

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE  
**Climate Action Working Group: July 15, 2016**  
Tamalpais Conference Room, 175 N. Redwood Blvd., San Rafael  
Minutes

Present: Doug Wilson, Pam Reaves, Tamra Peters, Nona Dennis, Roger Roberts, Ed Mainland, Pat Nelson, Judy Teichman, Damon Connolly, Kate Powers, Bill Carney. Guest speakers: Rebecca Boyles and Jamie Tuche, from MCE Public Affairs.

Doug called the meeting to order at 9:03.

**Brief Introductions**

**Adoption of the Agenda by consensus.**

**June minutes: Brief discussion of the meaning of “additionality” as a term of art.**

**Discussion: Questions re MCE “Deep Green”**

Doug introduced our guest speakers, who noted that they had taken a stab at answering a list of questions about Deep Green and passed out the Q&A to the group. [Q&A attached].

Doug commented to the speakers that the Climate Action Working Group has been talking about Deep Green for the last couple of months. Every time that we talk about the best things that we can do to combat climate change, a shift to 100% renewables by signing up for MCE’s Deep Green is near the top of the list. However, most Marin residents have no idea what “Deep Green” means. There has been a recent plateau in growth of Deep Green enrollments, and we would like to know what MCE is doing to push Deep Green.

Main Street Moms had the idea of taking the idea of switching to Deep Green around to citizens groups and encountered many questions. They found that they needed to be able to explain why Deep Green is better. We need this information to counter misinformation and to deal with the headwinds against CCAs at the utilities and the PUC.

Comment, Ed: Local solar comes directly from the Novato Quarry Solar Array. This sets aside arguments re RECs. This is a ripe area for MCE to push. Also, a portion of revenues from Deep Green goes to the development of local projects. Ed asked Josh Fryday, member of the Novato City Council and Vice President of Public Affairs at NextGen Climate, to a group he is assembling to push for sustainability in Novato.

Comment, Tamra: Resilient Neighborhoods has educated and inspired 75 people to switch to Deep Green over the years. Resilient Neighborhoods converts KWH to pounds of carbon. Members get immediate reductions in carbon emissions to go Deep Green. Deep Green is on

the top of Resilient Neighborhoods' list of things to do. PG&E solar shares can also be part of an action plan.

Question, Doug: What is MCE doing to push Local Sol? Answer, Jamie: There are 100 people on a waiting list for Local Sol as a result of MCE's e-newsletter and online marketing. There is no active marketing for Local Sol because the completion date has not been finalized.

Comment, Roger: A recent notice that MCE sent out re a price of 16 cents/KWH v. 9 cents/KWH for current retail is wrong. It's actually 14.2 cent/ KWH.

Jamie: It's more expensive: MCE's cost plus 4 cents for administration. The advantage is that the rate is set for 20 years.

Roger: MCE should do a better job of explaining the inflation argument. The price will look better in 10 years.

Jamie: MCE has tested different messages to determine which was most successful.

There are local campaigns. For example, Fairfax got a grant to offset the cost of switching to Deep Green for the first 100 people who sign up. This is a \$5 credit for the first 12 months. This offer is approximately halfway subscribed. The Main Street Moms campaign was successful.

MCE has addressed a barrier to online signups. They no longer require the customer to provide their account number as a prerequisite to signing up for Deep Green.

There is MCE outreach to San Rafael and other municipalities. MCE plans to help calculate the effect on climate action plans. There are seven new communities joining in September: American Canyon, Calistoga, Napa, St. Helena, Yountville, Lafayette and Walnut Creek.

Pam: What is the cost for San Rafael to go Deep Green?

Bill C.: San Rafael says it will do it incrementally with savings garnered from a rooftop solar campaign. This is fiscally responsible and appealing.

Damon: This is in the Climate Action Plan, under "goals and objectives."

Doug: In Mill Valley, it would cost more than \$100,000.

Jamie: The cities can be earning money. MCE pays a premium for rooftop solar.

Customers are automatically signed up for Light Green. They can switch to Deep Green. MCE staff is happy to partner with MCL.

Bill: An argument re bundled programs is appealing.

Nona: MCE should make it easy to overcome the individual's inertia.

Bill: MCE has good PR capacity. It should get its progress with the cities in the press. Fairfax, San Anselmo, Belvedere are Deep Green.

Roger: Does the County have a plan for Deep Green? (Damon will find out.)

Roger: Cities can be leaders.

Jamie: Marin Fairgrounds went Deep Green.

Pam (to Damon): Has funding been approved for a new position? Answer: Yes, a combination of Omar's position and a full-time, fixed term position probably dealing mostly with sustainability.

Jamie: Green business certification addresses both Light Green and Deep Green. They get additional points for Deep Green, plus free local advertising. MCE can create special marketing materials.

Doug: On page 3 of the handout, there is a bar graph depicting what it costs.

Pam: Mary [Morgan] talks about the message: the right thing to do and the easiest way to do it.

Jamie: MCE tested three messages, pairing the message about climate/environment and low cost. New customers get a welcome packet, stickers and information. Tamra: Resilient Neighborhoods can give stickers out at graduation.

Pam: What about RECs?

Jamie: MCE is moving away from RECs. Currently, RECs are limited to 3% of power. Last year, it was 15%. The year before, it was 30%. MCE is switching to new renewables, built for MCE customers.

Pam: Where will the 3% come from? Answer: Usually out of state (Oregon, Washington) but this changes every year.

Ed: How does MCE compare with Sonoma Clean Power?

Doug: This issue is used politically to slow down acceptance of clean power. The larger amount of local energy projects and elimination of RECs come at a good time.

Pam: What are the facilities—cost of building, distribution, and covering land, compared with rooftop solar? Answer: There are facilities in Central California, Kern and King County. These are large, ground-mounted facilities. Pam: Do the calculations. If everyone did rooftop solar,

this affects MCE's bottom line. What is MCE's incentive to encourage rooftop solar? Answer (quoting Charles McGlashan): Closing our doors would be the ultimate success.

Judy: MCE is a public agency, not a private company with a profit motive. They have fixed costs and may need to charge more when use declines.

Rebecca: Sonoma Clean Power has 3% unbundled RECs.

Bill: How will MCE merge Light Green and Deep Green, and when? Answer: There is a 2025 goal, which helps to balance carbon free and cost of service.

Roger: While reliant on the grid, there is a transition cost in moving off grid. Does MCE have a long-term strategy to create its own grid? Answer: No. MCE is looking at micro grids and battery storage.

Tamra: What about the Power Wall? Answer: MCE is working with Tesla re delays.

Pam: What about demand response and storage? Answer: MCE is working with customer teams, grants, partners. The ways to reduce usage during peak demand periods is to charge higher rates during those periods or to install a device to turn the power down on those days.

Pam: That is similar to what Green Mountain does: shut down power for very brief periods. The customer does not even notice.

Judy: There is a lower rate for recharging vehicles at night.

Jamie: MCE has had success with its multi-family and small business campaign, which entails audits, rebates and direct energy-efficiency installs. Gov. Brown has a policy to promote such campaigns.

Doug: What are the best ways to change behavior? Make it easy and prioritize.

Ed: What percentage of the total procurement budget is energy efficiency? It should be larger. Requiring less energy to procure is a benefit to ratepayers. There is a dilemma. MCE needs to cover fixed charges, which may cause it to come more to resemble a traditional utility. Answer: MCE has not experienced this problem. Its staffing is lean (now 35) and it allocates money to rebates to keep rates low. Energy efficiency cost is not an issue in the near future. The energy efficiency program is funded by the CPUC.

Roger: There is a cost in moving from a centralized to a distributed system. Big utilities have embedded costs they need to transition to a new system. They need to change the way they operate, or they will disappear.

Ed/Nona: The grid is not going away. It is a mechanism for storage and reliability. It has costs and benefits.

Roger: MCE needs a critical mass to do better than PG&E, but then they become more like PG&E.

Jamie: MCE is reducing costs because seven new communities are coming on board, but MCE cost is not always lower than PG&E.

Doug: How does MCE co-exist with the utilities rate structure and CPUC management?

Jamie: MCE is not a stand-alone organization, but is self-sufficient in choosing sources of power. It relies on PG&E for delivery, etc.

Roger: Who covers transition costs?

Jamie: There are no transition costs for MCE right now.

Pam: Re demand response, does MCE have the physical capacity to tweak? Answer: MCE could partner, or PG&E could do it. You need a smart meter. There is a 9% decrease for Light Green. Deep Green is an additional 1 cent/KWH.

Comment: PG&E made a blunder with smart meters. They were obsolete even as they were installed. This is better done with IT, via wireless.

Doug: Re costs, there is a struggle at the CPUC, for example the PCIA.

Damon: The PCIA addresses the transition of sources of power supply and the recovery of stranded costs for energy already procured.

Nona: Re the Diablo Canyon closure, the utilities want to spread the cost via the cost allocation mechanism (CAM). CCAs struggle to adjust the cost allocation structure at the CPUC.

Tamra: What is the future? The ISO controls the grid. Is there a need for distributed ISO's to obtain energy close to where it is needed? Answer: No.

Ed: CAISO reported that local power is a great benefit to CAISO.

Kate: Is there a sunset to the PCIA?

Doug: No, they're rolling it over. We need transparency. If we allow the utilities to determine, the outcome will not be good for us.

Ed: The utilities' frontal attacks failed. Now they are trying to bleed CCAs to death. We need citizen involvement as well as a legal team. There is a SDGE scheme to market against

community choice. SB 790 imposed a code of conduct enjoining direct marketing. They are trying to weasel around it.

Pam: Present to the MCL board. MCE is here to help answer board questions preparatory to having a link on the MCL website to sign up for Deep Green and information in our newsletter.

Kate: It would be good to have someone there at the meeting to answer questions. Answer: MCE can send someone.

Moved and accepted by consensus: Present to the MCL board a request to have a link on the MCL website to sign up for Deep Green and provide information in our newsletter.

Comment, Ed: There is a Silicon Valley CCA and a Los Angeles CCA. This is a big development in the surrounding universe of CCA success.

Doug: There are regulatory roadblocks. The CPUC is a battleground. Yesterday at a hearing, three of five judges noted a willingness to consider because of citizen involvement.

Roger: RE reform of the CPUC, MCL should take a position.

Bill noted the importance of the CPUC and asked if they provided needed information re the PCIA. Doug indicated no, they won't reveal it. Bill: Why not?

## **Reports and Announcements**

**Lead on Climate:** On September 19, there will be an event on the Urgent Politics of Climate Change. The purpose is to encourage people to make climate a top-tier issue. Speakers will include Jared Huffman and Michael Wara of Stanford. There is a pending ask to Vien Truong of Green for All. Josh Fryday will moderate.

**Resilient Neighborhoods:** Resilient Neighborhoods received another grant of \$50,000 for an outreach associate position. The associate will be former volunteer Marilyn Price. Teams completed: the Community Carbon Cutters from the San Rafael Community Center. This team achieved a 24% carbon pounds reduction, 32,083 pounds reduced. Two more teams are finishing in the next week and a half. Sashi McEntee of the Mill Valley Council is organizing a team. RN will be working with the Environmental Forum of Marin re possible carbon-footprint reduction class projects. Resilient Neighborhoods achieved a total carbon reduction of 1247 metric tons.

**North Bay Watershed:** Pam and Doug attended a technical meeting. This organization stands out for working together regionally. They try to get everyone on the same page and have an active outreach program. Their research is online. They need decision makers at the table. Participants gave names of interested people. Chris Chu was there, as was a water district

representative. Climate Ready North Bay has an adaptation knowledge base addressing vegetation and soil. They have various scenarios on a user-friendly website.

**Community Marin** (Nona): Nona noted that the group's focus is on sea level rise, rather than GHG emissions. They are waiting for the next step from the County. There is a Bay Wave report. Pam: Are the different groups working better together? Nona: Yes, this is evolving. It engages everyone on the Bay side.

**Carbon Sequestration** (Judy): There was a discussion with the Carbon Cycle Institute. There is not enough experience to generate data for analysis. They are working on a Scope of Work, giving an idea of the data needed. There is a possibility of working with the County. Doug: John Wick might have the data needed. Judy: They are focusing on the economics of carbon farming. There is no viable alternative to carbon sequestration. One motivation for farmers is increased forage. Farmers also respond to sources of funding. Roger: There is a 5-year payback. Kate: Chris Jones emphasized that we should invest in the approach that has the highest return. Pam: The zero emissions approach leaves out sequestration. Put together mitigation and sequestration. The economics of what we invest includes return on investment and prioritization. Bill: There is a long tradition of business as usual with crisis geo-engineering. Kate: Resilient Neighborhoods has a non-cost approach. Doug: Discussion is needed. The missing part of the picture is finances.

**Legislative Report:** Ed noted that the legislature passed 6 bills, a CPUC reform package. This omits key elements in last year's package. It is crucial the CPUC decisions be legally reviewable. Other measures are moot without this. Roger: Is there a revolving door provision? Bill: The story in the written CAWG report about AB 32 and the Air Resources Board presents an opportunity for MCL comment.

Meeting adjourned 11:12.

Minutes: PN.