

Santa Cruz Climate Action Compact Status as of October 2008

On September 26, 2007, the City of Santa Cruz, the County of Santa Cruz and the University of California at Santa Cruz signed an agreement signifying their intentions to lead the region in the effort to mitigate climate change. By signing the Climate Action Compact, these three partners made a clear statement that while the ramifications of and solutions to climate change exist at a global level, action towards those goals must start locally.

In taking this leadership role, the Climate Action Compact partners pledged themselves to the following: 1) Set and present a greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goal for their organization; 2) Identify specific inter-institutional cooperative projects that reduce GHG emissions, stimulate investment in the community and foster economic development; 3) Present a comprehensive GHG reduction action plan for their organization; and 4) Immediately invite others from the public, private, and non-profit sectors in the region to join in the effort.

During the last year, the partners have each made definitive progress toward accomplishing these goals, and in the process have demonstrated that with strong local leadership and cooperation, it is possible to make meaningful change that protects our environment while benefiting the local economy. To date, two GHG inventories have been completed and the third is underway, reduction goals have been set and numerous programs have been initiated to meet them.

Programs currently under way include;

1. A Regional Green Building Task Force to create consistent green building ordinances and corresponding sets of checklists in each of the five local jurisdictions,
2. An expanded Zip Car Program to identify new locations and expand to additional organization to reduce car ownership and support city infill development policies,
3. Climate Action Teams to empower residents of Santa Cruz to make specific and targeted changes in their daily lifestyles in order to reduce their annual GHG emissions by 5000 pounds per household
4. A Green Drinks, Cool Ideas evening forum for creative solutions and critical thinking about climate change and sustainability
5. A Multi-Family Recycling program to increased beverage container recycling opportunities to the underserved multifamily facilities of the Monterey Bay Area.
6. An Electric Vehicle Plug-In Project to evaluate opportunity areas to install new recharging facilities that will provide greater mobility of plug-in vehicles within the County.
7. A Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation Plan being completed in partnership with university scientists and municipal staff.

With seven cooperative projects in various stages of implementation, the Climate Action Compact partners are taking visible action. In the next year, the community can expect to see the implementation of additional groundbreaking initiatives to measurably reduce our community's GHG emissions, including:

8. An interest free on water bill financing program to install solar hot water systems on homes and businesses.
9. An On-Tax-Bill Financing for Energy Efficiency Upgrades and Renewable Energy Installation program to create a voluntary Sustainable Energy Assessment District where property owners (residential and commercial) can install solar systems and make energy efficiency improvements to their buildings.
10. A Cool Business Program to update, upgrade, re-invigorate the existing Green Business Program
11. Completed Climate Action Plans for all partners, demonstrating each approach to meeting their GHG reduction goals.

These initiatives have not only helped to keep Santa Cruz ahead of the environmental curve, but also have set our community apart as a national leader in the efforts to combat the effects of global climate change. The community of Santa Cruz has reduced GHG 11% below 1996 levels and with the programs identified above is poised to meet it's 30% emissions reduction by 2020.