC communities suffer more and this needs to be corrected in the way solutions are executed.

Having an Office of Sustainability and Environmental Justice under the CAO elevates this work structurally. More funds would be needed to make this move possible and to resource the effort in ways that can ensure co-benefits go to the communities most in need.

There was concern raised at the meeting that it seemed plans were discussed and not action. We are an action group and that is our measure of what needs to happen.

There are solutions the County can take that can benefit us and some foundational plans are necessary, but action that can positively affect:

- healthy, affordable housing,
- opportunities for workforce development and more local jobs,
- cleaner air and water,
- less pollution in front-line communities,
- more transit options for low income and marginalized communities,
- more protection from heat and other climate impacts

*The above illustrate co-benefits of climate action for climate justice. The climate emergency is an overarching intersectional issue. We need to stop creating the problem (stop polluting) and we must protect communities from the effects of the changing climate already in play.*

Thank you all for your work. You have had so much to digest and contemplate. We have sent two other letters and below is a summary of the presentation made.

With Respect,

Marti Roach on behalf of 350 Contra Costa  
925-376-3853

## **Measure X presentation by 350 CCC on August 3, 2021**

SLIDE ONE: Good evening and thank you for this opportunity to address the measure X commission. My name is Marti Roach. I am on the leadership team of 350 Contra Costa

We are a county wide grass roots nonprofit organization that joins with many other groups to mobilize action to address the climate emergency and ensure equity and justice as we solve this challenge.

**SLIDE TWO:**

2021: Contra Costa BOS:  
We Have a **Climate  
Emergency.**

It's Real

- Science irrefutable
- We're living the Beginning

It's Bad

- Public Health Emergency
- Disproportionate Harms

It's Solvable

- Ticking clock to 2030
- Local action critical

**We pay either way!**



Our county like thousands of places around the world, has declared we are in a climate emergency that is backed by science and, now by our own lived experience. We now see that we must reduce fossil fuel pollution emissions on a much tighter timeline as not enough has been done and climate disruption is moving faster. We have the next 9-10 years to get emissions under control and begin to stabilize our atmosphere.

We all live with this now whether we choose to face it or not. Stunning stories abound now. A farmworker lost his life in the heat dome that covered the northwest. People drown in floods. We live under wildfire sieges that break yearly records in lives lost and acreage burned. We now have new language like fire sieges, gigafires, fires that make their own weather. Rising tolls from climate impacts affect our lives and our wallet.

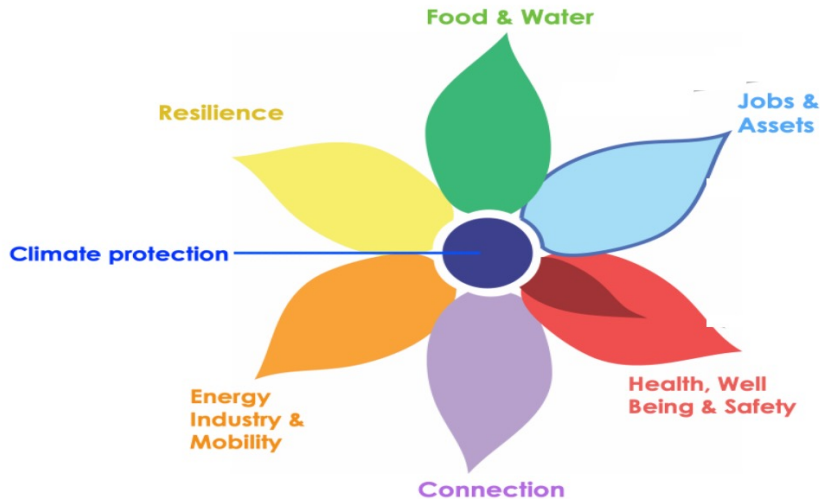
This is not just a climate emergency; over 29 medical societies including the AMA name it the top public health emergency we face. We measure this crisis in lives lost, work days missed, property gone forever.

There is good news here: It is solvable.

**We know the solutions and many of them happen at the local level, tied to changes in transportation, buildings, and land use, things that can be fixed in ways that can help us solve other problems at the same time.**

SLIDE THREE: This is called multi-solving and recognizes the intersection of solving many problems at once.

## We multi-solve so many problems when we tackle climate



We know improved air quality, for example, saves people from premature death and keeps more people from getting asthma and other illnesses. So we save lives, improve the quality of our lives and save health dollars as we reduce carbon pollution. This flower shows that there are benefits with climate protection that cut across many other community needs.

**It is important that these benefits prioritize equity and environmental justice.** Low-income families, BIPOC community members, residents who live near toxic and industrial polluting industries need to be at the front of the line on the benefits that come as we act to transform our communities for the better as we fix the climate emergency. They are the most vulnerable to the impacts. And funding needs to prioritize this.

SLIDE FOUR: We totally support the County's ask for resources addressing environmental pollution and other needs, but we need to go bigger, more intersectional and see this opportunity to better organize our County government and better resource it. We have wonderful models around us of sister counties who point the way. San Mateo County has created a dedicated Office of Sustainability, with authority directly under the County Manager, to work on reducing emissions and protecting the community from climate impacts. Their total budget is \$135M, of which about \$5M is dedicated to reducing emissions. They have many teams that each focus on areas like resilience, regional coordination, housing and transportation, community engagement and partnership. Santa Clara, SF, Marin and Sonoma County all have budgets to address climate and resilience in the multi millions and have programs and staff levels closer to San Mateo County. Sonoma County, for example, since 2009 has had a Regional Climate Protection Authority, that coordinates the County and its nine cities and multiple agencies, helping them

streamline work and position for grants and leveraging outside resources like bulk purchase of EVs.

We have one dedicated coordinator, an intern and other staff assigned on a part time, limited basis for projects.

Contra Costa needs to elevate its response to this crisis. We, too, need an Office of Sustainability, placed under the Chief Adm officer staffed and resourced to move fast, creatively and with resources to build partnerships with cities, the private sector and the community. We can invest in healthful solutions that reduce the problem rather than spend the same or more dealing with the impacts of climate change.

Let's build the infrastructure that can prioritizes justice, attract more money, unite our communities, and builds private and public partnerships. More staff will get our Electric Vehicle and other transportation and land use opportunities moving, our JT planning underway, our clean energy initiatives escalated. Done with justice in mind, this can lift up and help many in our County who need healthy housing, weatherized buildings, or help getting an EV.

SLIDE FIVE We ask you recommend \$2.5 Million annually for ten years to the County to enable bolder, swifter action on climate solutions that reduce emissions and bring multi-intersectional benefits that cut across all our concerns for health, equity and quality of life here in Contra Cosa.

If this funding starts going into our climate emergency response now, our upcoming 2022 climate action plan can be built with this knowledge so we can be bold on paper and in execution of plans. Let's match our resolve to act with the scale of the problem. Let's get a foundation can attract more resources and help lead our whole County.

All of you—a broad representation of our County- taking this message to our BOS can be the game changer we desperately need.