

JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES
INFORMATIONAL AND OVERSIGHT HEARING
LOCAL ACTIONS TO IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY
August 23, 2017

HEARING RECAP

Members Present: Assemblymember E. Garcia (chair), Assemblymember Frazier, Senator Skinner

First Panel: Scott Morgan, Governor's Office of Planning and Research; Cara Martinson, California State Association of Counties; Erin Evans-Fudem, League of California Cities; Anya Lawler, Western Center on Law & Poverty and the Climate Justice Working Group

- Mr. Morgan gave an overview of their office's involvement in adaptation work for the state. Their latest activities include the new general plan guidelines, SB 246 implementation, Civic Spark, and the Strategic Growth Council grants under the California Climate Investments.
- Ms. Martinson stated that cities and counties have a critical role in helping the state meet its climate goals, but that sustainability has regional variation. Climate programs can have multiple co-benefits and to-date new requirements for local governments (like SB 379) build on existing structures and processes at the local level. She also stated that the organics diversion requirements from SB 1383 will be hard to reach. While the best approach is to encourage local innovation and taking advantage of existing technical assistance and best practices, there was also need for more funding.
- Ms. Evans-Fudem echoed Ms. Martinson's remarks about continuing regional planning approach. Their Beacon program highlights best practices and jurisdictions that take early actions. It is important to link local actions to statewide funding; while the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities program has been successful, jurisdictions need funding for waste management. In general, local agencies lack funding to reach climate goals, so the state should consider increasing funding available and providing a state match funding program.
- Ms. Lawler reviewed the Climate Justice Working Group Report, stating that frontline communities have great need and have historically been excluded from investments. The group has also done polling that shows strong support for climate policies and adaptation measures in communities of color. She stated that it was important for government to meaningful engage communities in funding and policy decisions. The group thinks the state should invest one billion dollars into adaptation and resiliency measures by 2020.
- Discussion:
 - Assemblymember Frazier asked Mr. Morgan if his office could review Canada's equivalent of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) – they have similar environmental goals but have managed to develop a process that only takes two years.
 - Senator Skinner commented that more local governments have done climate action plans than sustainability plans, asking about any cataloging of local plans

and actions taken so far. She continued that the state needs to be sure we're appropriately planning for and counting local actions in our statewide plans. To her knowledge, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research has funded planning but not implementation.

- Mr. Morgan responded that OPR does local government surveys to track plans and implementation efforts.
- Ms. Martinson responded that the current draft Scoping Plan doesn't include a clear goal for local governments. All local governments are doing it differently. The focus has been on reduction of emissions, and it's hard to get resources for avoidance or planning.
- Assemblymember E. Garcia asked how local government plans align with SB 375 mandated regional plans.
 - Mr. Morgan responded that most local jurisdiction general plans do address their region's goals.
- Assemblymember E. Garcia asked if local governments are receiving resources to help with planning to meet the regional goals.
 - Ms. Martinson responded that the next panel will address those issues, but must preserve choices at the local level. She would accept voluntary emissions targets.
- Assemblymember Frazier commented that one size does not fit all, and the state must be flexible with local governments just like we are with industry. The state should set the goal and let locals figure out how to meet it.

Second Panel: Kurt Kaperos, California Air Resources Board; Scott Morgan, Governor's Office of Planning and Research; Bill Higgins, California Association of Councils of Governments; Chanell Fletcher, ClimatePlan

- Mr. Kaperos stated that SB 375 passed ten years ago and is still considered a national model. The Sustainable Community Strategy created by the bill fits within the federally-mandated regional transportation plan process. Implementation of the bill has saved costs to jurisdictions and created jobs. All regions are on track to meet their targets, and some will exceed them. Moving forward, ARB is looking to create on-the-ground metrics to better understand what is happening on the ground as implementation occurs.
- Mr. Morgan commented that his agency is working closely with ARB and other agencies on implementing SB 375. It appears that regions and the state are moving in the right direction.
- Mr. Higgins stated that the regional plans are based on land use and transportation predictions. There is a lot of uncertainty about the future, particularly for transportation. Funding from SB 1 will help, but only part of the statewide goal for reducing per capita emissions will come from the regional plans – the rest will require additional state action. There needs to be better connections between funding and regional strategies, particularly for local general plans.
- Ms. Fletcher stated that her organization has been tracking best practices to try to learn how SB 375 implementation is working. While models show regions are on track, there is not enough on-the-ground monitoring to understand how that is working. All stakeholders will have to do more to reach the targets of SB 32, and regions can do more: pushing for land use changes; promoting transportation mode shift by prioritizing

investments in biking, walking, and transit; and focusing on equity. The state should set performance metrics for SB 375 to ensure funding aligns with the strategies set by regions. If the reality is that regions cannot do more, the state needs to identify what additional actions it can take to help reduce per capita emissions.

- Discussion:
 - Assemblymember Frazier commented that cities and counties need job centers where people live, residents will not necessarily move for work so locating job centers in existing communities will help reduce vehicle miles traveled. California doesn't have incentives like Enterprise Zones anymore, so the question is how to achieve that. He closed by saying he thought every agency should have performance metrics.
 - Senator Skinner stated that the biggest obstacle to regional planning was lack of legal authority. Transportation is still California's largest sector of emissions, and there are no requirements for local governments to fulfill the jobs, housing, and transportation fit inherent to the sustainable community strategies.
 - Mr. Higgins responded that regions are starting to work together to create better plans that speak to inter-regional nature of commutes in California.
 - Ms. Fletcher responded that the regional housing needs assessments are not being met, and no one is tracking that implementation. There are also still big differences between general plans and the regional plans.
 - Mr. Kaperos commented that the unintended consequence of focusing on greenhouse gas emissions reductions is the lack of focus on contributing factors like housing, jobs, and others. Overall SB 375 has been successful.
 - Senator Skinner responded that local governments are not putting housing near jobs, the strategies aren't working. It isn't the fault of SB 375, but the issue hasn't been addressed.
 - Mr. Kaperos commented that California still needs to understand how we set, achieve, and track the regional targets.
 - Mr. Higgins commented that the state's actions to help achieve additional per capita emissions reductions are key.

Public Comment:

- Nikita Daryanani from Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability commented on the importance of local policies that realized co-benefits in disadvantaged communities.
- Jeanie Ward-Waller from the California Bicycle Coalition thanked the committee for the hearing, as the topic cut across the jurisdiction of multiple policy committees. Cal Bike supports the comments from ClimatePlan on the second panel.
- Josh Pane from the California Refuse Recycling Council commented on their membership and the need for additional facilities for waste management.
 - Senator Skinner commented that waste management is an example of a strong action that local governments can take to reduce emissions.