

Sunday, February 6, 2022

2-5-22 GrassRoots Institute - Climate Crisis Workgroup (GRI-CCW) Meeting Notes

Attending: Sandy Turner, Carrie Durkee, Eileen Mitro, George Reinhardt, Susan Nutter, Jim Schoonover, and Peter McNamee

- I. Jim Schoonover summarized events since the last CCW meeting concerning opposition to a proposal by Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs) to have the Cal. Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) enact new regulations and rates that would adversely impact Solar distributive generation on homes and businesses. In response to a massive public protest to the initial determination by the CPUC to implement the proposal, the commission has reopened deliberations on the proposal and is now focusing on ways to retain the incentives for residential and business solar as well as provide incentives for low income people to benefit from installing solar. GRI and Climate Action Mendocino have provided leadership opposing the IOU proposal (NEM3) locally by asking county supervisors to send a letter of opposition to the Governor and CPUC as well as encouraging letters, phone calls and emails by local residents in opposition. Tens of thousands of messages have been sent statewide and the CPUC's recent decision to reopen discussion on the proposal signals a victory for Solar and the planet. Public pressure needs to continue, and Jim offered to send out a talking points list to make letter, email and phone calling easier.
- II. George Reinhardt commented that the Trail Stewards are having great success with their public awareness campaign about saving Mendocino's redwood forests from timber harvesting. The effort, which GRI supports, has succeeded in making the forests a front burner issue for state and local leaders. Eileen Mitro noted that the timber industry is responding and that she has been contacted by an owner of one of the local mills, John Anderson, to go on a forest walk at JDSF on February 18th to hear the industries arguments for continuing "sustainable" harvesting. Eileen asked anyone with thoughts or talking points to send them to her in advance so she can raise them during the tour of the Casper area forest. Several people

noted that the industry has a financial bias towards expanding and continuing timber cutting and that it buys experts to write favorable reports to justify them being able to cut trees. The industry can not be relied upon to provide credible information that truly represents the “public’s interest” and their information should be deemed as biased by their financial interests unless there is strong proof otherwise.

- III. Carrie Durkee talked about recent efforts by the GRI infrastructure workgroup to expand our organizations public outreach capacity. GRI has enlisted the help of Susan Kelley (sp) to set up an internet based means for sending out information. A meeting is scheduled with Susan next Thursday, February 10th at 2:30 pm to discuss the logistics of an expanded public awareness approach - i.e, what should we be sending out, to whom, etc. Anyone interested in being part of that meeting should contact Carrie in advance and she will send them the zoom link info.
- IV. Eileen Mitro reported on her efforts to reach out to the Ukiah High School Environmental Club. The club is exploring a number of climate issues - water, solar, recycling, voter registration, etc. - and Eileen has attempted to connect local community leaders focusing on the environment with the club. Martin Millick the owner operator of Cold Creek Composting agreed to talk to the students and the persons running the Russian River Flood Control Board also want to talk to the club. Sandy Turner commented that students have a community service obligation and that linking environments efforts to senior projects is a good way to make the connection between environmental work and the students.
- V. Carrie Durkee reported that she is working with Marcy Snyder and others to start a signature collection effort. Initially, that will be working with the Pomo Indians to collect signatures to save local redwood forests. Carrie said that several signature collection projects are in the planning phase and there would be more opportunities for direct action in the near future.
- VI. Sandy Turner made a short report on local efforts on the coast to organize a “transition town” effort. About forty people have expressed interest and about twenty participated in a recent zoom meeting. A followup meeting is planned and he will keep GRI in the loop.

VII. Jim Schoonover and Eileen Mitro reported that they worked with Marie Jones of the Mendocino Climate Change Action Advisory Committee (MCCAAC) to draft a letter recommending improved language on climate priorities in the proposed county strategic plan that was presented to the Board of Supervisors (BoS) last week. None of the proposed changes were incorporated in the proposal presented to the BoS even though the suggestions were sent to the strategic plan workgroup well in advance. Peter McNamee reported on what happened when the strategic plan was presented to the BoS. He noted that the Bd was split in their comments about the proposed plan - while several Supervisors expressed support in concept, there was also general recognition at the proposal present was not adequate or sufficiently complete to be considered for adoption. In particular, Chair Williams made it clear that he could not support the proposal unless it was amended to provide workable implementation strategies that the county could afford to implement given its limited revenues and on-going fiscal obligations. The plan was sent back to the strategic plan workgroup without a vote of support by the Bd. Peter commented that in his opinion, the proposal presented to the Bd last week was the product of a fatally flawed process that ignored the fundamental components of successful strategic planning and strategic management - in particular, this plan proposal did not start from an agreement about the public wants county government to accomplish and what the public is willing to pay the cost of accomplishing. As a result, this plan is just a wish list without substantive public support and buy-in.

VIII. Peter McNamee presented an update and report on recent progress regarding GRI's climate action proposals to electrify the county fleet and reduce the carbon footprint of county government. County General Services Agency (GSA) has prepared a draft report recommending the county contract with Enterprise Rental to lease replacement vehicles for the county fleet that are either hybrid or EVs and that this would be phased in starting with the fleet supporting the Social Services Department. The GSA proposal would if fully implemented gradually phase in a electric fleet which would allow the installation of EV charges to fully support that fleet. GSA's proposal also estimates that this approach will result in millions in cost savings over the next decade. Peter recommended and the workgroup agreed to share the proposal with the MCCAAC and ask them to send a joint

letter of support. Eileen volunteered to get the GSA/Enterprise proposal to the MCCAAC and ask for their support.

- IX. George Reinhardt and Eileen commented that the lack of EV chargers is the bottle neck now and that GRI should shift to focus on how to leverage more investment in charger installations by the private sector. George, Eileen and Jim offered to explore contacting the auto companies like VW and Ford that have shown some leadership on this recently and see if GRI can help support such investments by writing a letter expressing our support for their efforts.
- X. Susan Nutter made a report that in Fort Bragg the City Council Group (CCG) and GRI activists continue to look for qualified candidates to run in next November's city council election. Four seats are up for election - a majority of the board - and we need a slate of candidates that progressives and support. She encourage everyone to look for people that support what GRI is doing to come forward and contact her about running or about how they can support a slate of progressive candidates.
- XI. Carrie concluded the meeting by noting that Sara Rose would be ask to present at the next CCW meeting at 10 am on February 19th at 10 am.