



# County of Santa Cruz

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## COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

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## COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT BY-LAWS

### 1. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Commission on the Environment is established under the authority of Government Code Section 31000.1 and pursuant to Sections 2.38.060 and 2.54 of the County Code. The Commission is composed of ten members. Each member of the Board of Supervisors appoints two commissioners.

The Commission shall exercise the following responsibilities in its efforts to provide policy recommendations and action programs:

A. Advise the Board of Supervisors in establishing specific goals and objectives and assist the Board in developing policies and programs to support these goals in both the public and private spheres:

1. Mitigating climate change caused by net increase in greenhouse gases (GHG);
2. Reducing energy consumption, as well as improving its production, distribution and sustainability;
3. Encouraging sustainable development patterns and building practices;
4. Encouraging the development and use of sustainable transportation modalities;
5. Conserving local natural resources and preventing pollution;
6. Furthering the county's stated goal of zero waste;
7. Mitigating hazards from toxics and hazardous materials; and
8. Enhancing, restoring and preserving local habitat and open spaces.

B. Work cooperatively with county departments, other county commissions, and public and private agencies to formulate the advice to meet the goals stated here while preserving the quality of life for the county's residents and sustaining economic viability for local businesses. As part of discharging this responsibility, the Commission will endeavor to avoid duplication of effort with these other entities.

C. Serve as an information clearinghouse to the Board of Supervisors and other

County commissions about proposed and pending state and federal legislation, executive orders, regulatory requirements, and/or legal actions which may impact the county's ability to meet the goals stated here.

- D. Advise the Board of Supervisors on potential areas of cooperation with other public and private agencies and organizations to plan and implement collaborative efforts that help accomplish the goals stated here.
- E. Submit a proposed biennial work plan to the Board of Supervisors for consideration and a biennial report on actual activities and accomplishments (odd numbered years only). A report to the Board of Supervisors on Commission attendance is due in even numbered years.
- F. Exercise any other responsibilities that may be set forth in the Commission's by-laws, or as directed by the Board of Supervisors.

## **2. MEETINGS**

- A. Regular meetings of the Commission shall be held six times a year. They will be scheduled generally on the fourth Wednesday of each month, convening at 5:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors Chambers, 5th Floor, Governmental Center, 701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, California.
- B. No meeting of this Commission shall be held in any facility that prohibits the admittance of any person, or persons, on the basis of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, or disability.
- C. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or by a majority vote of the Commission or by the Board of Supervisors during any regular or special meeting. Board of Supervisors authorization is needed for scheduling of any meeting beyond the six regularly scheduled meetings.
- D. The public shall be notified in advance of the time and place of regular and special meetings. Public participation in Commission meetings shall be allowed as follows:
  - 1. An opportunity for members of the public to directly address the Commission on any item on the agenda of interest to the public shall be provided before or during the Commission's consideration of the item.
  - 2. In addition, the agenda will provide for community oral communications on items not on the agenda, which are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission, at the beginning of each regular meeting agenda.

3. The chairperson of the Commission may establish reasonable limits on the amount of time allotted to each speaker on a particular item, and the Commission may establish reasonable limits on the total amount of time allotted for public testimony on a particular item or the total amount of time allotted for community oral communications. When further discussion is required, the Commission may vote to allot time in the agenda of the following meeting.

- E. At least seventy-two (72) hours prior to each regular meeting, an agenda for the regular meeting shall be mailed to each Commission member, and to each representative of the news media and to each other person who has submitted a written request to the Commission for notification of meetings, and shall be posted at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the regular meeting at a location that is freely accessible to the public. The agenda shall contain a brief general description of each item of business to be transacted or discussed at the meeting. No action or discussion shall be undertaken on any item not appearing on the posted agenda except that members of the Commission may briefly respond to statements made or questions posed by persons exercising their public testimony rights or ask a question for clarification, refer the matter to staff or to other resources for factual information, or request staff to report back at a subsequent meeting concerning any matter. Notwithstanding the foregoing, action may be taken on an item of business not appearing on the posted agenda upon a determination by a super-majority of the Commission that there is an "emergency situation" (in accordance with the Brown Act definition); or two-thirds vote of the membership of the Commission, or if less than two-thirds of the members are present, by unanimous vote of those members present, determine that there is need to take immediate action and the need for action came to the attention of the County subsequent to the agenda being posted; or when an item appeared on the agenda of, and was continued from, a meeting held not more than five days earlier.
- F. At least twenty-four (24) hours prior to each special meeting, an agenda for the special meeting shall be mailed to each Commission member and to each representative of the news media and to each other person who has submitted a written request to the Commission for notification of meetings; and shall be posted at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the special meeting at a location that is freely accessible to members of the public. No business other than that listed on the agenda shall be considered at a special meeting.
- G. All subcommittees shall comply with the notice and agenda requirements otherwise applicable to the Commission in these by-laws, except for subcommittees composed solely of less than a quorum of the members of the Commission which are not standing subcommittees of the Commission with either a continuing subject matter jurisdiction or a meeting schedule fixed by

resolution or other formal action of the Commission.

- H. A person shall not be required to register his or her name or fulfill any other obligation as a condition to attendance at any meeting of this Commission, but may volunteer such information for inclusion in the Commission's minutes.
- I. The meetings will be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.
- J. Smoking shall be prohibited at all meetings of the Commission.

### **3. VOTING**

- A. A majority of the voting members shall constitute a quorum.
- B. All official acts of the Commission shall comply with Santa Cruz County Code Section 2.38.150.

### **4. OFFICERS**

- A. The officers of the Commission are the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson.
- B. The duties of the Chairperson are to preside over meetings, prepare agendas, represent the Commission, and be responsible for communication with the Board of Supervisors. The Vice-Chairperson shall assume these same duties in the absence of the Chairperson.
- C. Elections of officers take place in May of odd numbered years at a regular meeting.
- D. The term of office for the officers is two years.

### **5. AGENDAS**

- A. Agenda Items

Commission members who wish to place items on the agenda shall give those items to the staff of the Commission at least one week in advance of the meeting.

- B. Additions and Corrections to Agenda

At the beginning of the meeting, staff shall inform the Commission of any additions or corrections to the agenda, and inform the Commission of any requests for continuances of scheduled items. (Procedures for adding items to the agenda can be found under Section 2 E of these bylaws). The Commission may elect to continue items at this time or to consider the requests at the scheduled time for the item. Whenever there are only six members of the Commission present, the Commission may grant requests for continuances so that a full Commission may hear the item.

**6. SUBCOMMITTEES**

Subcommittees may be appointed, as needed, by the Chairperson with the majority approval of the Commission. The Chairperson, with the majority approval of the Commission shall terminate the subcommittee when its function is no longer necessary.

**7. APPROVAL OF BY-LAWS**

These By-laws and any subsequent amendments thereto, shall be approved by the Board of Supervisors pursuant to Santa Cruz County Code Section 2.38.140.

**8. AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS**

Amendments to these By-laws may be recommended to the Board of Supervisors by a majority vote of the Commission.

**9. STAFF CONSULTATION**

Pursuant to County Code Section 2.54.040 C, staff members from other County departments shall be available to the Commission as assigned by their respective department heads at the direction of the County Administrative Officer.

*Approved by BOS: April 9, 2013*