



INTERIM GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS (GHG) CEQA THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

County of Santa Barbara
Planning and Development Department

Board of Supervisors Hearing
January 26, 2021

INTRODUCTIONS AND AGENDA



County of Santa Barbara
Planning and Development



- Purpose and Need
- Background
- Proposed Thresholds and Methodology
- Mitigation
- Environmental Review (CEQA)
- Recommendations



PURPOSE



- **State law**
 - Determine significance of GHG emissions
- **Board direction**
 - Amend *Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual*
 - GHG thresholds of significance

NEED



- **Thresholds for significance determinations**
 - Improvement over current process
 - Reduce project cost and time
 - Standardized process
 - Locally-appropriate and justifiable
 - Discretionary permits
 - Land use projects and plans

BACKGROUND



- **Industrial Stationary Source Threshold**
 - 1,000 MTCO₂e/year
- **2030 Climate Action Plan (CAP)**
 - Initiated in July 2020
 - Target: reduce emissions 50% below 2007 levels
 - Final thresholds adopted with CAP

RECOMMENDED INTERIM THRESHOLDS



1) Screening Threshold

- Screen out “smaller” projects
 - Majority of future projects screened out

2) Significance Threshold

- Determine if project-level GHG emissions have a significant impact
- Mitigation applied if emissions exceed Significance Threshold

METHODOLOGY



- 10 years of historic permit data
- Estimated annual operational emissions for historic permit types
- Projected development trends and GHG emissions to 2030

METHODOLOGY



- Calculated proportion of reductions from new development to meet 2030 target

- Estimated mitigation rates for projects exceeding a given threshold
 - Established **screening threshold**

- Divided targeted emissions from new development in 2030 by growth
 - Established **significance threshold**

SCREENING THRESHOLD



- Qualitative application:
 - Project-size Screening Criteria Table
- Quantitative application:
 - Screening Threshold

SCREENING CRITERIA



Project Type	Screening Criteria
Single-Family Housing	62,000 square feet (sf)
Multi-Family Housing	55,000 sf
Commercial Space	26,000 sf
Regional Shopping Center	12,000 sf
Office	28,000 sf



SCREENING THRESHOLD

- **300 MTCO₂e/year**
 - Captures majority of operational emissions from new CEQA projects
 - 15% of new projects expected to exceed this threshold

SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLD



- **3.8 MTCO₂e/year per service population**
 - Full-time residents and employees
 - Emissions from operational sources plus construction-related sources

MITIGATION MEASURES



- **List of “Potential Mitigation Measures”**
 - Different types of land use projects
 - Preference hierarchy:
 - 1) Project-specific
 - 2) Local
 - 3) Regional

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW



- **“Not a project” per CEQA Guidelines**
 - §15060(c)(3) (*Preliminary Review*)
 - §15378 (*Project*)
 - §15064.7 (*Thresholds of Significance*)

COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION



- **County Planning Commission**
 - November 4 and 12, 2020
 - Recommendation:
 - Approve the proposed amendments
 - 5-0 vote

RECOMMENDATIONS



That the Board of Supervisors:

- 1) Determine that the proposed amendment to Chapter II, GHG Emissions, of the *Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual* is not a project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060(c)(3), 15378(b)(5), and 15064.7(b); and
- 2) Adopt a resolution approving the proposed amendment to the *Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual* to include new interim thresholds for determining the significance of impacts from GHG emissions from land use projects and plans in compliance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4, Determining the Significance of Impacts from GHG Emissions.