



County of Yolo

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To: The Chair and Members of the Board of Supervisors

Regular-Community Services # 46.

Board of Supervisors

Meeting Date: 05/24/2022

Brief Title: Receive Update on Climate Action Progress, Introduce and Consider Climate Early Action Projects

From: Taro Echiburu, Director, Department of Community Services

Staff Contact: Kristen Wraithwall, Sustainability Manager, Department of Community Services, x8775

Subject

Receive staff update on progress related to the Board's Resolution on Climate Crisis and introduce and solicit feedback from the Board on early action priorities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon recommended by the Yolo County Climate Action Commission and associated project descriptions. (No general fund impact) (Echiburu/Wraithwall)

Recommended Action

Receive staff update on progress regarding Climate Action, and introduce and provide feedback on six recommended early action priorities and project descriptions.

Strategic Plan Goal(s)



Sustainable Environment

Reason for Recommended Action/Background

On September 29, 2020, the Yolo County Board of Supervisors passed Resolution 20-114, titled "A Resolution Declaring a Climate Crisis Requiring Urgent and Inclusive Mobilization in Yolo County." The resolution urged the investment of countywide resources to initiate a just transition to an inclusive, equitable, sustainable, and resilient local economy while also supporting and advocating for regional, national, and international efforts necessary to reverse the climate, social justice, and economic crises. The resolution created the Yolo County Climate Action Commission ("Commission") to include representation from vulnerable, marginalized, and underrepresented communities, cities and other appropriate jurisdictions, community organizations and experts in the field of climate change to engage the broader Yolo County community to ensure inclusivity and to advise Yolo County and its partners on the implementation of the Yolo County Climate Action Plan.

From September 2021 to January 2022, Yolo County staff and the Commission sought applications from the public for early actions to further Yolo County's climate action and sustainability initiatives and support the goals in the 2020 emergency climate resolution. The effort focused on short-term actions Yolo County can undertake to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon prior to development of the updated Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, scheduled to begin in summer/fall 2022. In January 2022, the Commission approved early action eligibility and prioritization criteria, which Yolo County staff used to recommend rankings of 21 early action proposals received by the Commission. County staff used the approved prioritization criteria to recommend seven early action priorities to the Climate Action Commission: 1) Carbon Farming Partnership; 2) Electrification Retrofit Rebate Outreach Program; 3) 100% Renewable Electricity Accounts; 4) Home Energy Labeling; 5) Inventory and Feasibility Study to Remove Fossil Fuels from Yolo County Operations; 6) Zero Emission Vehicle Master Plan; and 7) Yolo Agricultural Equipment Retrofit Program. The Climate Action Commission approved recommending these seven early action priorities to the Yolo County Board of Supervisors with some policy and technical changes, which staff incorporated. County Staff decided that the first six early action priorities would be brought forward to the Board of Supervisors at the May 24, 2022 meeting for review and feedback, while the Yolo Agricultural Equipment Retrofit Program early action priority would be brought forward at a future Board Meeting to allow County staff time to further develop that project description. The Climate Action Subcommittee of the Board of Supervisors has reviewed the first six early action priorities. Following Board review and feedback, staff will bring back the recommended Actions for Board approval as described below.

The Board of Supervisors set aside \$1 million in ARP funds to use for projects related to climate action. The Climate Action Subcommittee recommended staff allocate ARP funds primarily to match state and federal grants unless there is an urgent need for funding. County staff used this guidance to develop three criteria for recommending an

early action priority for ARP funding: 1) the project is urgent and therefore requires an investment of funds now; or 2) the project is ready to implement or "shovel-ready"; or 3) allocation of the funds now will allow development of implementation actions for which the County can pursue grant funds in the near future. If this suite of early action projects is approved, County Staff plans to return to the June 7 Board of Supervisors Meeting to recommend two projects receive ARP funding: 1) the Carbon Farming Partnership (\$149,845); and 2) the Electrification Rebate Outreach Program (\$100,000). The Climate Action Subcommittee has reviewed these recommendations for allocating ARP funds.

A brief description of each action is included below and a full project description for each action is attached. An initial funding summary is provided below as well. Upon approval by the Board of Supervisors of these six early action priority projects, County Staff will develop detailed budgets and project deliverables for all projects (with the exception of the Carbon Farming Partnership, for which such a budget and list of project deliverables already exists) and will bring these updated project descriptions and detailed budgets back to the Board in July.

1. Carbon Farming Partnership (Attachment A)

The Commission voted to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve this project description on March 28, 2022. The Center for Land-Based Learning proposes a two-year project with partners including the Yolo Resource Conservation District, the Yolo Land Trust, and the Carbon Cycle Institute to rapidly increase the scale of carbon farm planning in Yolo County, including completing three model carbon farm plans and educating growers about the climate and soil health benefits of proven conservation practices, including the Conservation Reserve Program, over the next two years. Carbon farming involves implementing practices known to improve the rate at which CO₂ is removed from the atmosphere and converted to plant material and/or soil organic matter. In addition to training growers in carbon farming principles, the Center will integrate direct feedback from experienced growers, as well as new farmers who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color, into the County's new Climate Action Plan process, ensuring the new plan has buy-in from the agricultural community. Staff plans to recommend this project for ARP funding at the June 7, 2022 Board of Supervisors meeting because it is shovel-ready and because completion of model carbon farm plans will allow Yolo County to partner with the Center for Land-Based Learning to pursue grants to implement the carbon farm plans in the near future, therefore furthering efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the agricultural sector. The County will work with the Center for Land-Based Learning to submit grant applications for carbon farming implementation projects as funding becomes available.

2. Electrification Retrofit Rebate Outreach Program (Attachment B)

The Commission voted to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve this project description on March 28, 2022. This project will create a program to provide information on electric retrofits and natural gas appliance replacement rebates to existing residential homes, as well as create a comprehensive outreach program to encourage low-income households in unincorporated Yolo County to access a new \$1 billion state rebate program proposed in the 2022-23 state budget. Energy efficiency and electric retrofits will lower energy bills, create local jobs, and improve indoor air quality and health-related issues by eliminating natural gas combustion in homes. Staff plans to recommend this project for \$100,000 in ARP funding at the June 7, 2022 Board of Supervisors meeting because state rebates will be available within approximately one year and it is critical for Yolo County to outreach to low-income and other eligible households to ensure they have the time and resources to access the rebates and implement electrification retrofits. This allocation of ARP funds would allow outreach to start while County staff evaluate additional grant funding opportunities to continue the outreach program.

3. 100% Renewable Electricity Accounts (Attachment C)

The Commission voted to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve this project description on March 28, 2022. This project will enroll all Yolo County municipal electric accounts not covered by existing County solar/renewable projects into Ultra Green via Valley Clean Energy or the similar Pacific Gas & Electric Company program. Yolo County will explore funding options for this action, which may include ARP funds, Department funds, or a combination of these.

4. Home Energy Labeling (Attachment D)

The Commission voted to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve this project description on March 28, 2022 and Yolo County staff recommends seeking grant funding to implement this project. The action will create a mandatory home energy labeling program for homes listed for sale in the unincorporated area based on the federal Home Energy Score Program. Developed by the U.S. Department of Energy, Home Energy Score is a program that assesses a home's energy use and provides a score on a one-to-ten scale. The score motivates homeowners, buyers, and sellers to improve the home's energy efficiency and increase the score. The County could provide toolkits, checklists, and recommendations to homeowners to increase their efficiency, including a list of Pacific Gas & Electric Company rebates and incentives. The action will also evaluate options to subsidize the cost of home energy assessments for low-income households. The Commission asked Yolo County staff to communicate to the Board of Supervisors that this program could be burdensome for low-income communities as part of the recommendation. Implementation of this program will require passage of an Ordinance to require home energy labeling in the

unincorporated area.

5. Inventory and Feasibility Study to Remove Fossil Fuels from Yolo County Operations (Attachment E)

The Commission voted to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve this project description on April 25, 2022 and staff recommend seeking grant funding to implement this project. When the Commission selected this project a priority in February 2022, the project described the removal of all fossil fuels from Yolo County operations. Yolo County staff discussed the proposal internally and realized Yolo County needs an inventory of all fossil fuel uses in County operations as well as the existing electrical system service capacity in County buildings before the County can commit to removing all fossil fuels. The County also needs to conduct a feasibility study which will include an evaluation of building readiness to electrify based on current electrical capacity and total energy requirements, priorities for electrification, cost estimates, a proposed process for measuring greenhouse gas emission reduction, potential funding sources, and a proposed timeline.

6. Zero Emission Vehicle Master Plan (Attachment F)

The Commission voted to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve this project description on April 25, 2022 and staff recommend seeking grant funding to implement this project. Zero Emission Vehicle Master Plan integrates three early action proposals into one project, the "ZEV Master Plan," the "Electric Vehicle Charging Stations and Outreach," and the "Essential Electric Bicycles" proposals. This project will help encourage the adoption of electric vehicles in Yolo County, as well as support the increased use of Zero Emission Vehicle mobility services, such as ride-sharing and electric bikes.

Funding Summary

Name	Estimated Total Cost	Recommended Funding Source
Carbon Farming Partnership	\$149,845	If approved, Yolo County staff will recommend allocating ARP funds to cover the total project cost at the June 7, 2022 Board of Supervisors Meeting.
Electrification Retrofit Rebate Outreach Program	\$100,000 for first stage; approximately \$350,000 to \$450,000 total for a two-year outreach campaign	If approved, Yolo County staff will recommend allocating \$100,000 of ARP funds at the June 7, 2022 Board of Supervisors Meeting to support the beginning stages of this effort. Yolo County staff will pursue additional funding strategies for this project that could include ARP funding, grants, or a combination of both, to be recommended at July Board of Supervisors meeting after development of a detailed budget.
100% Renewable Electricity Accounts Program	Approximately \$16,000 for County Properties in Valley Clean Energy territory (plus additional amount TBD for County properties in Pacific Gas & Electric territories)	Yolo County staff will explore funding options for this action, which may include ARP funds, General Fund, Department funds, or a combination of these. Yolo County will not apply for grants for this effort because of the small dollar amount. Additional funding recommendations to be made at July Board of Supervisors meeting upon confirmation of totals with Valley Clean Energy and Pacific Gas & Electric.
Home Energy Labeling	To be determined	Yolo County staff will seek grants to implement this project but may also allocate General Fund or American Rescue Plan funds. Funding strategy to be recommended at July Board of Supervisors meeting after development of a detailed budget.
Inventory and Feasibility Study to Remove Fossil Fuels from County Operations	Approximately \$250,000	Yolo County staff will seek grants to implement this project but may also allocate General Fund or American Rescue Plan funds. Funding strategy to be recommended at July Board of Supervisors meeting after development of a detailed budget.
ZEV Master Plan	Approximately \$250,000	Yolo County staff will seek grants to implement this project but may also allocate ARP funds as matching funds. Funding strategy to be recommended at July Board of Supervisors meeting after development of a detailed budget and deliverables.

Collaborations (including Board advisory groups and external partner agencies)

Staff collaborated with the Yolo County Climate Action Commission to prioritize early actions and develop subsequent project descriptions. Staff also collaborated with the Climate Action Subcommittee of the Board of Supervisors to prioritize actions and develop project descriptions. Staff also met with Valley Clean Energy, the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District, and other local community representatives to develop the project descriptions.

Fiscal Information

No Fiscal Impact

Fiscal Impact of this Expenditure

Total cost of recommended action

Amount budgeted for expenditure

Additional expenditure authority needed

\$0

One-time commitment

Yes

Source of Funds for this Expenditure

American Rescue Plan

\$249,845

Further explanation as needed

Approval of the recommendations from the Yolo County Climate Action Commission for early action priorities will result in no fiscal impact on the General Fund. Subsequent actions could require General Fund and outside funding support. Staff will return to the Board of Supervisors with a corresponding fiscal analysis for future implementation actions, if needed.

Attachments

Att. A. Carbon Farming Partnership Project Description

Att. B. Electrification Retrofit Rebate Outreach Program Project Description

Att. C. 100% Renewable Electricity Accounts Project Description

Att. D. Home Energy Labeling Project Description

Att. E. Inventory and Feasibility Study to Remove Fuels from County Operations Project Description

Att. F. Zero Emission Vehicle Master Plan Project Description

Form Review**Inbox**

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