

Supes not excited by 'Cool Counties' declaration

Tuesday, 13 November 2007 02:38



Nov. 13, 2007 — Becoming a Cool County apparently isn't at the top of the Lassen County Board of Supervisors to-do list. Faced with a challenge to sign the U.S. Cool Counties Climate Stabilization Declaration, the board wasn't exactly enthusiastic.

"My personal opinion about a lot of the comments made in here is it's garbage," said District 1 Supervisor Bob Pyle, who planned to see a Cool Counties presentation at the California State Association of Counties meeting in Oakland Nov. 13-16.

"Right here it says, 'We are already observing the affects associated with climate change such as drought, flooding, increased forest fires.' Those are new?" Pyle asked. "We've never seen a drought before? We've never seen flooding before? How do they know it's climate change? It's just the normal ... It's been going on since the beginning of the earth."

According to a July 31 press release, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors is challenging California's other 57 counties to join it "in curbing greenhouse gas emissions in a collaborative effort to stave off the potentially catastrophic effects of global warming."

The Alameda board voted unanimously to adopt the Cool Counties Climate Stabilization Declaration and urged all other counties across California "to join this major new initiative to combat rising world temperatures."

The initiative calls on participants to work with other regional leaders to reduce local global warming emissions 80 percent by 2050, an achievable average annual reduction of 2 percent. Counties will also join together in urging the federal government to adopt legislation requiring an 80 percent emissions reduction by 2050 and raising fuel economy standards to 35 miles per gallon within a decade.

"They're talking about changing light bulbs here and that kind of stuff in county buildings," said Board Chairman and District 4 Supervisor Brian Dahle.

A letter from Scott Haggerty, president of the Alameda County board, said, "Cool Counties will lobby together to direct federal dollars back to the local level for key projects in water supply, emergency preparedness, coastal impacts, forestry, land use and transportation."

It added Alameda County has already saved taxpayers more than \$6 million annually from energy-efficient retrofits in county buildings.

It said global warming is already impacting public health through severe climate change.

"For example, we will be providing the emergency teams to respond to increasingly frequent extreme weather events," Haggerty's letter said. "Water shortages and heat waves most affect those with limited mobility, health care and funds."

"I'm of the opinion that Lassen County's already pretty cool," said County Administrative Officer John Ketelsen.

"We're far from being cool counties," said District 2 Supervisor Jim Chapman, "because in terms of trying to meet these targets of emissions, and so forth, just by the very nature of our management policies as a board, have set us up to become warm counties, I guess."

Initiative details

The resolution adopting the cool counties declaration says the world's leading scientists agree global warming caused by human emission of greenhouse gases is among the most significant problems facing the world today.

It says documented impacts of global warming include, but are not limited to, increased occurrences of extreme weather events (i.e., droughts and floods), adverse impacts on plants and wildlife habitats, threats to global food and water supplies — all of which have an economic impact on communities and their local governments. It also mentions the state requirement for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.

"Counties have a unique role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change through their regional jurisdiction over policy areas such as air quality, land use planning, transportation, zoning, forest preservation, water conservation, and wastewater and solid waste management," it says.

Counties are reducing global warming pollutants, "through programs that provide economic and quality-of-life benefits such as reducing energy

bills, preserving green space, implementing better land use policies, improving air quality, promoting waste-to-energy programs, expanding transportation and work choices to reduce traffic congestion, and fostering more economic development and job creation through energy conservation and new technologies.”

“OK then, I think the direction from the chairman is that Bob check it out at CSAC and report back to the board before we agendize it,” Dahle said.

The CSAC Web site at www.csac.counties.org said Alameda County joined large counties from across the country, as well as the Sierra Club, in endorsing the declaration. The counties involved in launching the Cool Counties Declaration represent a diverse array of some of America's largest counties —more than 17 million people across 10 states live in the founding counties. In addition to Alameda County, the founding governments include King, Wash; Fairfax and Arlington, Va.; Nassau, N.Y.; Montgomery and Queen Anne's, Md.; Miami-Dade, Fla.; Cook, Ill.; Shelby, Tenn.; Hennepin, Minn. and Dane, Wis.

```
"); pageTracker._trackPageview(); } catch(err) {}
```