

March 21, 2023

Interdepartmental Climate Action Task Force Semi-Annual Report

Contra Costa County

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Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the work of the Interdepartmental Climate Action Task Force (Task Force), established by the Board of Supervisors in September 2020 through the Climate Emergency Resolution. The Task Force has been focused on implementing the Sustainability Fund and Green Government Group (G3) Champions program since its last report. These initiatives support climate action within County operations in alignment with the County's Climate Action Plan.

History

The Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted a Climate Emergency Resolution (Resolution) on September 22, 2020. One of the actions included in the Resolution was to establish an interdepartmental task force of all Department heads, or their senior deputies, to coordinate urgent implementation of the County's Climate Action Plan (CAP) and identify additional ways the County can reduce and adapt to the impacts of a changing climate. The Department of Conservation and Development (DCD) in partnership with the Department of Public Works (Public Works) convened the Task Force in late 2020. As directed in the Resolution, the Task Force reports to the Board twice a year.¹

The 2022 reports covered the plans for the first and second tranches of the Sustainability Fund, approved by the Board in November 2021; the launch and initial progress of the Green Government Group (G3) Champions; and several departments' climate action progress.

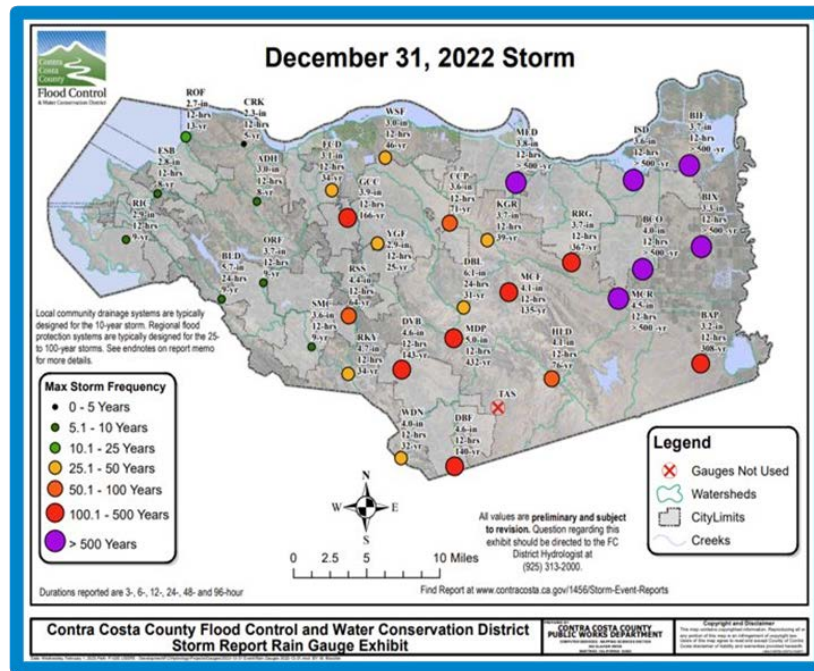
Extreme Weather in Contra Costa County

The Task Force received a presentation overviewing recent extreme weather events in Contra Costa County at its February 2023 meeting. There have been numerous major wildfire events across the county, including the 2013 Morgan Fire on Mount Diablo and the 2022 Scenic Fire near Port Costa. Even wildfires outside the county impact those who live and work here by reducing air quality. On September 9, 2020, skies across the Bay Area turned orange from sunlight filtered through smoke from wildfires in Northern California, Oregon, and Washington, and the following days saw air pollution spike to unhealthy levels.

Climate change also presents a threat to the county through sea level rise, flooding, and increased storm intensities. Climate change may lead to up to 55 inches of sea level rise by the end of the 21st century, resulting in a projected 40% increase in area of land susceptible to a 100-year flood event in Contra Costa County. Furthermore, the county has already seen more intense storms. *Figure 1* shows rainfall levels during the recent December 31, 2022, storm.

¹ Task Force reports and other related information can be found at <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/8333/Interdepartmental-Climate-Action-Task-Fo>.

Figure 1



Climate Action in Contra Costa County

At the February 2023 Task Force meeting, DCD staff provided a report on the update to the County's CAP. To facilitate the County's ability to reduce and adapt to climate change, the CAP is being updated in coordination with the County's General Plan update. The plans are anticipated to be adopted in 2024. Implementation of the CAP requires a coordinated effort among many people and departments. CAP focus areas include Clean and Efficient Built Environment, No Waste Contra Costa, Reduce Water Use and Increase Drought Resilience, Clean Transportation Network, Resilient Communities and Natural Infrastructure, Climate Equity, Leadership, and Implementation Strategies.

Based on the County's 2017 greenhouse gas emissions inventory, transportation followed by building emissions are the largest emissions sources in the unincorporated area of the county (setting aside emissions from large industrial facilities, which are not regulated by the County). County operations have a similar emissions profile, with employee commute, buildings and facilities, and government fleet accounting for the majority of emissions. To address the largest sources of emissions and continue progress on climate action goals, staff have identified climate action strategies to pursue prior to the adoption of the updated CAP in the 2023-2024 Interim Climate Action Work Plan.² Priorities include more all-electric and energy efficient building upgrades, increased electric vehicle adoption and charger availability, and waste reduction through composting and environmentally preferable purchasing.

The County has also prioritized ensuring that County investments support climate equity. In 2022, the Sustainability Commission received reports from the County Treasurer and from the Chief Deputy

² [2023-2024 Interim Climate Action Work Plan](#)

County Administrator who manages the County's bond program. Both committed to revising the County's investment and bond policies, including divesting from fossil fuels; evaluating the issuance of labeled bonds or other projects to be funded by municipal securities for "green," "sustainable," or "social"; evaluating how to avoid appearances of "greenwashing"; and encouraging local retail investors to purchase County bonds, including labeled bonds.

Sustainability Fund

The Board directed that \$2.5 million per year be allocated from Measure X to support the Sustainability Fund in November 2021. At the February 2023 Task Force meeting, Public Works provided an update on the implementation of the first tranche of the Sustainability Fund. The first project at 30 Muir Road is in the design phase, and 25 additional sites are in the process of undergoing site visits with a technical assistance provider. Overall, there are estimated to be over 150 chargers. The second tranche will support energy efficiency projects at County facilities, and energy efficiency assessments are underway.

G3 Champions

The G3 Champions have been meeting every other month since April 2022. Over 65 employees have signed up, representing 18 different departments, and about 30 attend meetings. *Figure 2* shows G3 Champion enrollment by department.

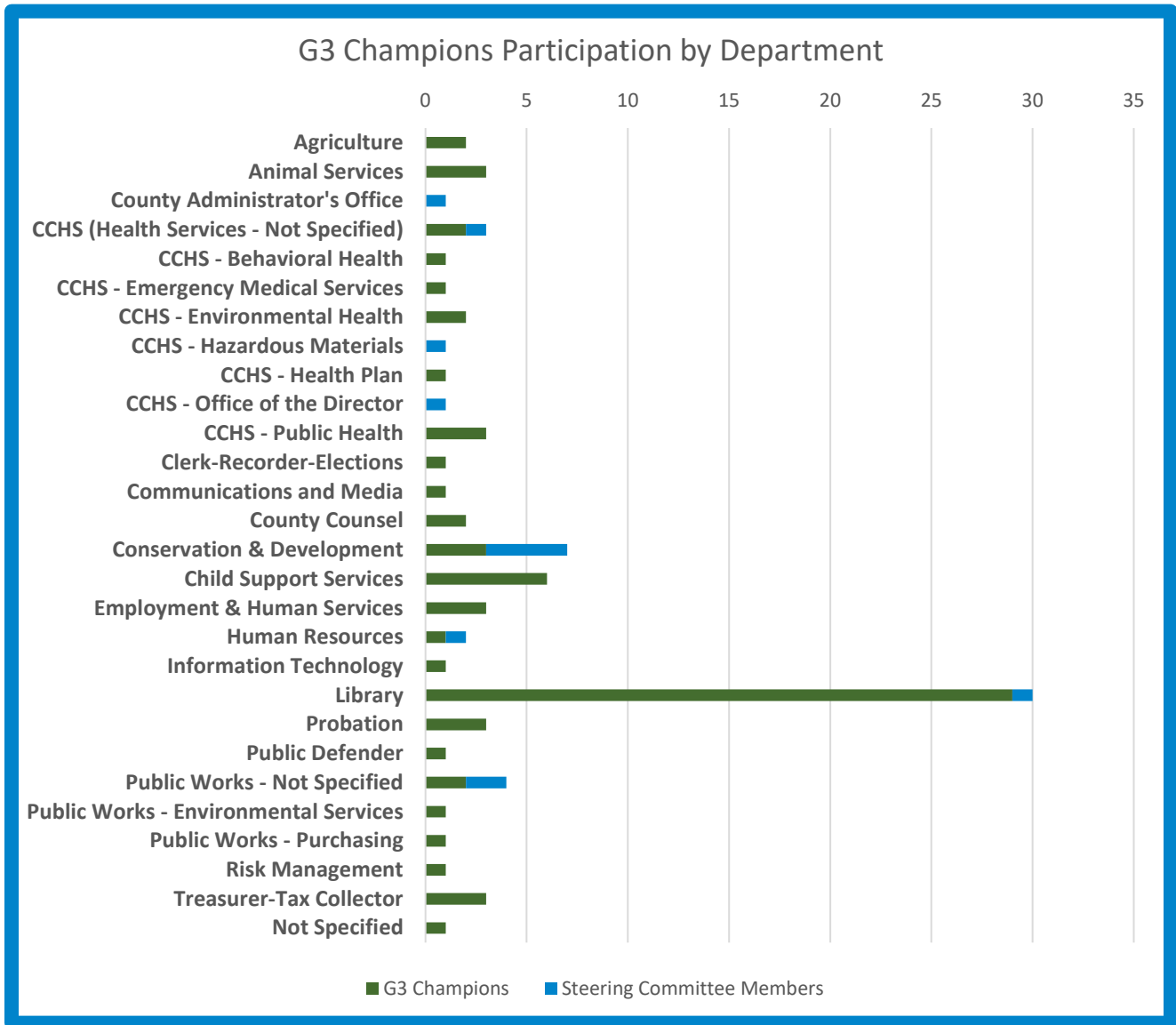
In October 2022, the G3 Champions met to discuss energy efficiency in County facilities, which included a presentation from the County Energy Manager. Following the meeting, Champions worked to identify opportunities for energy efficiency improvements in their facilities. The December 2022 meeting was focused on composting and recycling. Champions learned about waste management best practices and discussed composting and recycling tips, which were compiled in posters to be displayed around County facilities.

During the February 2023 meeting, Champions had the opportunity to share innovative sustainability programs and practices being implemented within their departments and provide feedback on the G3 Champions program. Champions have found support from the Board of Supervisors and County Administrator's Office particularly beneficial, in addition to finding out what's happening in other departments, learning new information related to climate action, and receiving resources and activities to share with others at their workplace. Some barriers reported by Champions include being in older or leased facilities, limited time and budget, the need for strong and active upper management support, and cutting through procedures they perceived as "red tape" to implement green practices. Champions identified some additional support that would help them carry out their work, including identifying partners who can implement plans, high-level meeting overviews to share with colleagues, increased focus on department-wide initiatives over individual action, and greater visibility of Champions' work.

The Task Force reviewed the Champions' feedback and program's progress so far and discussed ways to support the G3 Champions program. Ideas included more opportunities for the Task Force to learn about sustainability initiatives in other departments, discussing the G3 Champions' work in staff

meetings, and having meetings with their department’s Champions to brainstorm ways to foster department-wide change.

Figure 2



Next Steps

The Task Force is energized by the County’s climate action work and will continue to implement the Sustainability Fund, G3 Champions program, and other actions identified in the County’s Climate Action Plan.