

March 16, 2010

Members, Alameda County Agricultural Advisory Committee

Subject: Draft Alameda County Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP), upcoming presentation for meeting of March 23, 2010.

Dear Committee Members:

Enclosed with this letter, please find a copy of the Draft Alameda County Community Climate Action Plan. The CCAP is a collection of policy measure suggestions designed to help Alameda County reduce its emissions of “greenhouse gases”, or GHGs, back to the level at which they were in the year 1990, as required by State Laws AB 32 and SB 375. This is roughly a 15% decrease from 2005 levels, the base year for GHG emissions used in the CAP. Using a wide range of probable policy tools in six major categories – Land Use, Transportation, Energy Conservation, Green Infrastructure, Water Conservation and Waste Reduction – staff believes that the County can achieve this reduction.

The majority of the measures in every category would be relatively painless for the general public, commercial and industrial concerns. Better water conservation and waste recycling methods, tree planting programs, agricultural parks, and streamlining/incentives for green building techniques and alternative energy installation are likely to be popular and acceptable to most people. Furthermore, most measures included in the Plan are designed for, and would have the most effect upon, the urban core areas of the West County such as Castro Valley and the Eden Area. Measures such as improved neighborhood and commercial area pedestrian and bicycle access / facilities, better transit access, and higher density in selected areas are somewhat more suited to the urban core than to the rural areas, although there would be limited application in the east County as well. Many of the efforts in the CCAP would be County staff-driven and geared toward finding money to help fund the many various measures; the average citizen or business owner would find that these measures have either modest or negligible effects on everyday life or bank accounts.

There are a modest number of proposed measures and policy concepts that would have significant application in the East County and the rural areas. Please allow us to direct your attention to some of the measures in the CCAP with the most potential to affect citizens and agricultural uses of the East County:

Measure L-1: Direct future residential development to areas of the Unincorporated County that will generate lower levels of vehicle-related GHG emissions. In essence, this means that the County would use various tools to encourage development near transit nodes and areas with higher densities of essential services, and thus lower levels of transportation-related emissions, or contain on-site design features that reduce household automobile trips to below the target levels. If the project’s location or on-site design features are insufficient, the project would contribute to an **off-site development impact fund** that would invest in important emission reduction projects. The development impact fee rate would be proportionate to the cost of an equivalent emissions reduction through mitigation projects, and would be used within the unincorporated area. Staff expects that many types of development in the East County could be subject to this fee.

Measure E-4: Develop and implement a point-of-sale residential energy conservation ordinance (RECO). The intent of the RECO is to (a) reduce the community's GHG emissions, (b) reduce tenants' and homeowners' utility bills, (c) reduce the community's susceptibility to energy price fluctuations, (d) improve comfort and livability of homes by reducing drafts and heat imbalances, and e) preserve the region's valuable water resources. The RECO would require building owners (landlords and homeowners) to implement specific energy and water efficiency measures on their properties to achieve a 35 percent efficiency improvement. The entry-level package would include duct sealing, attic insulation, programmable thermostats, water heater insulation, hot water pipe insulation, and draft elimination. The ordinance would also require a 20 percent improvement in the water efficiency of plumbing fixtures and fixture-fittings. Credit would be given for measures already installed.

The total cost of such improvements would be approximately **\$7,500 to \$10,000** for the average single-family home (as of 2009). The RECO would contain a cost ceiling of 3 percent of the sale price or assessed value, **not to exceed \$30,000**.

Measure E-9: Develop and implement a point-of-sale commercial energy conservation ordinance (CECO). This would be very similar to Measure E-4 above, but would apply to commercial properties at point-of-sale. Due to the variety of commercial building, estimation of improvement costs is hard to generalize, but the average cost for efficiency upgrades is estimated to be between \$1.00 and \$3.00 per square foot. The CECO would contain a **cost ceiling of 2 percent of the sale price or assessed value, not to exceed \$100,000**.

Measure E-10: Require all new construction to achieve California Green Building Code Tier II Energy Efficiency Standards (Section 503.1.2). Alameda County, in coordination with the California Energy Commission, would amend its existing Green Building Ordinance to reflect the Tier II energy efficiency standards contained in Section 503.1.2 of the 2008 California Green Building Code (CGBC), as the required standards for energy efficiency for all new construction. This standard states that new construction must exceed 2007 California Energy Code requirements by 30 percent over 2007 Title-24 requirements. Projected costs to builders of new structures are unknown and would depend on the individual structure; but could be a substantial increase over costs of construction using current requirements.

Measure WS-2: Strengthen the Construction and Demolition Debris Management Ordinance to require 75 percent of all designated project-related construction and demolition debris to be recycled or reused by 2015. This would simply add an uncalculated cost to any applicable project, whether in the urban or rural areas.

Measure G-4: Work with local farmers and agricultural non-profits to develop urban-edge farming opportunities in the Unincorporated County. An Agricultural Park is a combination of a working farm and a municipal park that is located at the urban edge. They allow small farm operations access to secure land and close proximity to urban markets. Agricultural Parks can be located on either public or private land, can vary in acreage, can host single or multiple tenants, and can have a variety of both agricultural and recreational components. An example in the Unincorporated County is the Sunol Water Temple Agricultural Park. The park is located on 18 acres of land leased by the non-profit group, Sustainable Agriculture Education (SAGE), for nine years from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. Six farmer tenants work rented plots in

the park and sell their produce at farmers' markets, produce stands, to restaurants, and through CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) programs. Tenants share infrastructure, get training in organic agriculture practices, and pay rent and water costs.

The County would partner with local farmers, landowners, and agricultural non-profit organizations to develop an agricultural parks program. The program would identify potential sites on public or private land and identify interested farmers. The program would also develop infrastructure, technical support, and management systems that support the operations and viability of the farmer tenants.

The cost of this voluntary measure is unlikely to be significant to any participants; **however, it is a policy position that is new, and would encourage cooperation of a type unfamiliar to some landowners.**

Numerous other measures in the document would also be of interest, but none of them would have an apparent effect on agriculture and rural lifestyle of the foregoing set described above. Staff requests that the Committee consider these measures specifically, and then also review the other measures in the document. Staff will provide an introductory presentation at the meeting, and will be happy to answer any questions you may have, as well as accept suggestions for amendments toward the final document, due out in late May.

Please note: The attached Draft does not include the Technical Appendix, which is a 45-page compendium of mathematical analysis. If you would like a copy of the Appendix, please feel to contact me at (510) 670-6527 or at bruce.jensen@acgov.org anytime during work hours, and I will make sure you receive a copy.

Very truly yours,

Bruce Jensen
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Cc: Liz McElligott, Assistant Planning Director, Policy Planning and Research

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