

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

Climate Action Working Group: December 15, 2017

Muir Woods Conference Room, 175 N. Redwood Blvd., San Rafael

Present: Co-Chairs Doug Wilson and Pam Reaves, Ed Mainland, Pat Nelson, Helene Marsh, Norma Fragoso, Nancy Bell, David Kunhardt, Kate Powers, Doug Cooper, Dale Miller, Susan Stompe, Don Herzog, Cheryl Longinotti, Sarah Loughran, Belle Cole, Judy Teichman, Ken Jones, Judy Ford, Kiki La Porta, Bob Miller.

Co-Chair Doug Wilson called the meeting to order at 9:03, noting that Mary Sackett would not be available to speak on MCAN, the Marin County Drawdown and the County budget. He noted that in this meeting, the committee will take stock of multiple new developments and current and future actions of the Climate Action Working Group.

Brief Introductions

Agenda and Minutes

The agenda was adopted by consensus with amendments.

The November minutes were approved by consensus.

9:10 Discussion 1: CPUC Resolution E-4907

Referring CAWG members to a copy of CPUC Resolution E-4907, Doug noted that under the resolution the CPUC would assume the role of being able to allow, disallow, or delay the formation of new CCAs. The resolution is also questionable because it was released during a holiday vacation period and formulated outside of normal CPUC procedures. The CPUC has been criticized on the ground that it is furthering its own interest via the resolution and, further, that the governor has populated the CPUC with commissioners appointed from his own senior staff and/or with ties to PG&E.

The resolution poses a danger to new and expanding CCAs. It would be helpful for members to write letters to the CPUC and to attend the CPUC meeting scheduled for January 11, 9:30 – 5:00 in San Francisco. Doug W. will provide a link to sample letters, from Ed Mainland and MCE. At issue is whether the CPUC initiative is legal.

Comments and Questions

Ed: This is an existential fight. The CPUC initiative would freeze the formation of new CCAs for two years. This is contrary to the intent of AB 117, passed in 2002 and authorizing the formation of CCAs. The initiative is prompted by the fact that 60 – 80% of Investor-Owned Utility (IOU) customers are projected to switch to CCAs within the next five years. The utilities are striking back via the CPUC. This is possible because under the Brown administration, CPUC

membership has been tailored to anti-CCA forces. CPUC bias is evident in commissioner comments—for example, ex-President Michael Picker’s characterization of CCAs as “forced collectivization.” There are tools and a sample letter available from the Climate Protection Center, as well as talking points for the January 11th meeting at CPUC headquarters. Ed also suggested that CAWG approach Sup. Damon Connolly and other supervisors, asking that they show up at the meeting or send a letter.

Kate: Should we approach Sup. Kate Sears, who is co-chair with Sup. Connolly on the committee addressing climate change mitigation and sea level rise adaptation?

Ed: There are two potential tactics: 1) “get into the weeds” and agitate for a proceeding on technical grounds, or 2) mount a direct attack on the legality of the resolution.

Belle: What is the CPUC argument? A. (Doug W. and Ed): There is a quibble about the speed of CCAs establishing themselves. They are taking utility customers, allegedly creating a concern about grid reliability. In workshops, the CPUC has brought forth TURN and other organizations to raise doubt about reliability and the long-term viability of CCAs.

Pam: This resolution is just as critical as other attacks on CCAs. Is it easier to stop? It came out of nowhere. There is no need to rush.

Ed: As a footnote, it did come out of the blue. There was no public input or factual record. It’s a power grab.

Kiki: A couple of questions: 1) Is there value in individual adaptations of the letter? A. Yes. 2) Should we seek involvement of other legislators? A. Yes. Redundancy is useful. The necessary information should be forwarded to the CAWG list along with the appropriate email.

Don: They claim to be seeking public comment, but you have to send to the service list for all parties involved in the rulemaking. They state that they will ignore protest and re-argument. Are there alternatives? Send to the personal email addresses of all commissioners. Woody Hastings of the CPC stated that they are making it difficult to comment.

Ed: That’s correct, but the past example we should follow is the fight over net metering, in which 50,000 emails were sent to the CPUC Public Advisor’s office. Deluge the Public Advisor and each commissioner.

Doug W.: The Clean Power Exchange action alert provides resources. Pam will forward it.

Kiki: Add Ed’s comment about the Public Advisor’s office.

Don: 350.org met with former CPUC president Loretta Lynch. She does not have a positive viewpoint; the issue is wired. The only chance is to extend the time leading up to the vote.

Doug W.: Make a media splash on the steps of the CPUC building. Make it hard for the governor to provide cover.

Ed: Loretta Lynch says that the CPUC ignores emails but listens to powerful legislators. Q. Who to contact? A. All. Mike McGuire, Kevin de Leon, Marc Levine, Nancy Skinner, Jerry Hill, Toni Atkins: the Democratic Party establishment.

Belle: Anybody out of Washington? A. No dollars spent by IOUs.

David: The cause of the resolution is the tide of success of CCAs. It is reaching into “red” parts of the state. The opt-in v. opt-out process is the nub of that success.

Kiki: That comes from AB 117. Let them try to attack that.

Doug W.: The projected 60-80% coverage of CCAs represents a big hit to the IOUs. There is a difference in ownership. The CCAs belong to the public, not investors. That makes it more difficult to fight in the political arena, given the big budgets of the IOUs.

Bob: The California CCA trade organization will be all over this. To what extent is it possible to connect with them? What do they think will be most effective?

Doug W.: We’re in touch with the MCE point person for Cal CCA. There is one coordinated campaign.

Pam: Whatever we do is helpful. What is the course of action as a committee?

Sarah: Some of the CCA impetus in Contra Costa County was based on local control, not environmental concerns.

David: There is an alliance.

Doug W.: Write a letter in line with MCL policy.

Kate: Yes.

Doug W.: Politics is about numbers.

Kate: MCL will think about how to make this possible and will address it via Facebook and email. Comments must be received by December 29.

Kate and Don: Be there for the photo op. Be there for the public comment.

Kiki: What is the difference between the December 29 and January 11 deadlines?

Don: Input received before December 29 will influence the decision. And it creates a paper trail.

Doug W.: A flash mob also impresses.

Pam: Faxes draw attention, according to the CPC. [Pam asked for volunteers to work on a letter and to contact Mike McGuire. Ed and Pat volunteered to work on a letter.]

Sarah: Send a letter to the organization's membership. A. Information and links will be sent to committee meeting attendees.

Pam (cont.): There should be a separate contact with Kevin de Leon. [Don and David volunteered.]

Kate: This will go before the board. Send emails to the board if they seek to represent MCL.

Pam: MCL should contact de Leon.

9:50 Discussion 2: Support for MCE

There is another missive pending, draft letter by Sarah and Helene. Doug W. stated that the CAWG is looking for further ways to reduce GHG emissions at the local level. MCE has been open and responsive to concerns, but the committee is looking for ways to maximize MCE's creativity and to promote their looking at all of the options. This objective is addressed in the draft letter by Sarah and Helene.

Helene: The letter addresses the fact that individuals repeatedly go to MCE with the same questions and input. It's most effective to speak in a collective voice. We considered the MCE mission and the rules regarding what they can do. The letter's position is intended to reflect the position of the environmental community.

Sarah: We spoke with Bob. J.R. Killigrew's presentation at the November CAWG meeting led to an effort to communicate these positions re GHG reduction, to draft a letter that all organizations are willing to sign. Collective action is more powerful in the legal framework of MCE.

Pam: On the MCE website, it's difficult to find the MCE mission statement.

Kiki: First reaction: "Right on." Some historical context: During the formation of MCE, the emphasis was on buying more electricity rather than reducing consumption.

Dale: Taking an opposition approach, we need to electrify everything. New electricity does not hurt the environment if we buy renewable energy. This confuses the message. Waste is an individual problem. If you're not using fossil fuel, waste doesn't hurt others.

Kiki: We should have language to support electrification and efficient use.

Doug W.: There is a convergence of the movements to electrify and to create more energy-efficient buildings. It is most important to get rid of fossil fuels. There is still a premium involved in heating a house with electricity.

Ed: With increased use of EVs increasing the demand for energy, energy efficiency is necessary to avoid swamping the system.

Judy F.: It's a matter of semantics. It is not MCE's mission to be a leader in energy efficiency. I like the letter.

Bob: I like the letter. There is a concern re asking MCE to do something. Ask instead why they are NOT doing something. There are competing objectives, each with a cost attached. If you do more to further one objective, you must do less to further another. Ask why they are choosing priorities and what the tradeoffs are among the objectives of increasing GHG-free energy, creating EV infrastructure, and EV support. MCE has \$50 million in reserves. This is needed for contracting purposes and to establish credit. Do the discovery first, then state our preferences. We are interviewing folks at MCE, asking what their constraints are.

David: There is nothing wrong with saying what we want, and "if not, why not?" Keep it clear. Is there a conflict between the first and second recommendations? A. There is a difference between carbon-free and renewable. We want more emphasis on carbon-free.

David: MCE decided not to provide EV subsidies, but they are promoting workplace chargers.

Doug W.: Paul Liotsakis will speak to that in January.

Dale: I would like to see more detail on the proposed incentive program, which MCE composed with advice. Sonoma Clean Power has made big progress. You need to be careful how you develop a program. Carleen Cullen has information. An EV daytime rate should be added. There is a solar surplus during the daytime.

Ed: Ed stated that he likes the idea of a citizen advisory committee. There is a model in Alameda County. It is important to get the letter right; make a small number of clear suggestions. Ed volunteered to work with the group composing it, suggest tweaks. Think outside of the box.

Doug W.: We envision a letter that necessarily speaks in generalities. MCE's level of professionalism is good. State the areas we want them to work on and can support. Take it to the board. It is not our place to specify details.

Pam: The citizens advisory committee needs to be specified.

Helene: Keep the size of the list of concerns small. This is more powerful.

Belle: Is there anyone at MCE we can show the letter to, test out the reaction? A. We are regularly in touch. We will not blindsides them.

Kate: J.R. gave the impression that there are constraints we don't know about. They are in communication with TAM re EV incentives. It's not in the business plan. Kate stated that she agrees with Bob re finding out about MCE constraints and tradeoffs and their work with other agencies. The letter has to go before the MCL board. MCL supports CCAs, but its process

requires board approval of letters that are sent. MCL's status in the county is based on its careful vetting.

Doug W.: I suggest we formulate the letter before the end of the year and then put it forward to the board. Get approval in January.

Dale: TAM is not a factor in an EV subsidy. Add a category for promoting electrification in general. Support for EVs is a major step forward.

Doug W. and David: Address the issue of carbon-free vs. renewable.

Sarah and Bob stated that there is a meeting with MCE next week where they will touch bases. There are lots of issues and multiple meetings.

10:25 Updates

Drawdown Marin. Doug W.: The County Climate Action Plan implementation committee wants informed public attendees at staff technical meetings. Commenters noted that the San Rafael committee is technical and raised the issue of whether this would backfire on the county.

MCAN. David stated that there is an unofficial group advocating to the County on at least five areas moving forward. The Environmental Forum is planning a couple of events in January and February. They have proposed to the County that they be a co-organizer of an event on barriers to reaching 100% clean energy. They are meeting with the County next week. By "clean energy" they mean essentially carbon-free. The County phrasing is "renewable." David invited Doug W. to suggest and advise on behalf of MCL.

Belle: Is the County supportive? A. There is not an official answer, but individual members have reacted favorably.

Kiki: At MCAN last week, Ann Hancock visited. Sonoma has been very successful. What we are trying to do in Marin—reaching out to get a change in public behavior—hasn't been done before. Five workshops are planned.

Belle: It's important to get the word out re public participation. Some groups don't understand. A couple of groups are committed to reaching out.

David: The key driver is broad inclusion.

Kate: Have content ready for dissemination. Not fliers, but links to websites with information.

Belle and Kiki: It is to be determined where the content will come from.

Kate and Pam: Is the Canal Welcome Center included? A. Yes.

David: SB 100 is going to come up in January. We are looking for an Assembly champion.

Bob: The Western grid integration is coming up in January. It behooves some MCL discussion.

David: De Leon is trying to keep this separate.

Norma: At the Environmental Forum last month, Kurt Johnson proposed a project for greening the bus system. At the last TAM meeting re extension of Measure A tax funding and use of the funds, a group requested more explicit support of GHG reduction, greening the bus fleet, and EV charging. They were more receptive than anticipated. EPAC (Expenditure Plan Advisory Committee) was initially business-as-usual, but the request was well received and action seems possible. Greening the fleet was talked about, but there is not an explicit goal. Suggestion: Go to the town councils.

Doug W.: In preparing a ballot measure, the language needs to generate excitement.

Kiki: The worry is that introducing something new to be funded will generate the idea that the existing funding is not needed. Maybe come back later for an additional increment.

Doug C.: Climate needs to be an explicit part of every action.

Norma: The public would be more willing to fund GHG-related improvement of transit efficiency.

David: The sales tax doesn't need to be renewed until 2024.

Kate: The TAM Strategic Vision Plan includes enhanced GHG language in Chapters 4-5. Marin needs to demand action.

Judy F.: You can't assume willingness to extend the tax for business as usual.

Ed: Novato's 2018 Green Film Series will present "Happening: A Clean Energy Revolution" on January 18 at Novato City Hall. From 6:00 to 8:30. Representatives from Environmental Forum of Marin, MCE, Resilient Neighborhoods, and Sustainable Novato will be on hand to talk about local action in a facilitated discussion after the film. This is part of a monthly event that engages more than the choir, especially youth. Sustainable Novato is addressing EVs and electrification of transportation with the effective participation of Novato's new Sustainability Coordinator.

Dale: Golden Gate EV will be presenting a Tesla event on January 27. GGEV will forward information for inclusion in the MCL e-bulletin. GG EV will also be presenting a webinar in January. In addition, it is participating in a project with College of Marin, assembling data on taxpayer-funded parking lots and EV charging stations. They hope for an allocation of Measure B funds. GGEV has worked with San Rafael school districts on school bus issues. E-buses cost far less.

Pam stated that she met with Klaus Christiansen, facilities manager at College of Marin, where a Tesla battery storage system has been installed, resulting in energy and cost savings. Tesla has sold batteries to STEM, which tweaks usage among facilities. College of Marin receives half of

the savings; STEM receives the other half. There are no EV chargers on site at College of Marin. An intern, Leonard Drucker, is looking into infrastructure issues.

Doug W.: This contract knocks peak energy down, as does a geothermal heating system. The Deep Green campaign is advocating to special districts such as wastewater, and to businesses, and they are working with other groups re spreading the word.

Pam: College of Marin is Deep Green.

Alto Tunnel (Cheryl and Don)

The Alto Tunnel project is part of the North-South greenway. It would connect Corte Madera and Mill Valley, thereby completing the spine of bicycling/walking paths in Marin and connecting a series of dead-end paths. Don and Cheryl showed the group a map of the proposed completed path. They stated that gaps in the greenway decrease usage. Fifty-seven percent of trips within the county are less than five miles. Use of the greenway for these trips would reduce the GHG impact of single-occupant vehicle trips. There is supportive data from Europe re life-cycle impacts. Bikes are ten times more efficient in this respect than cars. The reduced impact on pavement is substantial. There is pent-up demand: Forty-to-sixty percent of people are concerned about transportation's GHG impact but would need safe and comfortable places to ride in order to travel by bike. The Alto Tunnel segment is relatively flat and promotes use by all ages. On the basis of these arguments, Cheryl and Don asked for MCL support. They suggested that the project would serve 1,050,000 users/year and would result in a five-million-pound reduction in carbon released. Last fall, there was a co-evaluation of the condition of the tunnel. The next step is an environmental impact study. Cheryl and Don hope to get the town councils behind the project.

Bob: What is the cost per metric ton of avoided emissions?

Norma: Is there a website? A. Yes.

Helene: Could you define "support"? A. Acknowledging the importance of the project; a letter from the board eventually. What are MCL concerns?

Kiki: What are the funding sources? Is there a decision point coming soon? A. This is informational for now. Long-term, the project will compete for transportation and environmental funds, Measure A and matching funds. They will seek local funding for maintenance.

David: A key discussion is the benefit received for the dollars expended, the new route vs. the existing route.

Cheryl: The ability to interchange the Horse Hill route for the Alto Tunnel route is a myth. Horse Hill is not accessible for all ages, and the route is complicated. It is not the safe and accessible route that will encourage ridership.

Nancy: Is there data on the impact of the trail. There is data on the Larkspur-San Rafael trail.

David: The Larkspur-San Rafael trail is well used. A. The route is not as well used as the Larkspur-San Rafael trail because the Corte Madera grade was never accessible. You're comparing apples and oranges.

Susan: The Land Use Committee looked at this issue. One concern is that the tunnel half a mile long, with an artificial environment. Also, there are other worthy projects. The greenway is an additional cost. The bike lobby is strong. There is a concern re the cost and impact of this project vs. other projects that are much needed, such as work on Hwy. 37. A. Tunnels are safe.

Doug W.: This is the heaviest lift of the bike projects. There is a potential to use e-bikes for accessibility.

Announcements

Belle: The next Lead on Climate event, "Reaching Paris Without Going Through Washington," is set for September 15, the day after the Governor's summit. Christiana Figueres is among those participating.

Meeting adjourned 11:10.

Future meetings: The next CAWG meeting will be on January 19. Paul Liotsakis of MCE will speak at the January meeting. In February, Chris Choo will address rising sea levels.

Minutes: PN.