Resolution Number 2017-003
Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority
Santa Rosa, California
November 13, 2017

A RESOLUTION OF THE REGIONAL CLIMATE PROTECTION AUTHORITY TO UPDATE ITS GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION TARGETS AND ESTABLISH POLICY GOALS TO REDUCE EMISSIONS AND PREPARE FOR THE LOCAL IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

WHEREAS, climate change is a real and increasingly urgent threat that demands action at every level of government; and

WHEREAS, actions taken by local governments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) provide multiple benefits by providing energy and cost savings, air quality and public health improvements, local job creation, resource conservation, climate resilience, and enhanced equity; and

WHEREAS, the State of California has adopted policy targets to reduce GHGs by 40% from 1990 levels by 2030 and by 80% from 1990 levels by 2050; and

WHEREAS, the Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA) was created to coordinate countywide climate protection efforts in the County of Sonoma; and

WHEREAS, the success of the RCPA depends on the participation of and collaboration with all local jurisdictions, and a commitment to pool resources towards common goals; and

WHEREAS, the RCPA has previously adopted GHG reduction targets that are no longer aligned with the State of California; and

WHEREAS, the RCPA conducted a multi-year planning effort that was informed by each jurisdiction and hundreds of members of the community and that yielded recommendations for twenty goals to prepare for local climate impacts; and

WHEREAS, adopting the GHG reduction targets and policy goals that were developed in this planning effort will provide clear direction to RCPA staff in delivering on its Mission.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the RCPA will work to reduce countywide greenhouse gas emissions by 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and by 80% below 1990 levels by 2050; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the RCPA will reduce GHGs by pursuing implementation actions that support the following policy goals:

1. Increase building energy efficiency
2. Increase renewable energy use
3. Switch equipment from fossil fuel to electricity
4. Reduce travel demand through focused growth
5. Encourage a shift toward low-carbon transportation options
6. Increase vehicle and equipment fuel efficiency
7. Encourage a shift toward low-carbon fuels in vehicles and equipment
8. Reduce idling
9. Increase solid waste diversion
10. Increase capture and use of methane from landfills
11. Reduce water consumption
12. Increase recycled water and greywater use
13. Increase water and waste-water infrastructure efficiency
14. Increase use of renewable energy in water and wastewater systems
15. Reduce emissions from livestock operations
16. Reduce emissions from fertilizer use
17. Protect and enhance the value of open and working lands
18. Promote sustainable agriculture
19. Increase carbon sequestration
20. Reduce emissions from the consumption of goods and services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the RCPA will work to increase the health and resilience of social, natural, and built resources to withstand the impacts of climate change; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the RCPA will increase resilience by pursuing implementation actions that support the following policy goals:

1. Promote healthy, safe communities
2. Protect water resources
3. Promote as sustainable, climate-resilient economy
4. Mainstream the use of climate projections
5. Manage natural buffer zones around community resources
6. Promote agricultural preparedness and food security
7. Protect infrastructure
8. Increase emergency preparedness and prevention

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the RCPA seeks support from its member jurisdictions to collaborate towards the same GHG reduction targets and pursue common climate action goals; and

THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION was moved by Director Mackenzie, seconded by Director Gorin, and adopted by the following vote:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Director Agrimonti</th>
<th>Aye</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director Carnnachi</td>
<td>Aye</td>
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<tr>
<td>Director Coursey</td>
<td>Aye</td>
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<tr>
<td>Director Gorin</td>
<td>Aye</td>
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<td>Director Landman</td>
<td>Aye</td>
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<tr>
<td>Director Mackenzie</td>
<td>Aye</td>
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<tr>
<td>Director Mansell</td>
<td>Aye</td>
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<td>Director Miller</td>
<td>Aye</td>
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<td>Director Okrepkie</td>
<td>Aye</td>
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<td>Director Rabbitt</td>
<td>Aye</td>
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<tr>
<td>Director Russell</td>
<td>Aye</td>
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<tr>
<td>Director Zane</td>
<td>Aye</td>
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Ayes: 12  Noes: 0  Absent: 0  Abstain: 0  

SO ORDERED
I, the undersigned, certify that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority held on November 13, 2017.

Suzanne Smith, Executive Director
Clerk, Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority
[JURISDICTION]

Resolution # _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE [JURISDICTION] REAFFIRMING ITS INTENT TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AS PART OF A COORDINATED EFFORT THROUGH THE SONOMA COUNTY REGIONAL CLIMATE PROTECTION AUTHORITY AND TO ADOPT LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES AS IDENTIFIED IN CLIMATE ACTION 2020

WHEREAS, climate change is a real and increasingly urgent threat that demands action at every level of government; and

WHEREAS, actions taken by local governments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) provide multiple benefits by providing energy and cost savings, air quality and public health improvements, local job creation, resource conservation, climate resilience, and enhanced equity; and

WHEREAS, the State of California has adopted policy targets to reduce GHGs by 40% from 1990 levels by 2030 and by 80% from 1990 levels by 2050; and

WHEREAS, the [jurisdiction] has...[any specific actions related to Paris, US Mayor’s Climate Action Network, Under 2 MOU, etc.];

WHEREAS, the [jurisdiction] participates in a coordinated, countywide collaboration to address climate change via the Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA); and

WHEREAS, the success of the RCPA depends on the participation of and collaboration with all local jurisdictions, and a commitment to pool resources towards common goals; and

WHEREAS, the RCPA has adopted the same GHG reduction targets as the State of California; and

WHEREAS, the RCPA has established twenty goals to reduce GHG emissions and nine goals to prepare for local climate impacts; and

WHEREAS, the RCPA and the [jurisdiction] collaborated through the Climate Action 2020 project to develop Measures specific to [jurisdiction] that will result in the reduction of GHG and result in substantial environmental and community benefits.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the [jurisdiction] agrees to work towards the RCPA’s countywide target to reduce GHG emissions by 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the [jurisdiction] adopts the following goals to reduce GHG emissions, and will pursue local actions that support these goals:

1. Increase building energy efficiency
2. Increase renewable energy use
3. Switch equipment from fossil fuel to electricity
4. Reduce travel demand through focused growth
5. Encourage a shift toward low-carbon transportation options
6. Increase vehicle and equipment fuel efficiency
7. Encourage a shift toward low-carbon fuels in vehicles and equipment
8. Reduce idling
9. Increase solid waste diversion
10. Increase capture and use of methane from landfills
11. Reduce water consumption
12. Increase recycled water and greywater use
13. Increase water and waste-water infrastructure efficiency
14. Increase use of renewable energy in water and wastewater systems
15. Reduce emissions from livestock operations
16. Reduce emissions from fertilizer use
17. Protect and enhance the value of open and working lands
18. Promote sustainable agriculture
19. Increase carbon sequestration
20. Reduce emissions from the consumption of goods and services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the [jurisdiction] will continue to work to increase the health and resilience of social, natural, and built resources to withstand the impacts of climate change; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the [jurisdiction] has the goal of increasing resilience by pursuing local actions that support the following goals:

1. Promote healthy, safe communities
2. Protect water resources
3. Promote a sustainable, climate-resilient economy
4. Mainstream the use of climate projections
5. Manage natural buffer zones around community resources
6. Promote agricultural preparedness and food security
7. Protect infrastructure
8. Increase emergency preparedness and prevention
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the [jurisdiction] will support these goals through its own actions and through collaboration with other local governments through the efforts of the Regional Climate Protection Authority; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the [jurisdiction] intends to implement its local measures from the Climate Action 2020 planning project.

THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION was duly adopted this _____ day of ______, 2017, by the following vote:
CITY OF SONOMA

RESOLUTION #2016

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SONOMA ADOPTING CLIMATE ACTION 2020 MEASURES FOR THE CITY OF SONOMA AND MAKE FINDINGS THAT THEY ARE EXEMPT FROM ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PURSUANT TO SECTION 15308 OF TITLE 14 OF THE CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS

WHEREAS, climate change is a serious threat to worldwide and strong action is needed to avoid serious damage to human wellbeing and natural systems; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of Climate Action 2020 Measures developed for the City of Sonoma will result in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and will thus result both in substantial environmental benefits; and

WHEREAS, achieving the objectives of Climate Action 2020 measures for the City of Sonoma will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and will have numerous other collateral public benefits, such as reducing other unhealthful emissions, improving public health through alternative modes of transportation, and improving efficiency and reducing waste.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT,

1. Exemption from Environmental Review. The adoption and implementation of the climate protection measures developed for the City of Sonoma in Climate Action 2020 are categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to section 15308 of title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, because these measures constitute actions taken by a regulatory agency, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment.


The foregoing Resolution was duly adopted this 21st day of November 2016, by the following vote:

Ayes: AGRIMONTI, EDWARDS, HUNDLEY, COOK, GALLIAN
Noes: 
Absent: 

Laurie Gallian, Mayor

ATTEST:
Rebekah Barr, MMC, City Clerk
Staff Report

To: RCPA Board of Directors
From: Lauren Casey, Director of Climate Programs
Item: 4.1.2 – Next steps for RCPA climate action (ACTION)*
Date: November 13, 2017

Issue:
Shall the Board adopt a Resolution to adopt updated greenhouse gas (GHG) targets, and goals for reducing GHGs and preparing for climate impacts? Shall the Board promote a model resolution to RCPA members as an option to create consistent countywide policy impetus behind coordinated climate action?

Background:
The RCPA developed the Climate Action 2020 and Beyond Plan (CA2020) over the course of several years, with input from all local city councils, the Board of Supervisors, local government staff, expert consultants, community sustainability leaders, and hundreds of members of the public. It put forth a comprehensive framework for coordinated action on climate change including updated, long-term greenhouse gas reduction targets, broad policy goals to guide work to reduce GHGs and prepare for local climate impacts, and reduction measures customized to each RCPA Member Jurisdiction.

The Environmental Impact Report developed along with the Plan was intended as a tool to ensure that GHG reduction measure do not create adverse environmental impacts such as habitat loss or noise, and to make future implementation of those measures easier for local government and by private project developers. Unfortunately, the pursuit of this strategy for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) opened the plan to a successful legal challenge related to CEQA procedures. The RCPA Board opted not to pursue an appeal for various reasons (see item 4.1.1).

The judgment against the RCPA was frustrating for many reasons. It stalled and ultimately stopped local jurisdictions’ efforts to adopt the climate action plan, despite the work each jurisdiction put in to ensure the plan matched local priorities. The plaintiff has admitted in public forums that it supports the goals of the plan, and the implementation of measures within it, but stated that it brought the case because the project didn’t go far enough. Staff track policy guidance and expert opinions on the best approaches to community scale climate action planning, and guidance from state agencies and industry professionals continue to validate the RCPA approach to climate action planning.

For these reasons, RCPA staff propose that the CAP, while no longer enforceable as a CEQA tool, can still serve as an advisory resource for the RCPA’s work to coordinate countywide climate protection efforts. The ideas contained in the plan – to advance smart land use, resource efficiency, carbon free electricity, fuel switching, etc. – are still good and valid, and aligned with the climate action strategies articulated in the State Scoping Plan established to achieve the goals of AB 32 and SB 32.

To create more clear direction for RCPA staff on an ongoing basis, the Board may consider adoption of Resolution No 2017-003, officially updating our GHG reduction targets and policy goals to reduce GHGs and
prepare for local climate impacts. This resolution would achieve the same policy impetus behind climate action as would have the CA2020 Plan, but without the CEQA elements challenged by California River Watch.

The RCPA may also consider sharing the attached model resolution with each member jurisdiction, as a tool to codify updated commitments to the countywide collaboration on climate action, to update long term policy goals, and to consider pursuing the implementation of measures each jurisdiction had previously identified as good local opportunities. Taking this policy action at a city and county level would help create countywide consistency and clear guidance for RCPA and jurisdiction staff about coordinated implementation.

Even without a valid EIR, RCPA’s member agencies can still implement the measures in the plan if they either conduct CEQA review on the individual measures or find that the measures are exempt. In most instances, that should not be difficult and could be done with language like “that the adoption and implementation of the climate protection measures developed for the [jurisdiction] in Climate Action 2020 are categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to section 15308 of title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, because these measures constitute actions taken by a regulatory agency, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment.” The City of Sonoma did so upon adoption of its local measures, via the attached Resolution No 40-2016. Also, California River Watch has agreed to provide a signed letter on letterhead stating that it will not challenge the implementation of the measures.

In addition to pursuing the proposed policy action, the RCPA and/or its members may consider the following next steps:

- **Evaluate updated approaches to GHG thresholds under CEQA.** While the Plan cannot be used as a tool for making significance determinations for CEQA reviews of projects, the measures can be implemented. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is beginning a process to update guidance for addressing GHGs under CEQA. RCPA staff will participate in this process and support local jurisdictions in considering how local thresholds may evolve.

- **Pursue legislative solutions to avoid future CEQA challenges to beneficial projects.** The RCPA may consider working with other stakeholders to pursue CEQA reform that protects environmentally beneficial emissions reduction actions from costly challenges that are contrary to CEQA’s basic purpose.

- **Maintain a focus on implementation.** With the enactment of SB 32, the State now has a 2030 target that can become the focus of GHG planning. The long term targets warrant increasingly deep reductions in GHG emissions, and for a scaling up in work to de-carbonize social systems. The RCPA will continue to explore funding and financing models that help implement the good ideas from the plan.

- **Re-evaluate the RCPA approach to planning for the 2030 target.** Unless CEQA reform happens, it is clear that future climate action plans must be developed with meticulous justification for methodology. State planning documents as well as other explanatory papers are already addressing this need, and RCPA will participate with other stakeholders.

- **Support integration of climate action priorities within General Plans.** All jurisdictions already have some climate policies in adopted general plans, and several have included goals and strategies from Climate Action 2020 in recent updates. As several other jurisdictions embark on General Plan updates, the RCPA Board and staff may serve as a resource to borrow analysis and ideas from prior
efforts as appropriate, to navigate General Plan and CEQA Guidelines, and to collaborate with other local jurisdictions.

In conclusion, RCPA staff are committed to minimizing the loss of momentum on climate action progress in Sonoma County however the Board sees fit.

**Policy Impacts:**

If adopted, these resolutions could provide some of the comprehensive policy framework that had been proposed in Climate Action 2020.

**Fiscal Impacts:**

None.

**Staff Recommendation:**

That the Board adopt Resolution No 2017-003 to update RCPA GHG targets and policy goals. That the Board promote the attached model resolution as a policy option for local jurisdictions to consider.