

City of Lodi seeks input on climate action plan

By Maggie Creamer

Lodi News Sentinel, Wednesday, July 18, 2012

The city of Lodi is currently working on a climate action plan to create ways the community can voluntarily help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and conserve energy.

The Lodi City Council hired Sacramento-based consultant AECOM to design a plan that will work with the city's General Plan, a document that will guide development in Lodi for the next 20 years.

"We are looking for public comment on greenhouse gas emissions, global climate change and the things we can do in the city to promote a change," said Jeff Henderson, AECOM senior associate of design and planning.

The climate action plan caused a stir among residents at a council meeting in September, as some questioned the science behind global warming. The plan is being paid for with a \$120,000 grant from Smart Valley Growth Compact, which is a group of cities that applied for money together.

City Manager Rad Bartlam said that while the plan is not currently state-mandated, it likely will be in the future. The state is also requiring Lodi to reduce greenhouse gases and the plan will give a framework for the best way to do that, Bartlam said. Having a plan in place will also help the city secure state grant funding, he said.

Throughout the process, the council has stressed that any suggestions for local homeowners or businesses will be voluntary and could include incentives from the city, Henderson said. But there could be mandatory steps for the city, he said. For example, city buildings could have to reach a certain level of energy efficiency, while homeowners could receive rebates to make upgrades.

Councilman Alan Nakanishi, who voted against the city accepting the grant, said he has always objected to spending state or federal money related to Assembly Bill 32 — the California Global Warming Solutions Act — because he opposed the law when it was signed in 2006.

Nakanishi was concerned when the consultants said there could be mandatory requirements for the city in the plan.

"I don't need a group telling me how to be energy-efficient and how to keep the air clean. It's common sense. We are the governing body," Nakanishi said.

The consultants are first taking stock of what the city is already doing to reduce greenhouse gases and estimating what emissions will look like in the future, Henderson said. Then they will propose targets for the city to reach and recommend ways to decrease the gases based on research and suggestions from the community, Henderson said.

The consultants have been talking with community groups, including Citizens in Action, the local Tea Party affiliate, and developers to get suggestions, Henderson said.

Ed Miller of Citizens in Action said the group would support improved bike infrastructure or expanding the Park and Ride or rideshare programs. Businesses suggested installing a regional bio-fuel digester for food processing companies and wineries, demonstration sites for green roofs and more opportunities for solar installations.

AECOM has also had a booth at the Downtown Lodi Farmers Market where residents can offer their ideas.

Community members suggested increasing the Grapeline bus routes around town and expanding recycling services to accept more items. They also suggested the city study its bicycle lanes, because the routes can be disjointed.

AECOM will continue working on the plan, and the council is tentatively scheduled to consider adopting it around the first of the year.

Climate Action Plan at a glance

Summary: The Lodi City Council hired consultants AECOM to work on a climate action plan that will help the city meet the requirements of Assembly Bill 32 — the California Global Warming Solutions Act.

How you can comment: The consultants are looking for suggestions from the public on how both the city and the community can become more energy efficient. AECOM will be at the Downtown Lodi Farmers Market on July 26, Aug. 9, Aug. 30 and Sept. 20.

You can also email any comments or suggestions to Lodi Neighborhood Services Manager Joseph Wood at jwood@lodi.gov or 209-333-6711.

[Guest Commentary, Sacramento Bee, Wednesday, July 18, 2012:](#)

Viewpoints: Join fight for cleaner air in EPA proposal

By Dr. Harry Wang

My daughter was 8 when she was hospitalized because of a severe asthma attack. Air pollution had long been a professional concern for me, but this experience elevated the issue to a highly personal and very frightening level.

Although the quality of the air we breathe has improved significantly since 1970, when a bipartisan Congress passed the Clean Air Act, millions of Americans are still experiencing for themselves variations of my family's story – and not always with a happy ending. Fortunately, there's something that we can do.

On Thursday, Californians have an opportunity to fight for our right to breathe clean air. The Environmental Protection Agency is holding a public hearing in Sacramento to take public comment on its proposal to crack down on fine particle pollution, commonly called soot. Fine soot particles are tiny – you could fit dozens in a single grain of sand.

They're also deadly. Soot particles penetrate deep into the body causing lung and heart disease, stroke and premature death.

Californians should especially be concerned because the top five most polluted cities in the United States for both year-round and short-term particle pollution are in California. Sacramento ranks 21st in the country for highest short-term particle pollution.

But action can be taken.

A recent study found that stronger limits on soot pollution could prevent nearly 36,000 premature deaths nationwide every year. Many thousands of Californians would be among the beneficiaries of such life-saving protections. And in addition to dramatically cutting air pollution-induced deaths, stronger soot limits would also prevent more than 23,000 trips annually to the hospital and 1.4 million cases of aggravated asthma.

The health benefits would also create major financial savings nationwide of \$281 billion every year from reduced costs associated with premature death and disease.

So why wouldn't the EPA act decisively to set the strongest limits on soot pollution possible, especially since EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson has very openly discussed her own family's struggle with asthma?

It's because big polluters – the coal-fired power and oil industries, for example, whose operations fill our skies with soot and other pollution – are working tirelessly to undermine these protections. They're rich and powerful enough to shift the political landscape so that their financial bottom line outweighs the health and welfare of the American people. It's corporate self-interest, plain and simple.

That's why citizen voices are so important in this fight, and why I encourage you to join me at the public hearing on soot limits. Science, medicine and the law all require the EPA to defend our health with stronger limits on soot, but only public pressure can ensure it happens.

The EPA released its proposal to tighten limits on soot pollution just last month, but this major development occurred only because of a lawsuit by a coalition of public health and environmental groups. The proposal is a welcome development, but it's not strong enough.

Here's what's needed: I am joining other doctors and public health professionals in calling for an annual limit of 11 micrograms of soot per cubic meter and a daily limit of 25 micrograms of soot per cubic meter. These numbers might sound wonky, but they're important. Both short- and long-term exposure to soot can lead to heart and lung disease, stroke, cancer and even premature death – hence an annual and a daily limit. The concentration of soot present in our air is critical. These are the levels that scientific advisers have specified are reasonable. They're strong, but when lives are at stake, strong action is what's required.

We owe it to vulnerable populations – kids, seniors, diabetics, people with lung and heart disease, and low-income communities – to ensure that the air they're breathing is safe. I enjoy the great outdoors – my family and I travel to the Sierra Nevada every year to experience its magnificent beauty. But even these places are marred by soot pollution, and repeated exposure to such dirty air is a danger to everyone.

Thursday is our chance to speak out for what's right. Join me at the California Air Resources Board at 1001 I Street between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. Or for other ways to comment, go to www.epa.gov/pm/2012/howtocomment.pdf.

Dr. Harry Wang is a Sacramento child and adolescent psychiatrist and clinical professor of psychiatry at UC Davis School of Medicine. He is president of the Sacramento chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility.

[Letter to the Fresno Bee, Wednesday, July 18, 2012:](#)

Outlaw leaf blowers

With the air quality of the Valley under constant assault from gasoline-dependent engines, coupled with the deafening noise pollution, I cannot stress beyond the cause of the uselessness of the leaf blower. It is a device that suggests it saves time and effort by blowing debris from one place to another, usually in the gutter or clandestinely onto the property of a neighbor.

I do not know what Dom Quinto was formulating in the late 1950s, when he invented a lawn tool that, years later, would be banned in Carmel and Beverly Hills. Since the Valley is a massive chasm of the Coast Range and Sierra Nevada, wouldn't it be beneficial and healthful, for those who suffer from allergies and asthma, to have all cities and towns in California outlaw leaf blowers?

I cannot stress the annoyance of viewing lawn clippings, partnered with everyday litter, and not to mention the monotonous sound created in consolidation with the pointless audio of vehicle stereos, that simply putting a broom in one hand and a dust pan in the other, would reunite us to the silence of air.

Noel Gallardo, Fresno

