



SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

RECORD OF ACTION FOR
February 17, 2023

Supervisor John Gioia, Chair
Supervisor Federal D. Glover, Vice Chair

Present: John Gioia, Chair
Federal D. Glover, Vice Chair

Staff Present: Demian Hardman-Saldana, Senior Planner, Dept. of Conservation and Development; Jody London, Sustainability Coordinator, Dept. of Conservation and Development; Jennifer Quallick, Deputy Chief of Staff, Supervisor Andersen; Melissa van Ruiten, Scheduler, Supervisor Burgis; Luz Gomez, Building Healthy Communities Manager, Dept. of Health Services; Elissa Robinson, District Representative, Supervisor Burgis; Emily Groth, Climate Corps Fellow, Dept. of Conservation and Development; Nicole Shimizu, Planner, Dept. of Conservation and Development; Adam Scarbrough, Planner, Dept. of Conservation and Development

Attendees: Clementina Martinez-Masarweh, Erin Levine, Susan Hurl, Jamin Pursell, Hector Garcia, Howdy Goudey, Devin Jackson, Bharat Gupta, Norman Cohen, Amy Golan, Kiara Pereira, Mike Moore, Bolston Andrew Jones, Karissa Gerhke, Alex Meyer, Call-in User 1, 350 Contra Costa Action, Lee Loveall, Rachel Shoemake, Denice Dennis, Shoshana Wechsler, Carol Weed, Magdalena Olvera, Jan Callaghan, Charles Davidson

1. Introductions

The Committee announced that it would begin meeting in person starting in March due to the end of California's COVID-19 State of Emergency, but the public will continue to be able to participate remotely.

2. Public comment on any item under the jurisdiction of the Committee and not on this agenda (speakers may be limited to three minutes).

Public comment included a request for clarification on remote access opportunities for the public when the Sustainability Committee begins meeting in person in March. The Committee clarified that the public will have the choice to participate virtually via phone or Zoom or attend in person. Staff added that advisory bodies will also start meeting in person; this includes the Sustainability Commission, which will be meeting in Martinez.

3. **APPROVE Record of Action from November 28, 2022, Meeting of the Sustainability Committee.**
(Jody London, Department of Conservation and Development)

The Record of Action was unanimously approved.

AYE: Chair John Gioia
Vice Chair Federal D. Glover

4. INTERVIEW applicants for three expiring At-Large seats on the Contra Costa County Sustainability Commission.

The Committee interviewed the following individuals for the At-Large, Commercial seat: Norman Cohen, Hector Garcia, Amy Golan, Bharat Gupta, Susan Hurl, Erin Levine, Alex Meyer, and Clementina Martinez-Masarweh.

The Committee interviewed the following individuals for the At-Large, Community Group seat: Howdy Goudey, Devin Jackson, Jamin Pursell, and Bolston Andrew Jones. Prior to the meeting, another applicant, Vanessa Stevens, informed staff that she was withdrawing her application. Two additional applicants, Lauren Louie and Michael Dupray, did not attend the interview.

The Committee interviewed the following individuals for the At-Large, Environmental Justice seat: Karissa Gerhke and Kiara Pereira. Prior to the meeting, another applicant, Latifah Adullah, informed staff that she was withdrawing her application

5. RECEIVE UPDATE on 2023-2024 Interim Climate Action Work Plan (Jody London, DCD)

Jody London from the Department of Conservation and Development provided an update on the County's Climate Action Plan (CAP) update, which is occurring in conjunction with updates to the General Plan and Zoning Code. Due to an extension of the schedule for these updates, staff put together an Interim Climate Action Work Plan (Interim Work Plan) that includes the County's climate action priorities for 2023-2024. The Interim Work Plan covers a variety of areas, including buildings, natural infrastructure and climate resilience, reducing waste and water use, transportation, equity, and leadership. In particular, the County Treasurer and County Administrator are planning to update the County's investment policies. The Interim Work Plan was taken to the Sustainability Commission in December, and the Commission's interest in reducing the use of single-use plastics was incorporated into the Interim Work Plan and related discussions with staff began. London acknowledged a Public Comment letter from 350 Contra Costa submitted prior to the meeting (see attached) that included suggestions related to the Interim Work Plan's goals and objectives.

Public Comment included a concern about those with practical challenges that prevent them from adopting sustainable practices and a hope that the new members of the Sustainability Commission would want to provide voluntary actions to help people have more options to adopt sustainable practices.

The Committee directed staff to organize a workshop at which the Committee can discuss the CAP in more detail, in particular how the CAP interacts with the General Plan.

6. RECEIVE REPORT from Sustainability Commission Chair, or Designee. (Mike Moore, Sustainability Commission Chair)

Mike Moore, Sustainability Commission Chair, thanked the candidates seeking at-large seats for the Commission and provided an overview of the Commission's December 12 meeting. At the meeting, the Commission received updates on the Board of Supervisors' approval of the Project Narrative and Budget for a grant to develop a Just Transition Economic Revitalization Plan (JTERP) that the County is preparing to receive from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; the development of an All-Electric Roadmap for existing buildings; and the Interim Climate Action Work Plan. Both the Commission and public expressed interest in participating in the development of the JTERP. The Commission suggested adding actions related to an expanded foodware ordinance to reduce single-use plastics and the implementation of more public EV chargers to the Interim Work Plan. Moore informed the Committee that this was his last report as Commission Chair.

The Committee thanked Moore for his work as Commission Chair.

Public Comment also expressed thanks to Moore for his service as Commission Chair.

7. RECEIVE REPORT from Sustainability Coordinator.

London provided an overview of sustainability work occurring in numerous County departments, including the development of a carbon sequestration feasibility study, research into low-carbon concrete, the Library's plan to purchase an electric van, and Public Works' work on energy, County buildings, and the implementation of the Vision Zero and Active Transportation plans, including the Fred Jackson Way green infrastructure project in North Richmond.

8. DISCUSS and RECOMMEND to the Board of Supervisors candidates for At-Large seats on the Contra Costa County Sustainability Commission.

Public Comment included a desire for the County to provide incentives as a way to help those who cannot adopt sustainable actions due to cost or accessibility constraints.

The Committee recommended the following individuals for appointment to the Sustainability Commission, with terms ending March 31, 2027:

At-Large, Commercial – Susan Hurl

At-Large, Community Group – Howdy Goudey

At-Large, Environmental Justice – Kiara Pereira

9. The next meeting is currently scheduled for March 20, 2023.

10. Adjourn

For Additional Information Contact:

Jody London, Sustainability Coordinator
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Jody.London@dcd.cccounty.us



Climate Reality Project Policy
Action Squad for
Contra Costa County



February 15th, 2023

Members of the Sustainability Committee
Contra Costa County

RE: COUNTY ELECTRIFICATION ORDINANCE

Dear Supervisors Glover and Gioia,

More than 73 jurisdictions in California have in some form restricted or banned natural gas in new buildings. We are grateful that Contra Costa County is included in this group, after passing a building electrification (“BE”) [ordinance](#) on January 18th, 2022, requiring new residential, office, retail and hotel buildings to be all electric.

We understand that County planning staff (lead by Demian Hardman-Saldana) are working on long-range plans to phase out fossil fuel systems throughout the entire existing building stock, and the draft plan may be presented to the Sustainability Committee this spring. With this in mind we ask that the proposal below be considered as an item on the Sustainability Committee’s May 15 meeting agenda. This proposed policy can be an interim and immediate step taken to strengthen the existing building electrification ordinance while aligning with the draft plans for existing buildings.

We feel that this is urgent for the following reasons:

- Contra Costa cities look to the County for guidance on updating building codes. In the past year, both Hercules and Martinez modeled their BE ordinances after the County’s BE ordinance. Both omit the same building types that the County’s BE ordinance omits. Neither address building additions or alterations. Other cities are currently looking to put ordinances in place and citing the County as

their “go to” for how to do it . Therefore, it is urgent that the county have the strongest possible ordinance.

- The draft climate action plan has a goal to establish Contra Costa as a leader in climate policy action; this desire and responsibility requires the County to take leadership positions to advance policy action.
- Strengthening the BE ordinance will be essential to meeting climate action goals. Obviously, it is very counterproductive to keep adding additional natural gas heating systems when the goal is to phase them out entirely. The gas infrastructure will be a future stranded asset, requiring conversion at a cost to consumers, businesses, and all utility ratepayers.
- The IPCC, CARB and BAAQMD all recognize that fossil fuel use must be phased out as soon as possible. The plan for existing buildings is going to take time to implement, so the changes we suggest can be an interim step to expedite the reduction of GHGs now.
- The natural gas storage and distribution system leaks the powerful GHG methane, and risks the danger of explosions.
- Gas stoves produce dangerous amounts of air pollutants, including nitrous oxides (NOx), carbon monoxide (CO), and particulate matter (PM), that often exceed outdoor ambient air standards. These pollutants can have lasting and damaging effects on the human body. Children, low income, and communities of color are among the most vulnerable.

Proposal for next step in the Electrification of Buildings

Add language into the existing ordinance to:

- Include **all** building types.
- Address building Additions and Alterations. Many BE ordinances in California require electric heating systems for building additions and alterations that meet certain criteria. We find that BE ordinances typically trigger electric heating based on the amount of proposed building changes (i.e. a metric that is not tied directly to heating system changes). We recommend the following:
 - **Building Additions and Alterations:** Any new heating system is required to be electric when it will be placed in a new location or is additional to existing heating equipment.
- Include an infeasibility waiver for instances where the owner demonstrates that electric heating is not technically feasible.

We ask that the Sustainability Committee continue to lead on this important solution to the climate crisis, and move a stronger ordinance to the full Board this spring for

consideration and adoption. Electrification of buildings will lead to cleaner, healthier, more affordable, and safer communities.

Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions about our requested action.

Signatories for the Contra Costa County Building Electrification Coalition

- Lisa Jackson, 350 Contra Costa Action
- Dr. Robert M. Gould, President, SF Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility
- Fred Bialy, Climate Reality Project Policy Action Squad for Contra Costa County
- Melissa Yu, Senior Energy Campaigns Representative, Sierra Club, San Francisco Bay Chapter

cc: Demian Hardman-Saldana



February 16, 2023

Members of the Sustainability Committee
Contra Costa County

RE: Interim Climate Action Work Plan 2023 - 2024

Dear Supervisors Glover and Gioia,

350 Contra Costa Action has reviewed the Interim CAP for '23-'24, and Jody London's report for tomorrow's Committee meeting. We do appreciate the work the County is doing to further sustainability and climate action. The County's work on developing a plan to phase out natural gas systems in existing buildings is commendable, as are other initiatives mentioned in the staff report.

We also welcome some important additions to the Interim CAP plan, such as working to improve grid resiliency, converting County nat. gas systems to electric when feasible, low-carbon construction materials, enhancing the tree canopy to reduce the "heat island" affect, and the new section 7.4 on investing to increase climate equity.

That said, there is room for improving the Interim CAP plan. Please consider the following items to broaden the array of actions the County takes, as the climate emergency demands, and to set a positive example for local jurisdictions who look to the County for leadership:

1. Expand the building electrification (BE) ordinance to cover all building types, as well as building alterations and additions. For specific suggestions, please read our Feb. 16 2023 letter to you about improving the BE ordinance.
2. Encourage greater adoption of photovoltaic (solar electric) systems in the private sector.
3. Encourage greater adoption of EVs (electric vehicles) in the private sector.
4. Encourage greater adoption of whole building battery systems in the private sector.
5. Carbon sequestration must be limited to natural systems only.
6. Clearly list goals and objectives where possible, and provide data on progress in meeting the goals and objectives.

Please feel free to contact me should you need any additional information.

Gary Farber, on behalf of 350 Contra Costa Action
garyf8642@gmail.com

cc: Jody London, Sustainability Coordinator
cc: Demian Hardman-Saldana, Dept. of Conservation & Development
cc: Contra Costa County Sustainability Commission