



Contra
Costa
County

To: Board of Supervisors
From: John Kopchik, Director, Conservation & Development Department
Date: August 3, 2021

Subject: RECEIVE letter from Sustainability Commission recommending actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings and REFER the letter to the Susta

RECOMMENDATION(S):

RECEIVE letter from Sustainability Commission recommending actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings and REFER the letter to the Sustainability Committee.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact at this time beyond staff time needed to study the recommendations.

BACKGROUND:

The responsibilities of the Contra Costa County Sustainability Commission include: (1) Provide advice to staff and the Board on successful implementation of the Climate Action Plan, including suggestions on how that work can be performed more efficiently and effectively; (2) Advise the Board on opportunities to realize equity and fairness across the diverse communities of Contra Costa County in sustainability programs that support the Climate Action Plan; and (3) Provide suggestions to staff and the Board on how to better engage Contra Costa County residents and businesses on sustainability issues and implementation of the Climate Action Plan. The Sustainability Commission at its April 26,

APPROVE

OTHER

RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY ADMINISTRATOR

RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD COMMITTEE

Action of Board On: **08/03/2021** APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED OTHER

Clerks Notes:

VOTE OF SUPERVISORS

AYE: John Gioia, District I Supervisor
Candace Andersen, District II Supervisor
Diane Burgis, District III Supervisor
Karen Mitchoff, District IV Supervisor
Federal D. Glover, District V Supervisor

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on the date shown.

ATTESTED: August 3, 2021

Monica Nino, County Administrator and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: Stacey M. Boyd, Deputy

Contact: Jody London,
925-655-2815

cc:

2021 meeting received a report from Wes Sullens in his role as Director, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), at the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). The report focused on USGBC's green building rating system and

BACKGROUND: (CONT'D)

> opportunities to integrate LEED principles into the County's Climate Action Plan. The Commission formed a working group to explore ideas and develop recommendations.

At the June 28, 2021 meeting of the Sustainability Commission, the Commission unanimously adopted four of the five recommendations brought forward by the working group. The recommendations are described in greater detail in the attachment. They include: (1) All-electric requirements for new buildings. (Note: this issue has been discussed by the Sustainability Committee and is on the August 3 Board agenda for discussion and direction.) (2) Procurement policies and lifecycle greenhouse gas analysis. (3) Buy Clean California specifications. (4) Adaptability and repurposing of public buildings.

The Sustainability Commission recommends the Board take action to adopt and implement these policies.

CONSEQUENCE OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

Failure to take action on the recommendations in the letter means the Board would be disregarding the advice of the Sustainability Commission.

ATTACHMENTS

Sustainability Commission's Letter re Green Building Recommendations

July 17, 2021

Contra Costa Board of Supervisors
651 Pine St.
Martinez, CA 94553

Dear Members of the Board,

At its June 21, 2021 meeting the Sustainability Commission unanimously supported four recommendations developed by its “Green Buildings” working group. The recommendations aim at reducing the carbon footprint of the County’s buildings and infrastructure. This includes electrification, reuse, and reducing embodied carbon in construction materials, both in the public and private sector. This letter briefly states those recommendations.

A fifth recommendation, the adoption of a low-carbon concrete reach code, is still under discussion by our Commission members.

Measures similar to the four recommendations below have been, or are in the process of being adopted in neighboring Bay Area cities. In the footnotes, you will find references to specific measures in their Climate Action Plans.

1. All-electric requirements for new buildings

The Sustainability Commission fully supports current work by County staff to develop all-electric building reach codes for new construction in both public and private sectors. We recommend the adoption of a prescriptive, rather than performance-based, reach code.¹

2. Procurement policies and lifecycle GHG analysis

We recommend adoption of procurement standards that incorporate total lifecycle GHG analyses. Products and materials should be selected with consideration for their recovery, resale and reuse potential. Such policies will result not only in reducing lifetime GHG emissions but also bring cost savings over the long-term, factoring in operations, durability, and maintenance.²

3. Buy Clean California specifications

The *Buy Clean California Act* states the Department of General Services (DGS) is required to establish and publish the maximum acceptable Global Warming Potential (GWP) limit for select construction materials.

We recommend that the county’s Requests for Proposals require use of the construction materials identified by *Buy Clean California*. These materials currently include structural steel, concrete reinforcing steel, flat glass, and mineral wool board insulation.³

4. Adaptability and repurposing of public buildings

Promote adaptability and capacity for re-purposing in new and existing public buildings. For example, community centers should be designed with potential for being quickly adapted as cooling and clean air centers or as evacuation support facilities. Planning for such contingencies aligns with the Climate Emergency Resolution, which identifies the need to plan for the needs of the County's most vulnerable populations.⁴

We wish to restate this: these four recommendations were unanimously approved by the members of the Commission. This is an indication of the importance that our members, representing residents from across the county, attach to the goal of rapidly cutting carbon emission. Reducing the carbon content of our buildings and infrastructure is a cost-effective, technologically viable, and socially just step toward achieving that goal.

Respectfully,

Wes Sullens
Chair, Sustainability Commission

¹ [Oakland CAP](#), B-2 (p. 66)
[Dublin CAP](#), Measure EE-1 (p. 75) and ML-1 (p. 106)
[San Francisco CAP \(Draft\)](#), BO 1-1, BO 2-1, BO 2-9 (enter these into search box at top of page)

² [San Francisco CAP \(Draft\)](#), RPC 1-2 through 1-7
[Dublin CAP](#), ML-4 (p. 114)
[Oakland CAP](#), B-4
[Circular Economy - Principles for Building Design, European Commission, 2020](#) (download)
General Principles B, F, H (document p. 8)
From Principle F: "Favor construction systems that incorporate circular economy thinking... enable systems to be easily maintained, repaired and replaced as this will prolong life cycle of buildings."

³ [Buy Clean California Act](#), accessed July 8, 2021.

⁴ [San Francisco CA \(Draft\)](#), RPC 1-2, RPC 1-4 through RPC 1-7, TLU 6-4
[Circular Economy - Principles for Building Design](#),
General Principles F and G (p. 8)