



Contra Costa County Climate Leaders Program

MARCH ISSUE

A PROJECT OF GENERATION GREEN - A 501(c)3 NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION

Contra Costa County Climate Leaders (4CL) Program

Contact Us!

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Visit us on the Web!

www.cccclimateleaders.org

You'll find case studies, best practices, issues of the month, workshop materials, archived newsletters and updates on local government activities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Contra Costa County!



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Funding



Urban Greening Projects and Planning Grant Programs On behalf of the Strategic Growth Council, the Natural Resources Agency will be administering a competitive grant program for urban greening projects and plans. This is a grant opportunity for urban communities, focused on projects and plans that reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, conserve water, improve air and water quality, increase adaptability to climate change, and improve community quality of life. Applications are due April 30th. Learn more at <http://www.icleiusa.org/news-events/new-climate-funding-opportunity-for-california-local-governments>.

Applications for National Smart Growth Awards & Smart Growth Implementation Assistance EPA is now accepting applications for the 2010 National Award for Smart Growth Achievement. This competition is open to public- and private-sector entities that have successfully used smart growth principles to improve communities environmentally, socially, and economically. Up to five awards will be given in the following categories: Programs, Policies, and Regulations, Smart Growth and Green Building, Civic Places, Rural Smart Growth, and Overall Excellence. Applications are due April 5. For more information about the program, go to <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/awards.htm>.



Local City News

El Cerrito Wins Grant USEPA awarded El Cerrito one of only 20 US community grants to reduce GHG emissions. El Cerrito is partnering with cities of Albany, Piedmont, and San Pablo to achieve GHG reductions by implementing mechanisms for monitoring energy use, installing efficiency upgrades, developing Climate Action Plans for each city in the partnership, promoting participation in existing programs, and creating ways to replicate the program. Let's collaborate in Contra Costa and seek for grants to do the same!
<http://epa.gov/statelocalclimate/local/showcase/>.

Cities of Lafayette and Walnut Creek Consider Joint Purchase of 22.6 Acres The open space is adjacent to Walnut Creek's 170 acre Acalanes Open Space and East Bay Regional Park District's Briones-to-Mt. Diablo Regional Trail. This land is significant because it will preserve a valuable trail and wildlife corridor and is also a very visible hilltop seen by dozens of surrounding cities. The cost of the purchase would be split between four parties: the City of Lafayette, the City of Walnut Creek, the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), and the Muir Heritage Land Trust. The two cities and EBRPD have funds for this purchase through voter approval of Measure WW in 2008. Measure WW has created an opportunity to preserve this prominent open space at a time when the cities are struggling to maintain services during the economic downturn. See the following views of the hilltop from Martino Rd, Deer Hill Rd, and Acalanes High School.



The 4CL Program offers:

Quarterly workshops for education and networking opportunities.

Monthly newsletters for environmental updates, pertinent local information, and interesting upcoming events.

Ongoing website containing the CCC city environmental developments, archived newsletters, and other educational resources
www.cccclimateleaders.org.

Cities Use Non-Profits to Become More Sustainable In Moraga, the Rheem Elementary School Garden was retrofitted to become more sustainable through the volunteer work of the Moraga Valley Kiwanis Club. By utilizing local resources, cities can focus on environmental efforts. This project included the design, installation and funding for the cost of a computerized irrigation system. The school's garden now provides an extraordinary learning experience on food, nutrition and the environment. The entire school population is benefiting from the experiences and responsibilities associated with managing the Garden from the initial planning, nurturing and ultimate harvesting of a wide variety of plants and vegetables.

Antioch is Creating Their Climate Action Plan With the initial process underway, the City of Antioch is seeking community participation in the creation of their Climate Action Plan. They hope to have residents attending workshops and providing feedback. The first two workshops will be held on March 20th and 30th. You can learn more about the Antioch Community Climate Action Plan by going to www.antiochclimateaction.org.

Other City News



Sweden Labels Food With CO₂ Data In 2009, the Swedish government announced new food guidelines that recommend eating habits based on greenhouse gas emissions. Experts say these guidelines, if heeded by consumers, could decrease Sweden's emissions by 20 to 50 percent. More than 92% of Swedes wanted more information about the "green credentials" of their food and, producers responded to satisfy customers. Read more at

http://www.alternet.org/environment/145912/sweden_labels_food_with_co2_data

100% Renewable Energy Possible in Australia by 2020 A report to be released in the first half of this year finds that Australia can use solar and wind power to produce 100% of its electricity in 10 years using technologies that are available now. The study is being compiled by the Victoria-based advocacy group Beyond Zero Emissions and is based on the research of engineers and scientists. Australia currently supplies nearly 80% of its power from coal plants. Only 1% comes from wind power; less than half of 1% comes from solar energy. See the full article at

http://www.alternet.org/story/145882/an_australian_group_rolls_out_plan_for_100_percent_renewable_energy_by_2020



Legislation

So What is Going on with the Climate Change Legislation? That is a good question and a source of much speculation. Senators have been working on compromises and are aiming to unveil a draft proposal before the end of the month.

- Word is coming out that the Senate bill will not use the House bill's cap-and-trade piece but instead will favor a more targeted approach on three sectors of the economy--transportation, electric utilities, and industry.
<http://www.alternet.org/environment/145915>
- Senators are working with businesses in order to provide the environmental benefits that are needed without having a negative effect on the economy.
<http://www.latimes.com/news/nation-and-world/la-na-senator-lobbyists16-2010mar16,0,4525527.story>
- An economy-wide cap-and-trade program does not appear to have enough votes to pass in the Senate. Due to the lack of support, Senators have been looking at a possible oil industry tax to help control carbon emissions in the transportation sector.
http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2010/03/15/us/politics/politics-us-climate-usa-congress.html?_r=1

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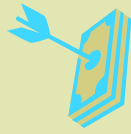
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State Legislature Approves Gas Tax Swap Package The League of California Cities has provided information to the city of Richmond concerning a "gas tax swap" that was passed by both the State Senate and Assembly. In brief, the swap contains the following major components: 1) repeals the sales tax on gasoline, 2) increases the excise tax on gasoline by 17.3 cents and adds an annual index that will ensure that the new tax will keep pace with the revenues expected from the sales tax on gas, and 3) increases the sales tax on diesel by 1.75%, allocating 75% to local transit agencies and 25% to state transit programs. The excise tax on diesel will be reduced from 18 cents to 13.6 cents for revenue neutrality purposes. The proposal increases the local streets and roads share from 40% to 44%, apparently providing increased funding for local streets and roads. However, it also includes weakened constitutional protections and revenue vulnerability for cities if the state debt service increases in the future. This swap will need to be watched carefully for its ultimate impact on local government.



Impacts

How Concerned Should Life and Health Insurers be About Climate Change? So far, this corner of the insurance industry has remained in the background of the climate debate. Scientists say that the threat is real as they point to increases in malaria, heat waves, lung illnesses and other diseases spread by insects that are expanding into new territory during the warmer, less deadly winters. Beetles, stinging insects, and mosquitoes are all responding much faster than previously expected. Should health insurers be looking at that kind of indicator for health costs? According to the World Health Organization and other scientists, people are already dying from the byproducts of warming. With most of those deaths are occurring in Africa and other developing areas of the world where insurance protection is a rarity, the industry isn't looking into it.

Climate Change May Extend Allergy Season Sneezing, congestion, and runny noses from hay fever may be lasting longer because of climate change. According to doctors in Italy, the changing temperatures may be extending pollen seasons. A study in Italy has concluded that pollen seasons, as well as the amount of pollen in the air, progressively increased during a six-year period. See the Article at <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6203YT20100301>.



Economics

Global Warming May Hurt Some Poor Populations, Benefit Others The impact of global warming on food prices and hunger could be large over the next 20 years. Researchers say that higher temperatures could significantly reduce yields of wheat, rice and maize -- dietary staples for tens of millions of poor people who subsist on less than \$1 a day. The resulting crop shortages would likely cause food prices to rise and drive many into poverty. But even as some people are hurt, others would benefit from the warming such as farmers whose crop prices would increase. The study revealed a surprising mix of winners and losers depending on the projected global temperature. See the full article at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/02/100220184329.htm>.



Upcoming events

Local Environmental Events: March/April

Climate Communities Hosts a Weekly Conference Call Friday at 2 pm Eastern on energy and climate topics of interest to local governments. To access the calls, please dial (877) 366-0711 and enter the passcode: 72199919#. To review background materials for the call, visit www.climatecommunities.us.

The Path to LEED and Beyond: Sonoma Mountain Village *March 18, Walnut Creek.* Sonoma Mountain Village is the first development in North America to be accepted into the prestigious "One Planet Communities" program. The community is a zero carbon, zero waste development with a philosophy centered on restoration. Learn about the features and register at: http://www.usgbc-ncc.org/index.php?option=com_events&type=event&task=details&id=862&Itemid=109.

Frameworks for Sustainability: Protocols, Registries, Data Tracking and Decision-Making Tools *March 18, Sunnyvale.* Have you ever wondered what the difference is between the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), WWF Climate Savers, the Green Business Checklist, Environmental Management Systems (EMS), the Climate Registry and all the other sets of guidelines, registries and carbon-tracking and analysis tools? This event will give you an overview of prominent sustainability frameworks and tracking tools. Find out more at <http://sustainabilityframeworks.eventbrite.com/>.

Building Vibrant Communities - Linking Revitalization with Other Opportunities *March 26, Webinar.* Hear from a brownfields contact at the EPA as well as different community organization perspectives on how brownfields revitalization can contribute to local food solutions and sustainable communities: <http://www.vitanuova.net/journal/2010/01/webinar-building-vibrant-communities---linking-revitalization-with-other-opportunities.html>

SAVE THE DATE! Solar Financing and "California First" for Contra Costa County? *April 1st,* Join us at the next 4CL workshop, to be hosted by the City of Richmond, to learn more about solar financing, energy efficiency, AB811, and opportunities under the PACE program for residential homeowners to finance solar installations thru property tax payments over a twenty year period. Register with: info@cccclimateleaders.org

Landscaping – Water Efficient and Attractive *April 20, Castro Valley.* Join the US Green Building Council's Diablo East Bay Branch at the newly completed Castro Valley Library (pending LEED certification) for a tour and discussion of the latest trends in sustainable landscaping design, the Bay-Friendly Related Landscapes score card for civic and commercial projects and solutions for design innovation and aesthetics. Also learn about the LEED points anticipated for the Library.: http://www.usgbc-ncc.org/index.php?option=com_events&type=event&task=details&id=863.

Bringing Back the Natives *May 2, Gardens in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.* Learn about sustainable and creative landscape options! Participate in a free tour of 50 Bay Area gardens which will focus on native species, bird and butterfly-friendly plants, water conservation, as well as low maintenance and pesticide-free care. More than 40 garden talks will be scheduled throughout the day. See the event flyer at <http://www.bringingbackthenatives.net/docs/2010-flier.pdf>

Other

Urban Development to Reclaim Unused City Areas Local Code, a project from UC Berkeley, proposes a systemic re-greening of leftover pavement space on a large scale. Culled from a database maintained by the Department of Public Works, the many sites for Local Code have been deemed "unaccepted streets," that is, sites in the San Francisco grid that occupy the position of streets but are not maintained by the municipality, or necessarily even passable to traffic. Seen separately and individually, these are litter-filled, residual spaces — and there are 1,625 of them, mostly around highways and industrial sites. Seen as a whole, these sites have a combined surface area of more than half of San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. See the full article and the links to a video at <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/02/03/space-its-still-a-frontier/?th&emc=th>.