



# County of Santa Cruz

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## COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

701 OCEAN STREET, SUITE 400, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

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## COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT 2015 and 2016 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 2015 on January 28, March 25, May 27, July 22, September 23, and December 2 at 701 Ocean Street. The Commission met in 2016 on February 3, March 23, May 25, July 27, September 28 and December 7. 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 2015, the meeting was held in the Planning Department conference room. 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 2015:

District 1 Mr. Greg Pepping (Chairperson), term expires April 1, 2017

Ms. Lynda Francis, term expires April 1, 2017 (resigned November 21, 2015)

District 2 Dr. Tiffany Wise-West, term expires April 1, 2017  
Dr. John Hunt (Vice Chair), term expires April 1, 2017

District 3 Ms. Rachel Kippen, term expires April 1, 2019 (resigned November 24, 2015)  
Mr. Ross Clark, term expires April 1, 2019

District 4 Mr. Robert Ketley, term expired April 1, 2015 (did not seek reappointment)  
Mr. Brian Lockwood, term expires April 1, 2019 (appointed September 29, 2015)  
Mr. Robert Culbertson, term expires April 1, 2019

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

**In 2016:**

District 1 Mr. Greg Pepping (Chairperson), term expires April 1, 2017  
Ms. Jane Orbuch, term expires April 1, 2017 (appointed May 10, 2016)

District 2 Dr. Tiffany Wise-West, term expires April 1, 2017  
Dr. John Hunt (Vice Chair), term expires April 1, 2017

District 3 Ms. Maureen Wilmot, term expires April 1, 2019 (appointed February 23, 2016)  
Mr. Ross Clark, term expires April 1, 2019

District 4 Mr. Brian Lockwood, term expires April 1, 2019  
Mr. Robert Culbertson, term expires April 1, 2019

District 5 Ms. Virginia Johnson, term expires April 1, 2017  
Ms. Karen Christensen, term expires April 1, 2017 (passed away 1/21/16)  
Ms. Margaret Bruce, term expires April 1, 2017 (appointed May 10, 2016)

**4. Commission Staff**

The Commission is staffed by the Planning Department.

**5. Attendance**

Commissioner attendance for 2015 and 2016 is detailed on the last pages of this report.

**6. Annual Goals and Accomplishments**

In 2015-16, 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 available to the public on the Commission webpage reflect actions taken by the Commission.

- The Commission developed work priorities for the 2015-16 biennial reporting period and adopted a Work Plan that includes a process for updating the Work Plan.
- Received regular updates from Commissioners on topics in their focus areas.
- Heard a presentations from County staff regarding the County Climate Action Strategy annual report and adaptation policies development.
- The Board of Supervisors approved the Commission's request to assign staff to the Commission from the Planning Department.
- Received a presentation on the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission's Passenger Rail Feasibility Study and advised the Board of Supervisors of the Commission's strong support of rail transportation in the County.
- Received regular updates from staff regarding actions by the Board of Supervisors related to topics of interest to the Commission.
- Heard presentations form the Director of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services regarding the Open Space Project.
- Received updates on local ballot measures
- Participated in the process of developing appropriate regulation of cannabis cultivation in the County through presentations by the C4 Committee staff, formally advised the Board of Supervisors of the Commission's priorities related to environmental protection and energy conservation elements in the proposed ordinance.
- The Commission received updates from the City of Santa Cruz staff regarding the status of their Climate Plan implementation.
- 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 issue of illegal dumping in the County particularly in the Pajaro River and received inforamtion on the efforts of the Public Work Department to address the issue and fund a pilot illegal dumping prevention and enforcemnt program.
- Monitored progress on the Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) feasibility process including recognizing County staff success in obtaining State grant funds to suport the CCA feasibility study, the completion of the technical feasibility study, and the success of the process to establish the governance and financing structures for the new agency.
- Held a joint meeting with the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Commission and the Water Advisory Commission 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 presentations on status of implementation of elements of the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan.

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

One or more Commissioners attended numerous community meetings to discuss issues related to environmental protection and 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, AMBAG meetings, Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission Meetings, UCSC sustainability meetings and various round table discussions with local and state 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 – 2015

District 1	Mr. Greg Pepping (Chairperson), term expires April 1, 2017 Ms. Lynda Francis, term expires April 1, 2017 (resigned November 21, 2015)
District 2	Dr. John Hunt (Vice Chair), term expires April 1, 2017 Dr. Tiffany Wise-West, term expires April 1, 2017
District 3	Mr. Ross Clark, term expires April 1, 2019 Ms. Rachel Kippen, term expires April 1, 2019 (resigned November 24, 2015)
District 4	Mr. Robert Culbertson, term expires April 1, 2019 Mr. Robert Ketley, term expired April 1, 2015 (did not seek reappointment) Mr. Brian Lockwood, term expires April 1, 2019 (appointed September 29, 2015)
District 5	Ms. Virginia Johnson, term expires April 1, 2017 Ms. Karen Christensen, term expires, April 1, 2017

DISTRICT	1	2	3	4	5
January	P - X F - X	H - X W - X	C - X K - X	C - A K - A	J - X Ch - X
March	P - X F - X	H - X W - X	C - X K - X	C - X K - A	J - X Ch - A
May	P - X F - X	H - X W - X	C - X K - A	C - X v	J - X Ch - X
July	P - A F - X	H - X W - X	C - X K - X	C - a v	J - X Ch - A
September	P - A F - A	H - X W - X	C - X K - A	C - X v	J - X Ch - A

December	P - X v	H - X W - X	C - X v	C - X L - A	J - X Ch - A
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X Present at the meeting  
A Excused absence from the meeting  
a Unexcused absence from the meeting  
v Seat vacant

**ATTENDANCE BY COMMISSIONERS – 2016**

- District 1 Mr. Greg Pepping (Chairperson), term expires April 1, 2017  
Ms. Jane Orbuch, term expires April 1, 2017 (appointed May 10, 2016)
- District 2 Dr. John Hunt (Vice Chair), term expires April 1, 2017  
Dr. Tiffany Wise-West, term expires April 1, 2017
- District 3 Ms. Maureen Wilmot, term expires April 1, 2019 (appointed February 23, 2016)  
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<b>DISTRICT</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
February	P - X v	H - X W - X	C - X v	C - X L - X	J - X v
March	P - X v	H - X W - X	C - X K - W	C - X L - X	J - X v
May	P - X O - X	H - X W - X	C - a W - X	C - X L - X	J - A B - X
July	P - X O - A	H - X W - A	C - A W - X	C - A L - X	J - X B - X
September	P - X O - X	H - A W - X	C - X W - X	C - X L - X	J - X B - X
December	P - X O - X	H - X W - A	C - X W - A	C - X L - X	J - X B - X

X Present at the meeting  
A Excused absence from the meeting  
a Unexcused absence from the meeting  
v Seat vacant