



Contra Costa County Climate Leaders Program

JULY ISSUE

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

*Contra Costa County
Climate Leaders (4CL)
Program*

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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



Clean Water State Revolving Fund Low Interest Financing Opportunity

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act or CWA), as amended in 1987, established the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program. The CWSRF program offers low interest financing agreements for water quality projects. Projects eligible for funding include construction of wastewater treatment facilities, including stormwater treatment and water reclamation facilities, as well as expanded use projects, for example, the creation and implementation of an estuary comprehensive conservation and management plan. For more information, please visit

http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/srf/index.shtml



Local City News

Santa Clara Shines in Recent Survey

In their recently released report for 2010, the Solar Electric Power Association ranked Santa Clara's electric utility, Silicon Valley Power (SVP), number one for the most new solar installations based on the average number of solar watts per customer. SVP installed over 1.8 megawatts of solar last year, averaging out to 22.3 watts per customer. 230 utilities participated in the nationwide survey, with PG&E of California coming in second place. The report can be found at <http://www.sepatop10.org/>

Alameda County Adopts Green Purchasing Policy

This May, Alameda County adopted the Alameda County Climate Action Plan for Government Services and Operations. The plan includes a green purchasing policy which focuses on prioritizing waste reduction, purchasing products with recycled content and those which meet requirements for water and energy conservation, and buying materials from environmentally- sensitive manufacturers. This is in addition to the County's previous waste reduction initiatives, including powering 25% of the energy consumed by the Santa Rita jail with solar power, and furnishing their local government offices with carpets made from recycled plastic bottles. For more on Alameda County's sustainable buying practices, please refer to: <http://oaklandnorth.net/2011/06/01/alameda-county-uses-its-dollars-to-go-green/>

Napa County's Action Plan Proposes Replacing Forests with Vineyards

Napa County is currently in the process of drafting a new climate action plan, complying with Assembly Bill 32 standards of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. The plan has had to be delayed, however, to late July or early August, as some claim that the policy it creates jumps ahead of what science has proven, and that further research is necessary to see if certain actions, such as cutting down trees to create room for more vineyards, are the best possible solutions for the city to plan on taking. While viticulture has improved over the past two years to use less water, produce more crops, and require less tillage and pesticides, the plan has been postponed until studies can adequately confirm the plan. For more on Napa's proposed Climate Action Plan, please refer to: <http://www.countyofnapa.org/CAP/>

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.**

Other City News



Chicago Not to Include State Tree in Future Plans Due to Climate Change

While planning for the climate change, Chicago has decided not to include its state tree, the white oak, in future plans. Due to the expected humidity changes, which would create a climate similar to that of Alabama, the city's green cover will not include its state tree. The city is planning to increase the green cover from 17% to 23%. Passed in 2008, the city's climate action plan also calls for permeable pavements, rainwater catchments to advance existing urban structures, preserving plants and trees, and more. For more on Chicago's adaptation strategies, refer to:

<http://www.chicagoclimateaction.org/pages/adaptation/11.php>

Mayors of Houston, TX and Evanston, IL Win Climate Action Awards

For the 2011 Mayors' Climate Action Awards, Mayor Annise Parker of Houston, TX and Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl of Evanston, IL won top honors for their work by finding innovative ways to increase energy efficiency and decrease global warming pollution. Houston plans to retrofit all 263 municipally owned buildings, cutting energy costs by 30% in city owned buildings. The city also offers a Green Office Challenge, reimbursing private companies 20% of costs for energy efficiency improvements. Evanston has proposed over 200 strategies to reduce greenhouse gases emitted by the city, over half of which have already been implemented. They plan to reduce their emissions by 13% by 2013. The most impressive entries all had one particular thing in common- their efforts were funded by the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program. For more on what winning cities accomplished, please go here:

<http://usmayors.org/79thAnnualMeeting/documents/BestPractices2011ClimateAwardWinners.pdf>.



Legislation

CA's Air and Resource Board Weighs Options for Enforcing AB 32

The California's Air and Resource Board (CARB) recently updated report details four approaches to enforcing AB32: 1) relying on existing laws and policies (no action), 2) a cap and trade system, 3) a direct tax on carbon emissions or 4) directly regulating polluting industries. The cap and trade system was deemed most favorable, as a tax would likely face several roadblocks, including potentially driving businesses out of California to go pollute elsewhere, resulting in no net change of emissions. For more information, please refer to: <http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/06/14/california-redoes-greenhouse-gas-analysis/#more-105549>

Richmond Ready to Move Forth with Bag Ban

Richmond, in its quest to become one of the "premiere green cities", will be funding an Environmental Impact Report for single use plastic bags, which has been required by local opposition. The City has also created a deadline for other cities to join it; Hercules, San Pablo, Pinole and El Cerrito have expressed interest but none have made a definite commitment to the ban as of yet. Since 2007, 13 cities have enforced a bag ban, seven of which have coupled it with a five cent fee for paper bags to encourage the use of reusable cloth bags. The bag ban will be in addition to Richmond's polystyrene ban on Styrofoam take-out products. For more on Richmond's bag ban, visit:

<http://richmondconfidential.org/2011/06/09/richmond-one-step-closer-to-banning-bags/>



Impacts

Northwest Passage Melting, Endangered Species Using to Migrate

In May of last year, an extremely endangered grey whale was spotted off the coast of Israel, indicating it had traveled through the previously frozen Northwest Passage. Scientists have found two species of plankton which have not existed in that part of the North Atlantic for at least 800,000 years. These sightings comprise one report among the 300 being compiled by Project Clamer, a collaboration of 17 institutes documenting climate and ocean change. While these occurrences are not of major concern, the continuous melting of the Northwest Passage is a signal for what may be yet to come. For more information, please visit:

http://www.contracostatimes.com/environment/ci_18355910

Bizarre California Weather Traced to Climate Change Related Phenomena

Nine tornadoes recently tore up the Sacramento Valley; the snowpack has only begun to melt. The bizarre weather may be a result of interactions between La Nina and negative Arctic oscillation. La Nina causes the cooling of equatorial waters, the negative Arctic oscillation causes the Arctic areas to warm, and pushes a vigorous jet stream of cold air down to North America. The negative oscillation has been suspected to be caused by climate change, as the ice melt in the Arctic has caused more snowfall across Siberia. For more on why the weather has behaved so oddly this year, visit:

<http://www.sacbee.com/2011/06/04/3676297/researcher-says-climate-change.html>

National Action Plan Predicts Water Resources Will Be Hit Hardest

The recent interagency report, *National Action Plan: Priorities for Managing Freshwater Resources in a Changing Climate*, indicates that it will be changes in our nation's water resources that will impact us most in the future, not rising temperatures or sea levels. Climate change has already begun to cause Northern wet areas to become wetter and Southern dry areas to become drier. The bill proposes six general recommendations and 24 specific actions for federal agencies to take, including expanded water use efficiency and better information. The plan can be found here:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/initiatives/adaptation>.



Economics

Triple Bottom Line Approach Essential to Successful Business

The triple bottom line approach is growing increasingly important for business to abide by; this approach focuses on measuring economic, ecological, and social growth. With the world economy struggling and climate change already showing a preview of what the future may hold, it is now important for businesses to preserve the environment, specifically by focusing on sustainable energy consumption, developing human capital, being responsible in one's community, and infusing the spirit of sustainability in all business operations. For more on what businesses may do, please refer to:

http://articles.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/2011-06-06/news/29626074_1_sustainable-development-clean-energy-carbon-footprint.

Cities Lead the Way in Controlling Climate Change

The World Bank agreed at the recent C40 meeting, comprised of leaders of the world's 40 major cities, to financially and technically assist with projects to mitigate the effects of climate change. The agreement would ease access to \$6.4 billion of climate-change-reduction-project funding. The agreement will also provide a common method of measuring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions. To learn more about carbon finance, please refer to:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21520231~menuPK:34480~pagePK:64257043~piPK:437376~theSitePK:4607,00.html>

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Upcoming events

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Newsletter articles are collected from a variety of sources and are cited via a website reference when applicable.

To add content or events to our next monthly newsletter, please send an email to info@cccclimateleaders.org.

Climate Change Adaptation in the SF Bay Area: Forecasts, Challenges and Recommendations

July 19th, Redwood City, CA

Climate change has become a reality in the San Francisco Bay Area and, while it cannot be stopped, there is much that public and private entities must do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the negative effects. This panel will discuss the expected consequences of climate change, challenges to adaptation planning efforts, recommendations for public and private planners; and provide case studies of recent adaptation projects in the San Francisco Bay Area. Earn AICP credit for attending this event. Register by Friday July 15. Learn more here:

<http://www.sfbayaep.org/programflyer.pdf>

American Renewable Energy Day

August 18-21, Aspen Colorado

One of the most important energy technology and policy summits in the nation, the American Renewable Energy Summit host speakers including oceanographer Dr. Sylvia Earle, president of the National Wildlife Federation president Larry Schweiger, Phil Radford, executive director of Greenpeace, and many more! The mission of AREDay is "To create vibrant and powerful cross-sector dialogue, commitments, collaborations and investments that foster climate change solutions at the speed and scale necessary to phase out fossil fuels, and usher in a rapid transition to a new, clean energy economy."

For more information, visit: <http://www.areday.net/>

ReStreets Charette: Streets Reconsidered

July 21- 23, UC Berkeley Campus, Berkeley, CA

Aimed at stretching the imagination past the bounds of current best practices, this three day event is sure to invoke innovative thought for cutting edge design of streets not just meant for driving, but for living. Held on the UC Berkeley Campus, groups of individuals will work together to utilize information from actual streets in major American cities to test design guidelines and develop innovative prototypical solutions for each topic: Mobility, Events and Programming, Social Gathering, Play and Recreation, Signage and Way finding, Green Infrastructure, Urban Agriculture, Commerce and Image and Identity. To learn more, visit <http://www.restreets.org/Content/10001/CharretteInformation.html>.

Other

Powerful, Free Resources for Local Governments

The powerful and free Statewide Energy Efficiency Collaborative Online Inventory tool may prove to be an indispensable resource to cities dealing with financial cutbacks. The tool allows nontechnical staff to go online, and for no cost conduct a broad community wide greenhouse gas inventory, create a climate action plan and decide how to implement it. In addition to the online tool, ICLEI USA has also developed a full suite of free resources to support California local governments. ICLEI has launched free Quick- Start Guides and instruction manuals on GHG inventories and climate action planning, and delivers regular in-person trainings to local government staff throughout the state on topics ranging from how to conduct a community-wide GHG inventory, to how to set GHG reduction targets and develop a climate action plan.

For the SEEC tool, visit <http://californiaseec.org/>.

For ICLEI's website, refer to: <http://www.icleiusa.org/>

Local Businesses Support Waste Free Lunches

The idea of a waste free lunch seems to be growing more appealing to everyone from moms to San Jose Adobe Systems. As of this year, the local Adobe office has stopped offering water bottles to its employees, by their request, and has continued serving their lunches on reusable plates with metal silverware, or in compostable to-go boxes. With manufacturers for BPA and phthalate free containers based as locally as ECOLunchboxes in Lafayette and LunchBots in Palo Alto, one may easily support local businesses while keeping waste out of landfills and money in their pockets by opting out of expensive restaurant lunches and bringing their own from home.