



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

December 9, 2019

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

Re: December 10, 2019 Meeting / Agenda Item A-30
Resolution of Concern regarding the current climate emergency

Dear Chairman Lavagnino and Supervisors of the Board,

As Founding Members of The Climate Mobilization - Santa Barbara Chapter (TCM-SB), we would like to express our gratitude to the Board for recognizing the emergency status of climate change and to Supervisor Williams for basing the draft resolution submitted for approval on language submitted by TCM-SB. TCM-SB was organized last year to advance mission of The Climate Mobilization to “initiate a WWII-scale mobilization to reverse global warming and the mass extinction of species in order to protect humanity and the natural world from climate catastrophe.” As part of this effort, TCM-SB submitted its proposed resolution in December, 2018 and in the interim has been actively advocating for a climate emergency resolution.

To date, [1,246 governments across the globe](#) have declared a Climate Emergency and in California, twenty-two cities and five counties (San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and Sonoma), totaling approximately 10.5 million residents, have declared a climate emergency in their jurisdictions. The situation is no different for Santa Barbara County.

There can be no denying that impacts from climate change are happening now, and each successive study and report is finding that the speed and tipping points of climate change are closer than the most aggressive scenarios and forecasts of previous studies. This past month, the [United Nations Emissions Gap Report](#)—an annual assessment of global pledges to cut greenhouse gas emissions—shows that countries' *current pledges under the Paris climate agreement will still raise global temperatures 3.2°C (5.8°F) by the end of the century*, well beyond the Paris goal of limiting warming to well below 2°C (3.6°F). Similarly, [The Production Gap Report](#) shows that *the amount of oil, gas and coal that countries already plan to produce will lead to 50 percent more fossil fuels produced by 2030 than would be allowable to stay under 2°C warming*.

Clearly, time is not on our side and Santa Barbara County is not immune from the consequences. Case in point: on December 5th, the Washington Post published [an analysis of 123 years of temperature data](#) showing that the rise in temperature for our area is double the rate of the continental United States. “Since 1895, the average temperature in Santa Barbara

County has warmed by 4.1 degrees Fahrenheit. Neighboring Ventura County has heated up even more rapidly. With an average temperature increase of 4.7 degrees Fahrenheit since preindustrial times, Ventura ranks as the fastest-warming county in the Lower 48 states.”¹

How can Santa Barbara best respond to a climate emergency? The Climate Mobilization strategy can best be described in three words: “ban”, “plan” and “expand.”

Ban. Phase out fossil fuel infrastructure, stop burning fossil fuels and divest from climate-damaging industries. In short, to get out of this hole we must first stop digging. The climate emergency requires a transition to a fossil fuel-free society, and local governments have the power to remove the social license of the fossil fuel industry by rejecting all direct ownership and commingled funds invested in fossil fuel companies made with public funds under their control. The prime example would be the Board’s rejection of any proposed expansion of fracking in Cat Canyon and other areas of the County.

Plan. Democratize the Climate Emergency response, establish a Climate Emergency Mobilization body, create a Climate Mobilization Action Plan. Local governments can elevate the voices of citizens and marginalized communities within the climate emergency response, identifying effective local solutions and working to develop a democratic mandate for mobilization. A comprehensive response requires coordination from a central government body, such as a Climate Emergency Mobilization Department with oversight and authority over all climate emergency planning and implementation efforts. The creation of a Climate Mobilization Action Plan would go beyond incremental emissions targets and identify and commits government to the strongest mobilization-scale strategies, actions, and legislation possible on issues of energy efficiency, renewable energy, zero emissions transportation, ecosystem conservation, food security, and adaptation and resilience within their jurisdictions.

Expand. Downwards, upwards and outwards. Downwards, through new climate mobilization programs and legislation, massive expansion of public transportation, and drawing down carbon through widespread ecological restoration initiatives are required to address the climate emergency. Upwards, by adopting state and national climate emergency commitments, programs, and legislation to support widespread implementation of climate action. Outwards, through regional planning, collaborative projects, networking, and education that builds a climate emergency action culture through coordinated outreach and engagement.

While TCM-SB is grateful that the Board will be declaring “that a climate emergency threatens our region, state, nation, civilization, humanity and the natural world,” it is imperative that Santa Barbara County takes concrete, actionable steps to effectively respond to this emergency. In our draft resolution, we proposed the following:

¹ Washington Post, “Fires, floods and free parking: California’s unending fight against climate change,” December 5, 2019. [<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/national/climate-environment/climate-change-california/>]

1. **Establishment of a countywide just transition and climate emergency mobilization effort** to reverse global warming, which, with appropriate financial and regulatory assistance from State and Federal authorities, ends countywide greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible and no later than 2030;
2. **Optimal utilization of available physical and economic resources** and the energies and efforts of the County's staff, residents, advocates, and allies;
3. **By early 2020, organization of an all-staff meeting** to educate staff on the latest climate science and emergency mobilization needed, with a directive to all County departments and commissions to report back within 30 days regarding feasible maximum emergency GHG reductions from operations by the end of 2030;
4. **Directive to the County Dept. of Planning** to report back on opportunities for radical GHG and co-pollutant emissions reductions and drawdown opportunities through updates to the County Energy and Climate Action Plan, including metrics that prioritize climate-adaptive land use planning; and
5. **Inclusion of support for a Green New Deal in its 2020-2021 Legislative Program** and related enabling legislation to effectively respond to the climate emergency.

By electing to join the Monterey Bay Community Power CCE and electrify its vehicle fleet, and through its Energy and Climate Action Plan and newly issued Strategic Energy Plan, the County of Santa Barbara has already taken proactive measures towards implementing the critical steps needed for a climate emergency response. All that remains is to declare the existence of a climate emergency that forms the basis for making good on that promise.

An excerpt from the December 5th Washington Post article best describes the situation:

Despite Santa Barbara's heritage as the birthplace of the modern environmental movement, the county is falling far short of its own anti-pollution goals, which are meant to serve as a model for others to follow. The failure has activists here wondering: If a place with Santa Barbara's predominantly green electorate and political class is unwilling or unable to change, who will?

Sincerely,

Robert Perry and Emiliano Campobello

Founding Members