

## AGENDA

Climate Action Working Group

Marin Conservation League

175 N. Redwood Drive, Mt. Tamalpais Conference Room

August 22, 2014 9:00 AM

1. Introductions
2. Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes
4. Brief Updates:
  - a. Report on presentation by BCDC on sea level rise - Nona
  - b. Latest on AB 2145 - Ed and Roger
  - c. Others
5. Discussion of strategy for coordinating efforts countywide to adapt to sea level rise: meeting with grassroots groups, electeds, and staff of various jurisdictions.
6. Proposed MCL solar policy revision\*
7. Announcements
8. Adjourn

\*Proposed new language (See existing MCL solar policy on MCL's website at <http://www.conservationleague.org/component/content/article/40-successes/advocacy/389-solar-policy.html#solar-policy>)

"D. Adequate bonding should be required to assure that the site upon closure be restored to equal or better than original conditions, and that equipment components be recycled."

**MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE**  
**Climate Action Working Group: July 11, 2014**  
**MCL offices, Mt. Tamalpais Conference Room**

Present: Co-chairs Pam Reaves and Doug Wilson; also Tamra Peters, Bill Carney, Steve Turitzin, John Rosenblum, Kate Powers, Bob Spofford, Jana Haehl, Nona Dennis, Susan Robinson, Kiki La Porta, and Tom Flynn

Pam and Doug opened the meeting at 9:02 a.m.

**Quick Intros:** Attendees introduced themselves.

**Approval of the Agenda:** Nona expanded her agenda item to debrief on the County's coastal sea level rise meeting that was held July 10. M/S/adopted (Peters/Haehl)

**Approval of June 6, 2014 Minutes:** Minutes approved.

**Opening Remarks About MCL Committee Policy:**

When co-chairs ask for agenda items, the request will come through MCL office. Replies should also go to MCL office (mcl@marinconservationleague.org). This protects personal emails. Suggestions for agenda items will not always show up on the agenda.

Also there is a new policy for group email messages. All emails to a committee will go to everybody on the committee. If you are on a committee and don't want email, delete it.

MCL would like all members of all committees to become MCL members. Benefits include being able to vote at meetings, to shape MCL policy, to get things on the agenda, to receive email alerts and to receive the newsletter, invitations to special events, and discounts on events. Membership is \$35 a year and payment can be made online through Paypal or by writing a check.

All of MCL's meetings are open to everyone—MCL members, non-MCL committee members and the public. However, only MCL members can vote and shape MCL policy.

**Action Items:**

- 1) **Determine response to current form of AB2145:** MCL has been a big supporter of alternative forms of energy, especially Marin Clean Energy. Three members of committee (CAWG) went to State Legislature to testify before the Senate to stop AB2145. A revised version is expected to re-emerge in the Appropriations Committee on Aug. 4 with changed language that is expected to limit the number of jurisdictions that can cooperate to form a community choice aggregation project to three contiguous jurisdictions. This leaves some rural and less well-financed jurisdictions pinched out. Meeting a critical mass of customers is a concern for counties with low populations but also having the staff and financial resources to do the implementation plan and feasibility studies necessary to do it independently. It's much easier and cheaper to piggyback on an existing entity.

Online info is often a few days old. New point person at MCE for advocacy is Martha Serianz, [mserianz@mcecleanenergy.org](mailto:mserianz@mcecleanenergy.org). It would be valuable to know what the positions of other groups who opposed the original bill are. Most want to avoid having an unlevel playing field. Even with changes, MCL still opposes the bill. Quick response may be needed.

**Action item: Pam will email Woody Hastings, the coordinator in Sonoma County, to get action alerts and updates.**

**Discussion Items:**

**1) Community Marin and sea level response coordination (Nona):**

Community Marin (CM) was started in 1991 when land use and transportation were not integrated. The County came to MCL and asked what it and other environmental organizations would like to see. CM produced a document of recommendations for environmentally responsible land use planning. The CM document is updated every few years.

One of two major strategic action recommendations from the latest update is to: Encourage County and cities to plan **together** to adapt to the effects of climate change esp. sea level rise and reduce activities that are primary causes.

In an effort to get a coordinated planning approach to sea level rise, CM action committee members will represent policy recommendations that all CM members agreed to but not represent CM as an organization.

Currently there are silos addressing sea level rise. Kate Sears, as Supervisor, is representative to BCDC where major regional responses have been formulated. Steve Kinsey is on Coastal Commission. Community Marin is working to get more leadership, thus better coordination, between and among the jurisdictions so as a County we don't deal with sea level rise along one continuous coast in a bunch of different ways. Kate is planning a broad County meeting in September and is looking at ways to coordinate a broader County response.

**Action item: Nona will set up meeting with Kate Sears about leadership from Supervisors and her potential partnering with Steve Kinsey.**

The Community Marin action committee is gathering information of what each jurisdiction is doing. Bruce Riordan, consultant to Joint Policy Committee, was contacted about how JPC's attempt to coordinate on a regional basis might be a model for Marin County.

Brian Crawford, Director of Community Development at County, suggested attending a Planning and Community Development Directors monthly meeting. There are also Marin County Mayors and Councilmembers, City Managers, and Public Works Departments groups. Everybody wants coordination.

**Action: Kiki will find out when, where, and who participates in the meetings of these different group.**

It might be good to focus on one coordinating group that brings in all jurisdictions. Marin Climate and Energy Partnership (MCEP) has been focused on Climate Action Plans and just now are bringing in concept of adaptation. MCEP has created a mechanism to pool funds. Christina O'Rourke is their consultant. Corte Madera and Belvedere may not be members.

Funding is a huge stumbling block and time is important. There is a need to invent a new kind of funding entity, a new kind of classification of money, to set aside for adaptation. Currently, there is nowhere in our political process to set money aside for this. We don't yet know what

adaptation strategies are going to look like. There is a need to consider present costs versus future costs of adaptation.

There is also the coordination effort of grassroots groups. The Sustainables have been working on this for a while. Community Marin activists are just getting going again. Marge Macris of MHEC has been urging to do something about adaptation.

There was discussion on how Community Marin group will interact with CWAG to prompt coordinated action. Redundancy is good. CAWG forum helps all know what each is doing and is a good place for coordination. The more unanimity and the broader the participation, the better. Additional groups that may want to participate in CAWG: Shore Up Marin who work specifically with vulnerable communities in the Canal and Marin City; Rob Eyler and Marin Economic Commission; the League of Women Voters.

There are two functions CAWG group is taking on. One is as a forum or “big tent” where different organizations share their point of view and help each other understand what’s been done. The other function is forming MCL’s own advocacy policy. We need to be careful that we know which path we’re on when we shape policy. Only members have a voice in shaping MCL policy. If we bring other groups into committee to shape policy, they either need to become individual members or business members.

**Action item: Bob Spofford will set up a Dropbox for CAWG library of links or pdfs for articles and documents that provide topical information.** Committee members will get an invitation. They will need to respond to the invitation in order to have this folder open in their Dropbox accounts.

## **2) San Rafael’s Solar Policy**

A solar project is scheduled to be before the council for approval July 21. A group of jurisdictions in Marin and Sonoma previously met with solar installers who presented proposals for solar installations on public facilities in each jurisdiction. San Rafael was the coordinating city. San Rafael will consider solar installations on 6 buildings: City Hall and portions of its parking area, Community Centers at D Street, Pickleweed, and Terra Linda, Dept. of Public Works, and the downtown parking garage at C Street that will produce energy for garages on C Street and on A Street. The City will receive a fixed, low cost on electricity. The vendor will own the panels and will provide maintenance.

San Rafael’s zoning ordinances for solar on residences is a different issue and in process of nearing a second reading.

## **3) Marin County Solar Ordinance (Bob)**

The next meeting of Katie Rice’s group addressing solar will be Wednesday, July 16. It will be the last presentation by outside speakers. Two poles have emerged: One is the Sonoma ordinance that required a great deal of work; the other is the approved Cooley/Porter project in Novato, considered a perfect large-scale solar project that sailed through the County’s approval process. There is a question about how much effort it will take to get a Solar Ordinance in the County. It’s currently not agendized and there is no money or staff time for it.

The Novato project took the second richest rate incentive off the market. (The San Rafael airport took the first.) The MCE feed-in tariff is on a sliding scale and the incentive goes down as each project built. Because there is a lesser incentive for the next project, it will have a greater challenge to be viable.

When the County says there's no money, it often takes the community pushing from all directions to influence planning on how the Supervisors allocate time and money. In context of other issues, solar installations on agriculture land have dropped down the priority list at least until a next project is proposed. The County Solar Ordinance is land based, not roof based. Roof based ordinances tend to be smaller scale. Solar ordinances for residences will probably get revised in the next national revision of Title 24, in the energy portion of the electrical codes.

Requiring that big parking lots have solar hasn't advanced. It's expensive and harder to fund, it's more expensive than rooftops.

#### **4) MCL Solar Policy**

MCL's Solar Policy carries weight with the County. MCL's Solar Policy was initiated several years ago with the previous Climate Action Committee. There was discussion between the previous Climate Action Committee and the Land Use Committee over philosophical differences at the time of the Greenpoint Nursery Solar proposal.

When the Cooley/Porter project was proposed, the MCL policy was re-examined again and there was discussion of key elements that were thought to be missing. One was requiring removal of solar equipment when it is no longer functional, recycling the elements of the equipment, and cleaning up the site. Another was there should be a minimal efficiency to justify its existence in the landscape.

Nona's notes on the Cooley/Porter project: It was considered a good project with reservations which were: It is located in agricultural zoning so it could set a precedent for agricultural zoning; also, there were concerns over possible negative impacts on the stream even though the project is within the minimum 100 foot setback.

The points that MCL argued in favor for the Cooley project could also be criteria in reviewing future projects such as: agricultural zoning, whether the site is degraded or not already, whether there are sensitive species involved, restoration requirements including bonding for the long term, and watershed concerns.

Bonding, currently missing from MCL's Solar Policy, would ensure there was funding for removing the equipment and returning the site to its previous condition once the equipment had reached its lifespan and in the event that it wasn't upgraded with new technology or brought up to standard of production.

Bob made the point that a contractor wouldn't build an installation if it wouldn't get maximum output. The efficiency condition is superfluous since it wouldn't make financial sense to do otherwise, as is the distinction between making the production for use on site versus selling the power offsite. His point: if you are making green power, it doesn't matter where it's used. Electrons go into the grid. It's part of network physics that it's more energy efficient for them to be used as close to its source as possible. Impacts of transmission lines are a different topic.

MALT's concern is they want to maximize agricultural production. They are requiring long-term conditions on easements. If a wind energy system were installed, the energy generated would have to be for use on the farm and not for commercial purposes. It changes the incentive. One reason for laying out these conditions, even for Cooley, is the concern about the automatic response of the County to do a categorical exemption for CEQA. We're not trying to force an EIR, but we want to establish an administrative record. It makes it very difficult to assemble a strong administrative record if you don't have an initial study where you put everything together in one compact document. An administrative record is important for precedence for future environmental analyses of future projects. We want to make sure that for each proposal there is a clear record and that the County, who has a policy to encourage renewable energy, doesn't go instantly to an exemption. We have to be vigilant and the County has to do its job so they don't miss any key environmental issues.

John Rosenblum mentioned a study about the issues of land use versus solar and utility scales which are extremely sensitive because efficiencies are also the efficiencies of greenhouse gas reductions. If you're taking productive land or wild land out of use there's an enormous difference in greenhouse gases.

**Action: John will send link to land use vs. solar study.**

It was discussed that it's important to know who is financing solar installations and that there are tax advantages for investing in these utility projects. As a result, it doesn't have to be the most efficient system. It has to be the one that has returns on the investment the fastest.

The money that is made by many of the residential solar installers is through financing, not the return of electricity. The economic aspect may overshadow greenhouse gas reduction and the green energy production aspect.

**Action item: A group including Tom Flynn, Nona, Bob, Kiki, Bill and Doug will compose language revisions to MCL Solar Policy. They will start communication online. MCL's Solar Policy is on the website. The group will meet by July 21.**

**5) Water efficiency program of MCE and coordinating those improvements with MMWD (Tom Flynn – Consultant)**

Tom's presentation is attached.

MMWD and MCE have the same customer base and the same officials representing them. Their energy profile and the water pumping profile match. If MMWD can pump during off peak hours or reduce their amount of pumping, there can savings. Though the initial savings Tom presented is small compared to what is spent, it's time to thoroughly crunch the numbers. John Rosenblum is developing examples based on other water and sanitary districts. It's time for MMWD and MCE together to take the jump into the next step. It's likely it will be beneficial to both.

**6) Campaign to "get in front of trends" so as to be proactive (Kiki)**

Comments to the IJ can be delivering wrong information. Kiki would like to discuss a coordinated approach to addressing individually and potentially as a group disinformation. It may not be the purview of this group. Those who want to discuss it further can get together.

**Information items:**

- There is a Bay Area Climate & Energy Resilience Project webinar about the City of Berkeley's new Hazard Mitigation Plan July 17, 2 -3 pm. If interested email Bruce Riordan at [bruce@bayareaajpc.net](mailto:bruce@bayareaajpc.net). There will be discussion on how Climate Change becomes mainstream and considered issues that matter on all administrative agendas.
- On July 10, the County's Community Development Agency presented a first meeting in a two year program of C-SMART, The Collaboration: Sea-Level Marin Adaptation Response Team, funded by a grant the County has to address sea level rise on the coast. Patrick Barnard, coastal geologist of USGS, gave a clear, interesting analysis of sea level rise from a global and coastal perspective, with the variables that enter into predicting how sea level will occur and how it will be varied in specific locations due to a variety of factors. It was a technical presentation but accessible. It was a great start. A recording may be available on the County website.

**Action item: Nona will find out if the meeting was recorded.**

- Pam attended a Marin Organic sponsored event called Farming 101 at the Seed Bank in Petaluma. Guido Frosini of True Grass Farms is measuring carbon sequestration without composting, using only rotational grazing that depends upon the stewardship of a natural ecosystem grazing technology.
- Bill mentioned there may be a follow up to Sustainable San Rafael's Rising Waters, Rising Rates on August 14. SSR will be posting the video of the previous event on their website.

**Next Meeting:** August 22, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. at MCL office, Mt. Tamalpais Conference Room

Meeting adjourned 11:15 a.m.

Notes: KP