## **Butte County Department of Development Services**

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# BUTTE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION SUMMARY NOTES

December 12, 2013 Public Hearing
Butte County Draft Climate Action Plan (CAP), CAP Work Plan
and EIR Addendum

**Planning Commission Action:** At this hearing, the Planning Commission approved a Resolution recommending approval of the Draft Climate Action Plan, related Errata, CAP Work Plan, and EIR Addendum to the Board of Supervisors.

#### Project Description

The Butte County Department of Development Services coordinated preparation of the CAP for the unincorporated area of Butte County. The Butte County General Plan was adopted and the General Plan EIR was certified in April 2010, and amended in November 2012 by the Butte County Board of Supervisors (County Resolutions 10-152, 10-150, 12-124, and 12-123). General Plan goals, policies, and actions to address global Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions include, but are not limited to, a requirement to reduce GHG emissions from County operations and community-wide sources.

General Plan Action COS-A1.1 specifically calls for preparation, maintenance, and implementation of a CAP. The proposed CAP identifies a GHG emissions reduction target and describes how the County will reduce both community-wide and government operations emissions to achieve the target. The CAP identifies a GHG emissions reduction target of 15 percent below baseline levels by the year 2020. The year 2006 has been identified as the baseline year in conformance with state legislation.

The CAP provides measures and associated actions for energy efficiency and renewable energy, alternative fuel vehicles and equipment, transportation, agriculture, and solid waste. It also addresses GHG emissions generated from County government operations and outlines a

strategy the County can use to adapt to a changing climate. The CAP supports statewide greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals identified in State Assembly Bill (AB) 32 and State Senate Bill (SB) 375. An EIR Addendum to the previously Certified General Plan 2030 Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Supplemental EIR is proposed for this project consistent with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.

#### Public Hearing:

At this hearing, the Planning Commission heard introductory remarks from Development Services Director Tim Snellings, and presentations from Principal Planner Dan Breedon and Project Manager and PMC staff member Jeff Henderson, the primary consultant assisting that County with the preparation of the CAP. Mr. Breedon provided an overview of the staff report and background material leading up to the Planning Commission hearing. Mr. Henderson provided an overview of the Climate Action Plan and technical aspects associated with the preparation of the CAP.

The Planning Commissioners asked several questions primarily related to how Greenhouse Gases were inventoried and tracked under the CAP. Questions and issues discussed included:

- Will the administration of the CAP, including monitoring and reporting have a staffing implication on Development Services? Development Services Director Tim Snellings said that the monitoring and reporting would be handled by the Advance Planning Section of the Department and that monitoring and reporting would be handled on a contract basis to a consultant, with an estimated annual cost of \$10,000.00.
- The positive influences of groundwater recharge on reducing pumping costs and therefore reducing GHG production was discussed. By recharging the water table AG pumps will be used less often, reducing consumption. Staff will be following up with the Department of Water & Resource Conservation for input to be provided to the Board.
- Potential differences of GHG generation between flooded rice fields and burning to manage rice waste. Staff indicated that data concerning this subject is not conclusive but that better information is expected to develop over time.
- Sequestration topics including how agricultural lands factored into the sequestration of GHG. Staff indicated that the sequestration of carbon by various land uses was not factored into the overall reductions inventoried under the CAP but that the CAP does recognize the positive impact Agricultural land has in providing for sequestration.
- Waste decomposition and how GHG amounts were factored for waste diversion from the Neal Road Recycling and Waste Facility.

- Hydroelectric power's role in lowering GHG generation in Butte County from the Oroville Dam for instance.
- Felt that the work plan and measures were well done and could assist a business owner or homeowner.

### The Draft Climate Action Plan received the following public comment:

Colleen Cecil, Executive Director of the Farm Bureau spoke and related that she had discussed the CAP with staff on several occasions. Ms. Cecil related that Agriculture should be viewed as the "shining star" in helping to achieve GHG reductions. Farmers provide unique, creative and sustainable solutions in their business and agricultural activities. Providing incentives for the long term strength of Agriculture is a key concept that the CAP can help with. Farmers and ranchers are striving to work with others in ways to increase efficiencies overall.