



Mike Pettit
Assistant County Executive Officer

March 18, 2025

Scott Powers
County Chief Financial Officer

County of Ventura Board of Supervisors

Danielle Keys
County Human Resources Director
Labor Relations

SUBJECT: Receive and File a Report Back Regarding General Plan Program COS-LL: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Policy Enhancement Program; and Adoption of a Resolution Dissolving the Ventura County Climate Emergency Council

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Receive and file a report back regarding General Plan Program COS-LL: Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Policy Enhancement Program as directed by your Board on December 17, 2024.
2. Adopt the attached resolution (Exhibit 1) dissolving the Ventura County Climate Emergency Council.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

DISCUSSION:

Background

On September 15, 2020, the Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted the Ventura County 2040 General Plan (General Plan), which uses an integrated approach to address climate change by incorporating related goals, policies, and programs throughout the General Plan elements, such that the General Plan serves as the County's Climate Action Plan (CAP). As part of the adoption of the 2040 General Plan, Program COS-CC: Climate Emergency Council (CEC) was included as a mitigation measure in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the 2040 General Plan in recognition that further steps must be taken beyond the measures identified in the General Plan to meet state and County GHG reduction goals. On October 20, 2020, the Board adopted Resolution No. 20-124 (Exhibit 2) establishing the CEC, as required by Program COS-CC.

Resolution No. 20-124 outlines the CEC's purpose, which is to research, develop, and advise your Board regarding potential programs and policies to implement the County's CAP and the General Plan's GHG Reduction Strategy for unincorporated areas of Ventura County that would result in quantifiable GHG reductions that further progress

toward achieving the 2030, 2040, and 2050 GHG reduction targets and goals established in the General Plan. In addition to Program COS-CC, the proposals and activities of the CEC have a relationship to General Plan Program COS-LL: GHG Reduction Policy Enhancement Program, which outlines the CEC's scope of work. The full text of both General Plan Programs is provided in Exhibit 3.

Since its initial meeting on March 30, 2021, the CEC has met 31 times with the last meeting occurring on September 17, 2024. To date, the CEC has formed four temporary advisory committees to develop proposal evaluation criteria and CEC proposals. The temporary advisory committees presented five proposals that were approved by the CEC, with the last CEC proposal discussion during their October 25, 2022, meeting. Since then, no new proposals have been presented by the CEC.

CEC proposals were presented to your Board twice; two proposals were discussed during the September 20, 2022, Board meeting, and two proposals were discussed during the September 12, 2023, Board meeting. A fifth proposal was not presented to the Board as its purposes were achieved by the passage of Assembly Bill 1346, which was enacted in 2021 to address air pollution from small offroad engines. (Health & Safety Code, § 43018.11.) Of the four proposals presented to the Board, three supported work that was already being completed by County staff to address climate change and adaptation; and one proposal involves a proposed update to the County of Ventura Administrative Policy Manual to add language to reduce GHG emissions from new and existing county-owned facilities for which staff will be returning to your Board in 2025. Full details of the proposals are provided in Exhibit 4.

On December 17, 2024, Resource Management Agency staff presented County-initiated amendments to the Ventura County General Plan, including language amending Program COS-LL. The proposed amendment to COS-LL requested that in addition to developing and recommending new programs to reduce quantifiable GHG emissions, the CEC also advise on CAP programs that County staff has created or are in the process of developing. Your Board approved the amendments to the General Plan, except for the proposed amendments to Program COS-LL. Your Board directed staff to assess Program COS-LL regarding the continued need for and role of the CEC and to return to the Board with a proposal regarding that matter.

Completion of Program COS-LL and Proposed Dissolution of the CEC

Program COS-LL states that the CEC's recommended GHG reduction subprograms and policies shall be presented to the Planning Commission for review and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors, and then to the Board of Supervisors for consideration and approval, no later than 2025. Therefore, the CEC has met its scope of work laid out in COS-LL by presenting four proposals to your Board prior to 2025; there has not been a new CEC proposal since October 2022.

In January, the County Executive Office's (CEO) Sustainability Division provided an update to the CEC members about the December 17th Board meeting. Included in the

update was a request for feedback on the need for continued engagement with the CEC and ideas on future community engagement best practices and opportunities. The CEO Sustainability Division received responses from three CEC members, all three CEC members noted support for the CEO Sustainability Division to host annual workshops. General feedback from two CEC members was for continued CEC engagement; however, there was concern expressed about the ability of CEC members to attend in-person meetings during the workday as this has resulted in a lack of quorum and the cancellation of several CEC meetings. In addition, the respondents acknowledged that CEC members currently do not have the technical expertise to develop any additional recommended subprograms under Program COS-LL and that technical staff, or a consultant, would be better suited to propose programs and policies with quantifiable GHG reductions. One CEC member voiced support for continued monthly CEC meetings and noted that once the GHG inventory for the unincorporated areas is updated, the CEC will be able to make additional recommendations for climate actions needed to achieve the GHG emission reduction targets and goals established in the General Plan.

The CEO Sustainability Division appreciates the CEC's proposals and ideas for new opportunities to reduce GHG emissions as well as their feedback on CAP implementation, and desires to allow for broader community engagement in shaping Ventura County's climate action efforts. Accordingly, the CEO Sustainability Division proposes to utilize several approaches for CAP-related community engagement. One approach includes hosting annual workshops focused on overall CAP implementation, with presentations on existing and proposed CAP-related programs, GHG emission reduction efforts, and awarded CAP-related grants. The workshops will include different options for feedback on CAP implementation allowing for broader community participation, while not being subject to the limitations of the Brown Act that governs formal meetings. Another approach is to host working groups, as appropriate, involving more detailed discussions specific to CAP Programs and CAP-related grant funding. Lastly, CEO Sustainability Division will utilize additional opportunities for community engagement throughout the year, including but not limited to tabling at events like Earth Day, in-person and online CAP surveys, and presentations at meetings or workshops hosted by stakeholder groups.

The CEO Sustainability Division feels that this substitute approach to community engagement is a better use of staff resources and will result in more comprehensive community participation regarding CAP implementation. Therefore, a proposed Resolution dissolving the CEC is included in Exhibit 1. COS-LL will not require an amendment to the General Plan since the tasks included in the Program were completed prior to 2025.

CEO Sustainability Division staff also reached out to several CAP stakeholder groups to receive feedback on the proposal for annual workshops and the proposal was well received.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

The CEO Sustainability Division's efforts, informed by community input, to reduce GHG emissions and implement CAP programs supports the County of Ventura Strategic Plan Priority 3: Reliable Infrastructure and Sustainability. Specifically, through reducing GHG emissions and implementing CAP programs, the County is meeting Goal 3 by investing in sustainable infrastructure, renewable energy, and preserving our natural resources.

This Board item was reviewed by the County Executive Office, the Auditor-Controller's Office, County Counsel, and Resource Management Agency. If you have any questions regarding this item, please contact Heather Allen, Program Administrator in the County Executive Office's Sustainability Division, at heather.allen@ventura.org.

Sincerely,



Alejandra Téllez
Sustainability Officer



Sevet Johnson, PsyD
County Executive Officer

- Exhibit 1 - Resolution Dissolving the VCCEC
- Exhibit 2 - Resolution No. 20-124
- Exhibit 3 - General Plan Programs COS-CC and COS-LL
- Exhibit 4 - CEC Proposals