



SF Environment

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Mayor

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Director

COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2011
DRAFT

The Commission on the Environment

The mission of the Commission on the Environment is to improve, enhance, and preserve the environment; and to promote San Francisco's long-term environmental sustainability as laid out in Section 4.118 of the City Charter. The Commission on the Environment sets policy for the Department of the Environment and advises the Mayor, Board of Supervisors, and other City departments on environmental matters. Appointed by the mayor, the seven-member commission develops policies and programs on a wide range of environmental topics including zero waste, toxics reduction, environmental justice, clean air, energy efficiency, green building, habitat restoration, commute alternatives, greenhouse gas reduction, green jobs, and the city's urban forest. The Commission's office is located at 11 Grove Street, San Francisco, California, 94102.

Commission Membership - 2011

Matt Tuchow, President; Ruth Gravanis, Vice President; Angelo King; Alan Mok, Operations Committee Chair; Rahul Prakash; Heather Stephenson; Johanna Wald, Policy Committee Chair.

Commissioners Leaving Office in 2011

Special thanks to Commissioner Emerita Jane Marie Francis Martin who served on the Commission from May 10, 2007 to January 7, 2011 and to Commissioner Emeritus Jason Elliott who served on the Commission from January 7, 2011 to April 20, 2011.

Meetings

All meetings of the Commission on the Environment and its committees are open to the public. The full Commission meets bimonthly on the fourth Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. in January, March, May, July, September and November. Meetings are held at City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Jr. Place, Room 416, in the City and County of San Francisco unless otherwise noted.

The Commission's Policy Committee meets monthly on the second Monday at 5:00 p.m. with the exception of the fourth Monday in October. Meetings are held at City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Jr. Place, Room 421 in the City and County of San Francisco unless otherwise noted.

The Commission's Operations Committee meets quarterly on the third Wednesday at 5:00 p.m. in January, April, July and October. Meetings are held at the Department of the Environment Eco Center, 11 Grove Street in the City and County of San Francisco unless otherwise noted.

Background on the Commission

In carrying out its mission, the Commission and its two committees engage in three general types of activities: 1) providing oversight of and strategic advice on the work of the Department of the Environment and its staff; 2) generating and reviewing new policies, practices and ideas relating to sustainability for consideration by the staff, the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors and by other city agencies as relevant; and 3) providing public outreach and education. The Commission carries out its responsibilities principally by reviewing and commenting on oral and written presentations from the staff at both full Commission meetings and at committee meetings.

In its relatively short history, the Commission has seen the Department grow from 8 employees in 2000 to 114 employees as of this reporting period, and has been directly responsible for a number of San Francisco's most well-known environmental initiatives, including its ban on City purchase of single serve water bottles and its groundbreaking ordinance on plastic bags. Other major initiatives that the Commission has spearheaded include the Department's green jobs program, its Climate Action Plan, and the City's mandatory composting requirement. As the result of these initiatives, in 2011:

- 3,500 jobs were supported by San Francisco Department of the Environment's policies and programs in areas such as zero waste, energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- 1.55 million tons of waste were diverted from landfill and San Francisco achieved 78% diversion/recycling rate, making it #1 in the country for a city our size and saving the equivalent of almost two Golden Gate Bridges.
- Over 50 cities around the country have plastic bag bans.
- San Francisco's greenhouse gas emissions are nearly 12% below 1990 levels and have exceeded emission reduction goals set by both the United Nations and the State of California, even as our population has grown.
- San Francisco was identified as the "greenest" city in North America in the first North American Green Cities Index.
- San Francisco was awarded "best green building city policy" by the World Green Building Council.

Major accomplishments of the Commission in 2011

In 2011, the Commission's major accomplishments include:

- Adopting a resolution acknowledging the importance of protecting, restoring and enhancing San Francisco's biodiversity and encouraging development staff to seek funding for biodiversity staffing and programs. This resolution added biodiversity to the suite of issues that the Department addresses, thus taking the first step toward filling a major gap in the Department's portfolio. The need for and text of this resolution were discussed in several meetings of the Policy Committee and in two meetings of the full Commission, with adoption of the resolution occurring on November 22, 2011.
- Spearheading the development of policy for, and legislative language requiring, disclosure of radiation levels associated with cell phone use in response to public concerns and with the leadership and expertise of the Department's Toxics

Adopted

Reduction Team. The San Francisco Board of Supervisors and Mayor adopted legislation requiring such disclosure on January 7, 2011. With adoption of this legislation, San Francisco became the first city to have such a requirement in place.

- Playing a major role in the Department's development of its 2011-2013 Strategic Plan. The Policy Committee reviewed and discussed in detail draft versions of every section of the plan as well as the final draft, while the full Commission provided advice on both a draft version of the plan and the final draft, which was approved on May 24, 2011.
- Providing feedback to the America's Cup Event Authority, particularly on its Sustainability and Zero Waste Plans. Both the Policy Committee and the Commission provided this feedback as well as opportunities for members of the public to provide comments on these plans and other actions that will need to be taken if the America's Cup events that will be held in San Francisco in 2012 and 2013 are to be truly environmentally responsible. [As the result of Commission feedback, an environmental justice component was added by the Event Authority to its _____ plan.]
- Providing feedback to the Department of the Environment regarding the launch, content, and operation of the Community InSight Project, an online idea forum to engage San Franciscans on plans for a greener future.

Oversight activities of the Commission in 2011 include:

- Approving the Department of the Environment's Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Budget. The Department's budget was reviewed by the Operations Committee on January 19, 2011 and approved by the full Commission on January 25, 2011.
- Approving the 2010 San Francisco Buy Green Program Annual Report on November 22, 2011. This program encourages City Staff to buy products like office paper and computers, the Department has determined are environmentally preferable and as such allows the City to use its purchasing power to protect the environment.
- Adopting a Revised Reduced Risk Pesticides list for 2011. On January 25, 2011, the Commission approved this list as required by Environment Code Chapter 2, Section 203, Ordinance 115-05. In so doing, the Commission and the Department help the City protect residents, visitors, City staff and the City's biodiversity from the effects of unnecessary and avoidable pesticide use.

Accomplishments of Environment Commission Committees

In addition to the accomplishments referenced above, 2011 accomplishments and activities of the Operations Committee include:

- Approving the Department Budget for Fiscal Year 2011-12 for recommendation to the Commission. Operations Committee Members were provided reports on the Department's draft budget for that year at two of its meetings in 2011. The Committee reviewed the reports and drafts, provided its recommendations and, on January 19, 2011, recommended to the full Commission that it approve the 2011-12 Department budget.
- Reviewing and approving the Department of the Environment's Solar Monitoring System Grant and the City and County's Bike Fleet Grant Solicitation.

Adopted

- Reviewing and making recommendations on the Department of the Environment's proposed office move and website redesign. Office move discussions were held on location, size requirements, and other space considerations.
- Assessing how programs of the Department of the Environment help create green jobs and stimulate economic opportunity.
- Reviewing and providing input into grants and special projects of the Environmental Justice Program including the San Francisco Healthy Homes Project, an effort to address health disparities in San Francisco.
- Reviewing plans for the reorganization of the Department of the Environment's Public Outreach Program.

In addition to the accomplishments referenced above, 2011 activities of the Policy Committee include:

- Overseeing the launch of the Green Finance SF-commercial program. This groundbreaking program helps San Francisco businesses green their buildings, cut down on carbon emissions, save energy, and create jobs in the City.
- Providing recommendations for improving the sustainability plan for the Treasure and Yerba Buena Islands Development Project, a proposal for the reuse of a former military base that has won international recognition for its outstanding commitment to sustainable development.
- Receiving updates and providing input to staff regarding the need for the City to increase its efforts to provide alternatives to single-use plastic bottles at events throughout San Francisco. The Committee also emphasized the need to restrict the sale of plastic water bottles at America's Cup events.

Other Work of the Commission in 2011

In 2011, the full Commission passed three resolutions commending the service and contributions of former commissioners and former staff of the Department of the Environment. Jane Marie Francis Martin was commended for her service on the Commission, Debbie Raphael, for her service as the former Toxics Reduction Program Manager, and Mark Westlund, for his service as the former Outreach and School Education Program Manager.

Adopted