



Grassroots Institute

Progressive Solutions for the Common Good

GRI Working Groups

June 14, 2023



Climate Crisis Action



Noyo Headlands



Mendocino County Vision



Candidates & Elections



Water



HEART

Board of Supervisors
501 Low Gap Road, Rm. 1010
Ukiah, Ca. 95482

Honorable Board of Supervisors,

After your Board meeting on Tuesday, June 6, 2023, Supervisor Williams requested recommendations for use of Net Zero Carbon Emission funding. The GrassRoots Institute’s Climate Crisis Workgroup submits the following recommendations for your consideration.

1. The County should assess the cost benefit of installing Solar panels on the new roof of the County Ag Building. The Ca. Energy Commission provides 1% decarbonization loans to counties to pay the cost of solar systems. The loan could be paid back from cost avoidance for the Ag Building’s grid electricity purchases and/or the sale of excess solar electricity generated at the facility. Better yet, also install battery storage and sell the excess energy during peak rate hours and/or supply electricity to the Office of Emergency Services building located next to the Ag Building to offset OES electrical needs.
2. Using the WillDan report recommendations as a starting point, enterprise-wide the County should identify energy inefficient lighting systems and replace them with energy efficient/long life lighting systems. Energy costs savings from efficient lighting systems and the longer life span of such systems can be used to pay the cost of the replacements. The Workgroup further recommends installing automatic turnoff switches in order to achieve further energy cost reductions when County facilities are not being used. Since energy inefficient bulbs and fixtures must be regularly be replaced due to use, replacing lighting with energy efficient systems should have no net cost and produce big on-going cost savings.
3. The County should move as quickly as possible to retrofit enterprise critical worksite facilities with cost effective insulation. Optimizing insulation has long been recognized as an effective strategy to capture optimum energy savings. Further, the County should retrofit enterprise critical facilities that currently have energy inefficient HVAC systems with efficient heat pump systems that would produce energy savings to offset costs over the anticipated life span of the systems.

4. The County should assess the suitability of all enterprise critical County facilities for rooftop or ground mount Solar systems (battery storage suitably should also be assessed at the same time). The County should use either Net Zero Carbon Emission or state/federal energy conservation/decarbonization grants/loans to pay the cost of installing solar systems on enterprise critical properties. ALTERNATIVELY - if the county is not equipped/staffed to undertake such a project - the County should issue a Request For Proposal (RFP) to contract with a solar energy system provider/vendor to install and maintain solar systems on suitable County properties and pay the County a portion of the proceeds from the vendor's sale of excess electricity generated by the solar systems beyond what is used to meet the County's enterprise operation electricity needs. Combined with cost avoidance from electric energy purchases and new revenues from the sale of excess electric energy generation, the costs of installing Solar systems would be offset over the depreciated life of the systems.

5. The County's facility plan includes proposals to purchase emergency generators. The County should scrap all plans for fossil fuel emergency generators unless solar and/or battery system alternatives have been considered and rationally determined to be unacceptable. Solar generation is less expensive to purchase, needs less maintenance and does not require the purchase & storage of fuel. The county will recoup its investment through on-going operational cost savings.

6. The County should adopt an ordinance prohibiting County facility or capital improvement and/or maintenance expenditures of \$10K or more; unless a written assessment has been completed of the suitability of all non/less polluting lower energy use alternatives. Only the least polluting/lowest energy use/lowest cost option suitable for fulfilling the County's mission should be procured. Further, all such assessments should be reviewed and approved by the Board of Supervisors and made available to the public as part of the Board's meeting agenda packet for public comment.

7. Sell all County fossil fuel "pool" vehicles - rent suitable zero emission/low emission vehicles when needed. Many public and private businesses avoid the on-going costs of purchasing, storing and maintaining "pool" vehicles by utilizing a standing agreement with a vehicle rental company.

More projects were considered by the Workgroup than are offered here. Indeed, there are many worthy projects than should be considered as additional funds are identified. The workgroup notes for example, that the County is commended for pursuing grant funding for electric vehicle chargers.

For the purpose of the recommendations here, emphasis was placed on initiatives the County has not focused on previously, that would be one-time investments to encourage County carbon emission reductions, and/or also result in ongoing enterprise operational energy savings to the county.

Additionally, the proposals recommended here are based on tried and proven applications used in millions of homes and businesses throughout the nation and California to capture net cost savings and benefit the environment.

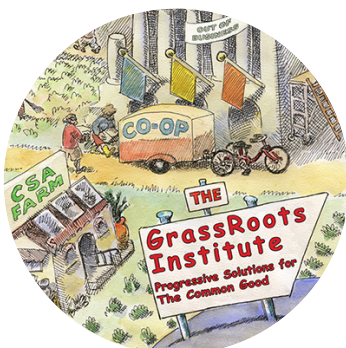
Because of the on-going need to lower energy costs by making wise energy saving investments, the Workgroup also recommends the County put a priority on seeking funding to replenish the Net Zero Carbon Emission fund over time. We believe that a portion of the costs savings from projects using Net Zero Carbon Emission funds should be repaid into the fund in order to facilitate future energy saving investments and carbon emission reductions.

The GrassRoots Institute commends the Board for placing a priority on reducing the County's Carbon Emissions and reducing enterprise energy costs. We look forward to working with you as we all adapt to the challenges imposed on us by Climate Change.

Sincerely,

Peter McNamee

On Behalf of the GrassRoots Institute



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