



County of Santa Cruz

COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

701 OCEAN STREET, SUITE 400, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

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COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT 2019 and 2020 BIENNIAL REPORT

1. Role of the Commission on the Environment

The Commission on the Environment acts as an advisory body to, and resource for, the County Board of Supervisors. The Commission is charged with recommending policies and action programs designed to improve and protect the environment. In accordance with its purpose as presented in Chapter 2.54.050 of the County Code, the Commission shall:

- A. Advise the Board of Supervisors and make recommendations on ways to improve and protect the environment to ensure the long term environmental sustainability of the County;
- B. Advise the Board of Supervisors and work with other commissions in reviewing and updating County policies to provide a comprehensive course of action to support these goals in both the public and private spheres;
- C. Serve as an information clearing house to the Board of Supervisors and other county commission about proposed and pending legislation, both state and federal, which may impact the environment;
- D. Advise the Board of Supervisors on potential areas of cooperation with other public and private agencies and organizations to plan and implement effective environmental policies in Santa Cruz County; and
- E. Exercise any other responsibilities that may be set forth in the commission's bylaws, or may be directed by the Board of Supervisors.

2. Meeting Dates, Time and Location

According to the Commission on the Environment Bylaws, meetings are held six times a year generally on the fourth Wednesday of each month, convening at 5:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors Chambers located at 701 Ocean Street, Fifth Floor, Santa Cruz, CA. As directed by the Board of Supervisors, the Commission now meets six times a year, with the schedule set each December for the following calendar year. The Commission met in 2019 on January 23, March 27, May 22, July 24, September 25, and November 20. The Commission met in 2020 on May 27, August 4, and September 23, and November 18. The meeting scheduled for January 22 was canceled, and the meeting scheduled for March 25, 2020 was cancelled to allow County staff time to readjust to a virtual meeting format. The remainder of meetings in 2020 were also held virtually.

3. Commission Structure

The Commission is composed of ten members who are residents of the County. Each member of the Board of Supervisors appoints two commissioners.

The Commission is presented in the following tables:

2019	Commissioner	Term Expires
District 1	Greg Pepping	April 1, 2021
	Jane Orbuch	April 1, 2021
District 2	Tiffany Wise-West	April 1, 2021
	John Hunt	April 1, 2021
District 3	Rachel Kippen (appointed 3/26/19)	April 1, 2023
	Ross Clark (reappointed 3/26/19)	April 1, 2023
District 4	Brian Lockwood (reappointed 3/26/19, resigned 6/21/19)	April 1, 2023
	Tony Gregorio (appointed August 27, 2019)	April 1, 2023
	Robert Culbertson (reappointed 3/26/19)	April 1, 2023
District 5	Virginia Johnson (resigned 9/25/19)	April 1, 2021
	Beth Trenchard (appointed 10/8/19)	April 1, 2021
	Margaret Bruce	April 1, 2021

2020	Commissioner	Term Expires
District 1	Greg Pepping	April 1, 2021
	Jane Orbuch	April 1, 2021
District 2	Tiffany Wise-West(Vice-Chair)	April 1, 2021
	John Hunt (Chair),	April 1, 2021
District 3	Rachel Kippen	April 1, 2023
	Ross Clark	April 1, 2023
District 4	Tony Gregorio	April 1, 2023
	Robert Culbertson	April 1, 2023
District 5	Beth Trenchard	April 1, 2021
	Margaret Bruce	April 1, 2021

4. Commission Staff

The Commission is staffed by the Planning Department (David Carlson, Resource Planner).

5. Attendance

Commissioner attendance for 2019 and 2020 is summarized in the following tables:

2019	Commissioner	Jan.	Mar.	May	July	Sept.	Nov.
District 1	Greg Pepping	A	X	X	A	X	X
	Jane Orbuch	X	X	X	X	A	X
District 2	Tiffany Wise-West	X	X	X	X	X	X
	John Hunt	X	X	X	X	A	X

District 3	Rachel Kippen	v	v	X	X	X	X
	Ross Clark	X	X	X	X	a	X
District 4	Brian Lockwood	A	A	A	r	-	-
	Tony Gregorio	-	-	-	v	X	X
	Robert Culbertson	X	X	A	X	X	X
District 5	Gine Johnson	X	X	X	X	X	r
	Beth Trenchard	-	-	-	-	-	A
	Margaret Bruce	X	X	X	A	X	X
X	Present at the meeting						
A	Excused absence from the meeting						
a	Unexcused absence from the meeting						
r	Resigned						
v	Seat vacant						

2020	Commissioner	Jan.	Mar.	May	Aug	Sept.	Nov.
District 1	Greg Pepping	c	c	X	X	a	X
	Jane Orbuch	c	c	X	X	X	X
District 2	Tiffany Wise-West	c	c	X	X	X	X
	John Hunt	c	c	X	X	X	X
District 3	Rachel Kippen	c	c	X	X	X	X
	Ross Clark	c	c	X	X	X	X
District 4	Tony Gregorio	c	c	a	a	A	X
	Robert Culbertson	c	c	X	X	X	X
District 5	Beth Trenchard	c	c	A	X	X	X
	Margaret Bruce	c	c	X	X	X	X
X	Present at the meeting						
A	Excused absence from the meeting						
a	Unexcused absence from the meeting						
r	Resigned						
v	Seat vacant						
c	Meeting canceled						

6. Annual Goals and Accomplishments

In 2019 and 2020, the Commission continued to focus on issues pertaining to climate change within the County and the Monterey Bay Region by supporting municipal planning and regional program development. This participation served to educate, promote a collaborative dialogue and encourage the development of cooperative projects among local government staff, businesses, academic institutions and non-profit organizations involved with climate change policies and programs within the Monterey Bay Region.

Regular Commission meetings throughout 2019 and 2020 provided informational opportunities on topics relevant to building awareness and context for the adoption of appropriate local policies and programs to address climate change. Presentations to the Commission also

identified existing resources as well as opportunities for State and Federal funding and local cooperation.

Milestones are listed below. Commission minutes available to the public on the Commission webpage reflect actions taken by the Commission.

- The Commission developed work priorities for the 2019-20 biennial reporting period and adopted a Work Plan that includes a process for updating the Work Plan.
- Received regular updates from Commissioners on topics in their focus areas.
- Formed an ad hoc committee to draft a letter to the Board regarding the threat to County infrastructure from climate change and encouraging resiliency planning.
- Received a presentation and provided feedback on the County Strategic Plan initiative focusing on the Sustainable Environment section of the Operational Plan.
- Received a presentation and provided feedback on proposed ordinances addressing plastic pollution.
- Appointed an ad hoc committee to continue to work with Public Works staff addressing plastic pollution
- Elected a Commission Chair (Tiffany Wise-West) and Vice-Chair (Bob Culbertson).
- Received information from staff regarding the County's protest of BLM RMPA for oil and gas leasing and development.
- Received a state legislative update from Tim Goncharoff, Resource Planner regarding legislative processes in Sacramento that could benefit or conflict with County environmental programs and objectives.
- Submitted an advisory letter to the Board of Supervisors with recommendations regarding climate change adaptation and hiring a new Sustainability Manager position for the County.
- Received an update from staff regarding the Board's direction to the County Administrative Office to investigate establishing a Clemaat Action Manage position.
- Received a presentation from Commissioner Bruce on the California Cap and Trade system.
- Received a presentation by Eat for the Earth promoting low carbon food production and consumption.
- Received a presentation from Citizens Climate Lobby on carbon fee and dividend legislation.
- Received a presentation from Commissioner Wise-West on the City of Santa Cruz Resilient Coast Initiative.
- Submitted an advisory letter to the Board recommending the County pursue financing opportunities for microgrid and battery storage only systems to create more resilience to Public Safety Power Shutoffs.
- Received presentation from Monterey Bay Community Power on their community programs
- Received presentation from Commissioner Wise-West on the City's Health in All Policies (HiAP) initiative.
- Received information from Commission staff on the Planning Department's Sustainability Policy and Regulatory Update project.
- Received a presentation on the Regional Conservation Investment Strategy.
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- Received information from Commission staff regarding the County Climate Action Strategy annual report.
- Received regular updates from staff regarding actions by the Board of Supervisors related to topics of interest to the Commission.

Commissioner participation in local community meetings

One or more Commissioners attended community meetings to discuss issues related to environmental protection and cooperative opportunities that held potential for establishing local climate change policies and programs as well as identifying funding sources.

7. Future Goals

The Commission's work plan reflects the Commission's intent to continue its efforts to inform the Board on climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives; the County's Sustainability Policy and Regulatory Update project; plastic pollution mitigation; state and federal legislation; sustainable transportation policies, programs and projects; and the ongoing work of various local community groups with specific recommendations for local policies and programs that are feasible and effective.

8. Recommendations

The Commission will develop a work plan for the next two year period and continue to focus on plans and initiatives to implement mitigation and adaptation priorities in the County Climate Action Strategy, including creation of a full-time Climate Action Manager position for the County. Other Commission work in the next two years will include continuing to advise the Board of Supervisors and make recommendations on ways to improve and protect the environment to ensure the long term environmental sustainability of the County. It is therefore recommended that the Board of Supervisors accept and file the 2019-2020 biennial report of the Commission on the Environment.