



# County of Santa Cruz

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## COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

701 OCEAN STREET, SUITE 330, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073  
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## COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT 2013 and 2014 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 the 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**

The Commission met in 2013 on January 26, March 23, May 25, July 27, September 28, and December 7 at 701 Ocean Street. The Commission met in 2014 on January 25, March 28, July 25, and December 2; the May 2014 meeting was cancelled due to lack of a quorum. The Commission generally met on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 5:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors Chambers located at 701 Ocean Street, Fifth Floor, Santa Cruz, CA. In July 2014, the meeting was held at the Loudon Nelson Center in Santa Cruz. 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.

### 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.

They are as follows:

**In 2013:**

District 1 Mr. Greg Pepping, term expires April 1, 2017  
Mr. Dan Haifley, term expires April 1, 2017 (resigned November 21, 2013)

District 2 Mr. Jeffrey Talmadge, resigned March 2013  
Mr. Kenneth Adelman, term expired April 1, 2013  
Ms. Tiffany Wise-West, term expires April 1, 2017  
Dr. John Hunt, term expires April 1, 2017

District 3 Ms. Laura Kasa, term expires April 1, 2015  
Mr. Ross Clark (Chairperson), term expires April 1, 2015

District 4 Mr. Robert Ketley, term expires April 1, 2015  
Mr. Robert Culbertson, term expires April 1, 2015

District 5 Ms. Virginia Johnson, term expires April 1, 2017  
Dr. Betsy Herbert (Vice Chair) (resigned January 30, 2013)  
Karen Christensen, term expires, April 1, 2017

**In 2014:**

District 1 Mr. Greg Pepping (Vice Chair), term expires April 1, 2017  
Ms. Lynda Francis, term expires April 1, 2017

District 2 Ms. Tiffany Wise-West, term expires April 1, 2017  
Dr. John Hunt, term expires April 1, 2017

District 3 Ms. Laura Kasa, term expires April 1, 2015 (resigned July 16, 2014)  
Ms. Rachel Kippen, term expires April 1, 2015 (appointed September 9, 2014)  
Mr. Ross Clark (Chair), term expires April 1, 2015

District 4 Mr. Robert Ketley, term expires April 1, 2015  
Mr. Robert Culbertson, term expires April 1, 2015

District 5 Ms. Virginia Johnson, term expires April 1, 2017  
Karen Christensen, term expires, April 1, 2017

**4. Commission Staff**

The Commission is staffed by the General Services Department.

**5. Attendance**

Commissioner attendance for 2013 and 2014 is detailed on the last pages of this report.

## 6. Annual Goals and Accomplishments

In 2013-14, 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. The Commission supported County staff efforts to establish a Sustainability Manager Position, responsible for coordinating the implementation of the County Sustainability Plan/Climate Action Strategy and meeting the adopted greenhouse gas emissions targets.

**Regular Commission meetings** throughout the year 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 already submitted to the Board and provided to the public reflect actions taken by the Commission.

- The Commission received updates from the City, County and University of California Santa Cruz regarding the status of their Climate Plan implementation.
- Supported and recognized the formation of the County Sustainability Office within the County Planning Department.
- Received presentations by two Property Assessed Clean Energy programs working within California (CaliforniaFirst and HERO). Commission recommended that the County, who already was a member of CaliforniaFirst, participate in the HERO solar financing program.
- Received input from County building officials regarding efforts to improve residential solar permitting process.
- Heard presentations from county staff regarding water supply status and recent studies.
- Received periodic updates from county staff regarding legislative processes in Sacramento that could benefit or conflict with County programs and objectives.
- Recognized the successful ban of plastic bags throughout the County, which include three of the four city jurisdictions.
- Heard a presentation in 2011 and monitored activities of the Climate Action Compact Working Group.
- Welcomed the new Director of AMBAG.
- Monitored progress on the Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) feasibility process including recognizing County staff success in obtaining State grant funds to support the CCA feasibility study.
- Identified the need to better communicate and coordinate with other County commissions to improve services to the Board of Supervisors and reduce confusion regarding roles of each commission.
- Established an Ad-Hoc inter commission working group to improve communication among environmental commissions.

- Received a presentation on the County Draft Sustainability Plan and recommended county adoption of the plan.
- Supported Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission efforts to select sections of the Rail Corridor for Phase I construction.
- Heard a presentation by Commissioner Greg Pepping, Coastal Watershed Council, regarding the establishment of the San Lorenzo River Alliance.

### **Commissioner participation in local community meetings**

One or more Commissioners attended over twenty local community meetings to discuss cooperative opportunities that held potential for establishing local climate change policies and programs as well as identifying funding sources. These community groups included the Climate Action Compact Working Group and Municipal Sub Committee, Monterey Bay Community Power, the Santa Cruz Region Green Building Task Force, AMBAG meetings, Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission Meetings, UCSC sustainability meetings and various round table discussions with local government staff, County commissions and community based organization stakeholders.

### **7. Future Goals -**

The Commission's work plan reflects the Commission's intent to continue its efforts to inform the Board on the implementation of AB32 and related executive orders and legislation, impacts on the local environment due to climate change, and the ongoing work of various local community groups with specific recommendations for local policies and programs that are feasible and effective.

### **ATTENDANCE BY COMMISSIONERS – 2013**

District 1	Commissioner Greg Pepping Commissioner Dan Haifley (resigned November 21, 2013)
District 2	Commissioner Kenneth Adelman (term expired April 1, 2013) Commissioner Jeffrey Talmadge (resigned March 2013) Commissioner John Hunt Commissioner Tiffany Wise West
District 3	Commissioner Laura Kasa Commissioner Ross Clark
District 4	Commissioner Robert Ketley Commissioner Robert Culbertson
District 5	Commissioner Virginia Johnson Commissioner Betsy Herbert (resigned January 30, 2013) Commissioner Karen Christensen

DISTRICT	1	2	3	4	5
January	P – X Ha - X	T-X A-X	C-X K- A	Cu-X Ke - X	J-X Hb-X
March	P – X Ha – X	W- X A - a	C- A K- X	Cu- X Ke - X	J-X Ch-A
May	P – X Ha – X	Hu- X W- A	C- X K -A	Cu- X Ke -A	J- A Ch-X
July	P – A Ha – X	Hu-X W- X	C- X K-X	Cu- X Ke- X	J- X Ch- A
September	P- X Ha – X	Hu- X W -A	C-X K-X	Cu-X Ke- A	J- X Ch-X
December	P- X Ha –r	Hu-X W-X	C-X K-X	Cu- X Ke-X	J-X Ch-X

X Present at the meeting      A Excused absence from the meeting  
r Resigned      a Unexcused absence from the meeting      V Seat vacant

**ATTENDANCE BY COMMISSIONERS – 2014**

- District 1                      Commissioner Lynda Francis  
   Commissioner Greg Pepping
- District 2                      Commissioner John Hunt  
   Commissioner Tiffany Wise West
- District 3                      Commissioner Laura Kasa (resigned July 2014)  
   Commissioner Rachel Kippen (appointed September  
   2014)  
   Commissioner Ross Clark
- District 4                      Commissioner Robert Ketley  
   Commissioner Robert Culbertson
- District 5                      Commissioner Virginia Johnson  
   Commissioner Karen Christensen

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DISTRICT	1	2	3	4	5
January	P – X V	H-X W-X	C-X K-X	Cu- A Ke -X	J-X Ch-A
March	P – X F – X	H- X W - X	C- X K- A	Cu- X Ke - A	J-X Ch-X
May	MEETING CANCELLED DUE TO LACK OF QUORUM				
July	P – X F – X	H-X W- X	C- X V	Cu- X Ke- A	J- X Ch- A
September	P- A F – X	H- X W -A	C-X Ki-X	Cu-X Ke- A	J- X Ch-A
December	P- A F- A	H- X W-X	C-X Ki-X	Cu-X Ke-X	J-X Ch-X

X Present at the meeting      A      Excused absence from the meeting  
r      Resigned      a      Unexcused absence from the meeting      V      Seat vacant