

Marin Conservation League
Climate Action Committee
Meeting Notes

September 20, 2012

Attending: Susan Stompe, Joe Bunker, David Schnapf, Chris Yolanis, Tim Rosenfeld, Bob Spofford (temporary chair in Rogers's absence) and (by phone) Michelle Passero

Approved: Notes from July 19 Meeting.

Updates & Discussion:

1. AB32/Cap & Trade – Michelle reported by phone that things are moving ahead on cap & Trade. The first auction of carbon rights is scheduled for Nov 14 and will be a key landmark, establishing the first US price for carbon in the environment. A key related piece of legislation, AB1532, is on the Governor's desk for signature. It set's up a process for investing the fees from carbon permits, anticipated as around \$1 billion, in EE programs, renewables, etc. There is pressure on him to let the \$\$ flow to the general fund, and some fear he may not sign it. *er (Note: It was signed 9/30, Bob)*
2. Single use bag ordinances – No progress in any of the cities. No Marin local city wants to be the pioneer on the off chance that there could still be some sort of legal threat. Despite the favorable court rulings for Manhattan Beach, a legal threat to a city in Marin is still *theoretically* possibility. On a positive note, San Rafael *has* passed a ban on styrofoam take-out containers. Perhaps we should put some pressure on other cities to do the same.
3. Report on the previous night's "Choosing the Future we want" event (MCL was a co-sponsor with the Sustainables, MEHC, LWV. Nona was a panelist.) – General agreement that it was a success. Very well attended, and the vocal anti-planning fringe did not attempt to take it over, though some of them were in the audience. An important message that emerged multiple times and which seemed to have traction with the audience was that the kinds of very high housing densities that are sometimes imagined by opponents of SB 375 have never in fact been discussed for Marin (or anywhere else in the Bay Area suburbs.) When people understand what is actually possible, and how little it differs from what surrounds them today they calm down. Inside our group there was discussion of possible ways we could help get this message out. (*e.g.* A "myth vs. reality" piece on the website or newsletter.)
4. MEA/MCE – The rollout to all Marin households and businesses is now complete. It looks like the final opt-out rate will be a bit under 20%, which is disappointing, but is what is in the business plan. Three big positive developments in the past month: a) The Governor vetoed AB 976, which snuck through the legislature on the last day, and would have made the creation of future CCAs much more difficult. b) PG&E has started sending out refund checks to MCE customers reflecting a retroactive reduction in the exit fee they charge these customers (*aka* the "power charge indifference adjustment".) This reduction resulted from an MEA petition to the PUC last winter, and is part of a positive trend in the commission's response to MEA's arguments.

Perhaps more important, this change significantly reduces the price difference between MCE and PG&E rates. c) MEA has launched an important Energy Efficiency program targeted at multi-family housing and small retailers. This is being done with EE funds the PUC switched from PG&E to us. This will be followed by more and bigger EE programs in 2013 as MEA increasingly takes over the role of the primary conduit for EE funds for all Marin ratepayers (even those who stay with PG&E.)

New Business – There was the start of a discussion about possibly drafting a new policy for how MCL evaluates proposed solar generating projects in Marin. This was triggered by the recent site visit and MCL letter regarding the proposal for just under 1 MW of solar by Green Point Nursery in Novato, which has just been submitted to the county planning staff. During the drafting of that letter, several members of this group had expressed the view that MCL's initial posture toward this project was too negative. Susan explained that MCL's policy has been that, with the abundance of rooftops, parking lots, etc. in Marin, MCL should not support installing PV solar over open land.

Several people started to lay out reasons why this policy may be too restrictive and why MCL should weigh the climate-related positives of such projects in their evaluation. This didn't get very far due to time. We agreed that as a first step, Bob Spofford will draft a discussion paper on this and circulate it to the Climate group before our meeting in November.