

County of Santa Clara
Board of Supervisors
Supervisorial District Three
Supervisor Dave Cortese



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DATE: April 7, 2009

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: 

Ken Yeager
Supervisor, District 4



Dave Cortese
Supervisor, District 3

SUBJECT: County Goals for Environmental Stewardship

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Refer to the Administration a request to create a set of "County Goals for Environmental Stewardship" that includes staff's current list along with the items listed in the background of this memo, in order to position the County as a leader in conservation, and report back to the Finance and Government Operations Committee (FGOC) in May 2009.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

A more comprehensive statement of goals will contextualize the ongoing efforts (such as the Climate Change and Sustainability Program and the Climate Action Plan) by county staff to both assess our current carbon footprint and identify actions and policies to reduce the County's greenhouse gas emissions and promote environmental stewardship within the County's jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND

The County's strong interest in working collaboratively on climate protection has been demonstrated through:

- Signing the Cool Counties Resolution in 2007
- Deciding to sign the Bay Area Climate Change Collaborative Compact in 2009

Internally, county staff has been hard at work on the Climate Action Program, which coordinates the different departmental actions needed to accomplish the targeted reductions in greenhouse gases. From increasing promotion of public transportation and ridesharing amongst county employees to reexamining our waste and recycling program to increase diversion rates, countless hours have been invested and these efforts should be continued, if not accelerated.

That said, the Board of Supervisors should also consider adopting a set of goals that reflect the overall commitment to environmental stewardship. We have signed on to other organizations' goals, but we have not yet put forth a cogent set of principles for how the County can proactively participate in the new economy, which is highly influenced by climate policy.

County staff has proposed the following goals to the Board of Supervisors:

- Launching a County Commute Program to increase employee awareness of the benefits of carpooling and using the Eco Pass in March 2009.
- Working with a consultant to achieve greater diversion rates for county waste through the new waste and recycling hauler RFP to be released in March 2009.
- Development of an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy to use the power of the County's dollars as a consumer to influence the market as well as decrease the County's impact on the environment to be brought to FGOC in May of 2009.
- Revising the draft Commercial Green Building Policy to be presented to FGOC in June 2009 to include county buildings to show that the County will apply the same regulations to itself.

- Developing a retro-commissioning plan for county buildings.
- Advancing energy efficiency and conservation projects within county facilities.
- Presenting the draft Climate Action Plan to the Board of Supervisors in September 2009.

Additional goals for consideration:

County's Goals for Environmental Stewardship

Within the lesser of 15 years or as prescribed by the Bay Area Climate Change Collaborative Compact, as appropriate, the County of Santa Clara in tandem with its residents, businesses, and the various local governments within the County will:

1. Ensure that 100 percent of light fixtures owned and operated by the County, in buildings, on streets, and in parks, are at the highest energy efficiency standard
2. Reduce per capita energy use by 50 percent
3. Receive 100 percent of our electrical power from clean renewable sources
4. Ensure 100 percent of County buildings are LEED certified and require LEED standards for construction in county land use jurisdictions
5. Divert 100 percent of county waste from landfills and convert waste to energy (Climate Compact)
6. Reduce our consumption of water by 20% (Climate Compact) and recycle or beneficially reuse 100 percent of our wastewater
7. Adopt a County General Plan with measurable standards for sustainable development
8. Ensure that 100 percent of public fleet vehicles are electric, hybrid electric, or run on alternative fuels
9. Work with local governments and regional authorities to ensure that all existing county trails are interconnected with local and regional trails

Further goals for consideration and defining:

1. Planting a set number of trees in unincorporated urban county pockets and working with local governments and agencies to build a comprehensive urban forest
2. Working with the County's economic development team, local non-profits, and our other local jurisdictions to create a defined number of clean technology jobs

3. Creating a defined number of volunteer opportunities centered on environmental conservation, in coordination with county departments and local non-profits.

These goals are not meant to detract from the valuable work already accomplished by county staff, but rather to initiate the formation of a set of goals that all county departments and employees can look to as a target for the County's environmental leadership.