

**MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE**  
**Climate Action Working Group: March 20, 2015**  
**Muir Woods Conference Room, 175 N. Redwood Blvd., San Rafael**

Present: Co-chairs Pam Reaves and Doug Wilson; also, Bob Bundy, Bill Carney, Jon Elam, Tom Flynn, Rick Fraites, Heather Furmidge, Ed Mainland, Pat Nelson, Tamra Peters, Kate Powers, Roger Roberts, Susan Robinson, Bob Spofford. Judy Teichman

Doug opened the meeting at 9:07.

**Quick Intros:** Attendee introductions.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from January 9 and February 20, 2015 meetings approved.

**Approval of the Agenda:** Agenda was approved with the addition of report by Rick Fraites on Community Marin.

**Report on meeting with Logan Ferree in Jared Huffman's Washington office and subsequent meeting with Beckie Menton at MCE -- Roger Roberts**

Roger was in Washington DC in February. He met with Logan Ferree, Senior Legislative Assistant for energy matters on Jared's staff. Contact info: (202) 225-5161, Logan.Ferree@mail.house.gov. Roger spoke with Logan about possibilities for energy efficiency program support at the Federal level.

In the 1980's, Roger was a Board member of the non-profit Marin Citizens for Energy Planning that was involved in weatherization and energy efficiency for low-income housing. It was funded in part by Federal grants. Since MCE is having trouble getting enough funding from CPUC to have an effective energy efficiency program, Roger asked Logan to investigate the possibilities of Federal assistance options. Roger also met with Beckie Menton of MCE.

First, Roger suggested that MCE might be eligible for use of Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs) to fund EE in low-income housing. Beckie is also looking into this with the County. MCE is not a registered nonprofit so may not be eligible. However, Beckie told Roger MCE may work around this by developing a working relationship with a nonprofit that would receive the grants and would contract with MCE to do the work.

Second, there is a good chance that an infrastructure bill will be passed by Congress this year and it may include public buildings. GSA recently completed a study that is recommending zero energy for all Federal buildings across the country. Roger suggested to Logan that energy efficiency be included as an eligible use of infrastructure funds.

Third, Roger suggested that Logan look into guarantee programs that would authorize the US Small Business Administration to allow guarantees for renewable energy and energy efficiency investments by small businesses.

Fourth, the disincentive with Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing is that it is equal to or greater than second mortgages and that in the event of foreclosure FHA and VA would have legal concerns that their guarantee of home loans would not be senior. While CA has a backup fund of about \$10 million to back PACE, it is not nearly enough. Sonoma County has their own backup fund for PACE financing. Many counties do not have that financial ability. In order to make

it work nationally and across state lines, Roger recommended that FHA and VA have their own renewable energy guarantee programs so there would be lower cost financing. Beckie strongly supports this because it is similar to what MCE faces with financing investments in energy efficiency.

Fifth, Roger suggested Logan look into energy efficiency program support through the Department of Agriculture's Rural Electrification Agency.

Roger also spoke with Beckie about eligibility for energy efficiency programs through CPUC from cap-and-trade monies. This year there is a \$2-\$3 billion windfall that hadn't been anticipated. Programs could take the form of simple grants funneled through both investor owned utilities and CCAs, or as buy-downs on interest costs of financing investments in energy efficiency or renewable energy. Roger suggested writing a letter to State legislators and the governor supporting that.

Roger stated that it's important for MCL to stay in touch with Jared Huffman's office and if there is movement on legislation on any of these possible federal assistance options, supporting letters should go out. Roger will stay in touch with Logan. Also important is to stay in touch with MCE on direct and indirect support of their EE programs.

**Action:** Roger will be point person on this.

**Other reports:**

Rick Fraites reported on Community Marin. Marge Macris has effectively taken on the role as unpaid advisor to MCCMC's committee on Climate Action. Community Marin recently met with Supervisors Kinsey and Sears and County Planner Jack Liebster. They will meet with Supervisor Connolly next.

Tamra Peters reported that Resilient Neighborhoods has revamped their handbook. It has over 100 actions households can take under six headings. It ties in with all the different agencies and jurisdictions in the County working on climate change and the newest information. New groups are forming. Resilient Neighborhoods has a contract with the County on studying how effective the program has been. 450 people in Marin County have reduced 2.365 million pounds of carbon emissions to date.

Ed Mainland reported that the CA Supreme Court recently upheld the Sierra Club's lawsuit against the City of San Diego for having an inadequate Climate Action Plan except for one element, which it will take under review. This is an important decision for Climate Action Plans and whether they implement State Executive Order S-3-05 climate goals.

Ed reported SB286, an introduced bill by Hertzberg, opens direct access for electricity providers. It effectively opens the door for large energy providers to cherry pick big customers and supply them with dirty power that is cheaper. It may make it hard for MCE and all CCAs throughout CA to compete. This bill would split the tenuous alliance between CCA's and direct access proponents. MCE will oppose the bill. Roger said it's important to keep track of where the bill stands and testify

at the appropriate time, like members of MCL did with AB2145. Bill status and language, as it moves through committees, can be obtained from State Senate website.

**Action:** Ed will circulate two emails with background material to help members of CAWG form an MCL position.

**Discussion:**

**What should our next steps be in helping Marin prepare for sea level rise and other climate change issues?**

Doug led discussion on strategy for CAWG moving forward. He said City and County officials have best view of what's going on. CAWG needs to stay well informed.

Bill reminded group that characterization should be climate change impacts as a whole. Sea level rise is just one of the issues and that it is all interconnected and we want to look at whole framework. Doug said CAWG has focused on energy efficiency issues as mitigation and sea level rise at the County as adaptation, but there are many issues and our focus will change as other issues come to the fore.

Roger suggested CAWG choose one of the larger jurisdictions like the County, San Rafael or Novato and help them move forward like Berkeley did with their energy ordinance. That would have a demonstration effect that other cities could follow and is similar to the way the BERST model green building ordinance began. The downfall of BERST was that it was promoted at the same time that State mandates were passed and cities decided to follow those mandates even though they didn't go as far as BERST. Marin Climate Energy Partnership is now in place but wasn't then.

Novato is working on its General Plan currently and has Bob Brown, author of BERST, as Community Development Director. Brown is working to get a Climate Action Plan insinuated into Novato's General Plan.

**Action:** Rick will report back on Novato General Plan and its white papers.

The County is also ripe for support because it's working on its Climate Action Plan. The benefit of working with the County is that it's all encompassing and can be unifying.

Bill said if State moves toward Zero Net Energy Building code, that working on State level is a better way to get things done. County is talking about moving towards State goals in their Climate Action plans. Roger pointed out that the problem with State's mandates is they run the risk of getting watered down and that if we can do something more meaningful locally we should do that. Ed added that State goals passed years ago are inadequate in facing the magnitude of the problem before us according to the current thinking of the scientific community. The other problem is that State goals often don't get implemented. MCL could have role in helping get goals implemented locally. Bill said that is all the more reason to also work at the State level to get it right because State building code has advanced and does have impact.

Ed said Energy Efficiency CAWG subgroup has worked to put together a list of ten actionable items. CAWG can look at list and identify top two or three that it would like to get behind and

push. Bill said he would like subgroup to bring prioritized actionable items to CAWG so we can get working on them.

Tom said one of the actionable items on the list is to develop a real world example by organizing a sector with similar energy saving opportunities to move forward with energy efficiency and renewable energy. He is having success with organizing dairies such as Clover Stornetta, Straus, and Organic Valley. Dairies are stretched because of the drought. Helping dairies with energy efficiency and water efficiency helps lower their operating costs, helps make them economically viable, and helps reduce carbon impact. Albert Straus has offered to do a model transformation demonstration project using one of their least efficient dairies. Clover is equally committed with their own dairies and in reaching out to other players in Marin and Sonoma counties. There is potential in aggregating dairies to provide technical assistance and group purchase for economies of scale. There are other sectors that can be organized for economies of scales.

Bob said central truth about many energy efficiency programs is that when implementing them they become customized projects that require an enormous amount of manpower in relation to the results. Also, there are many different programs and that adds to the chaos. The advantage of working with a sector like the dairies is that they come up with something that could be replicated cookie cutter style. Residential sector is different.

Roger asked Tom whether heating units could be created as a cookie cutter program. Tom has been talking with Jean Berensmeier and Marin Community Foundation about organizing a group conversion in San Geronimo Valley from wood burning stoves with a group purchase of heat pumps that can be used with renewable energy. They can also apply to multifamily splits. San Geronimo Valley has some of the worst air quality in the Bay area and is a priority for the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

Also solar hot water systems for apartment buildings that have common hot water have good tax incentives right now. SolEd is organizing government sector to do group purchase. Lighting conversion could be done in many kinds of buildings. Amory Lovins says that key things are standardizing solutions as much as you can, having them apply to as many customers as possible, having the financing as standard as possible, and organizing group purchasing. Roger said why not push that with MCE.

**What should our next steps be to help Marin and MCE implement energy efficiency measures?**

Ed said we should hold MCE to their own language and their 2013 – 2014 plans.

Tom said he actually started exploring dairies with MCE. Beckie looked at agriculture accounts. Per account, they have some of the heaviest energy use in the County because of refrigeration, milking machines, etc.

Now, MCE is moving into Napa unincorporated area. According to Tom, MCE can either commit to long term contracts to meet the energy demand of the wineries there, or they can take advantage of a lot of energy saving opportunities to reduce the demand so MCE doesn't have to commit to having to sell all the energy they have contracted for. MCE can either be in a long term game where it's all about competing for price or they can be in a game where it's about serving their

customers where they lower the demand of their customers to the point where even if the price goes up, the customer's overall bill is less. MCE is a public entity. Charles McGlashan said if we do such a good job at saving our customer's energy that they don't have any more energy use and we don't need MCE then we've done our job.

How do we help MCE gear up to grow an effective program? Maybe the best place starts with working the Board. Tom received a positive response from Kate Sears. MCE's Board meets first Thursdays of every month.

Katie Rice is new representative to regional Air Quality District. 350.org has been very active in working with the Air Quality District. Also, Katie Rice tried to get a consensus on a solar ordinance.

Damon Connolly made a pitch for energy efficiency at MCE's retreat last Fall.

Rafael Silberblatt of MCE currently works on special projects. In addition to Beckie, there are two others working on energy efficiency. MCE had \$4 million budget for energy efficiency for 2012 – 2013 and it was extended into 2014. MCE can distinguish itself by intelligent coordination of various resources. MCE doesn't have to hire, but can contract, talent to deploy in project areas.

**Proposed for next month's meeting:** Conversation between Dana Armanino of Marin County and Jane Elias of Sonoma County's Energy Independence Program. Bill recommended that the Energy Efficiency subgroup's ten recommendations be the basis for discussion by the guests. Susan asked what our guests expect from our gathering of information and ideas that is going to be input to *them*. Doug said part of what is gained is the opportunity for sharing of ideas with others guests and with the group. This is an opportunity for them to do outreach and possibly receive support. Ed suggested that Leslie Alden be invited to next month's meeting. Leslie follows MCE and has a lot of ideas and information.

Rick said it's also a good idea to meet with elected officials and we should come up with strategies and plans to help them. City Council members are part time and they need help because they don't have time to avail themselves of all the information. Tamra suggested that CAWG can offer the expertise to condense that information and give support to implement it. Elected officials also sit on Boards like MCE's. MCCMC meetings are a good place to meet with and lobby electeds. MCCMC meets the fourth Wednesday of each month.

Tom would like to hear next meeting's guests discuss how do we start to coordinate energy efficiency territories for the customer. Marin Energy Watch has some energy efficiency territory, PG&E has most, MCE has about 1/7 of the pie in the County. Doug said it would be good to understand how they decide who does what and how they work together and how we can improve that. Roger would like it not to turn into a list of problems of why they can't do anything. He would like to see next meeting called a "Working Session to Improve the Delivery of Energy Efficiency Programs".

Future meetings: Bill would like to see the gas tax and infrastructure be on a future meeting's agenda. Roger said Federal government will be dealing with that this Fall because the Highway Trust Fund is running out of money. Ed said CA State Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins is on top to the issue. He said there is a lot of political action around that at the State level.

**Announcements:**

Marin County's Sea Level Rise Planner

[http://www.marincounty.org/~media/files/departments/cd/planning/slr/130310\\_ongoing-marin-related--adaptation-studies\\_2015.pdf](http://www.marincounty.org/~media/files/departments/cd/planning/slr/130310_ongoing-marin-related--adaptation-studies_2015.pdf) (copy url and paste)

MCL Water and Watersheds meeting, Armando Quintaro speaker, Thursday, March 26 @ 4:00, 750 Lindero St., San Rafael

Environmental Forum of Marin's Lecture on climate disruption and renewable energy on Saturday, March 28, 9:00 – noon, at Bay Model. Dawn Weisz will be a speaker.

MCL Business Breakfast with Mike McGuire, Friday, May 15, 7:30 a.m. @ McInnis in San Rafael

C-SMART meetings on Sea Level Rise in West Marin are coming in May and June at Dance Palace and in Stinson Beach. Look for that info.

350.org movie "The Future of Energy", Tuesday, March 24 at 7 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church in San Rafael. It has a clip of Woody Hastings, a Sonoma Clean Power advocate

MALT, "Carbon Farming 101" at Nicasio Native Grass Ranch, Saturday, May 30, 10 am – noon, \$15 members, \$20 non-members (415) 663-1158

Energy Efficiency subcommittee meeting Monday, March 23.

**Next Meeting:** April 17, 9:00–11:00 a.m.

Meeting adjourned 11:04 a.m.

Notes: KP