



ACSI

MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATION

Chair Rebecca O'Neil | Vice Chair Mary Peveto

November 20, 2014

Dear Chair Kafoury and Commissioners:

In 2010, Multnomah County created its own citizen Advisory Committee on Sustainability and Innovation [ACSI]. The founding ordinance established ACSI to advise the Board and Office of Sustainability, and to evaluate and recommend strategic direction on key opportunities for the County. The Committee currently has 13 members, meets on a quarterly basis, and is focused on three work groups: energy, air toxics, and governance. In 2014, the Committee has decided to organize under a governance structure and to make specific and annual policy recommendations to the Board. Our recommendations follow.

DIESEL EMISSIONS

ACSI members acknowledge and thank the Board for its leadership on air toxics unaddressed by federal or state regulations through the articulation of the human health, environmental justice, and climate toll being paid by Oregon's citizens. We believe that Multnomah County, with the state's highest concentration of air pollution sources and the largest population of any county in the state, is in the strongest position to demonstrate the benefits of state policy governing diesel emissions. With that in mind, ACSI members suggest that the Board of Commissioners:

- Adopt, as part of the County Legislative Priority list, Oregon state legislative initiatives that reduce diesel emissions in the 2015 session of the Legislature.
- Request the data and evidence that can support the benefits of reducing diesel emissions. Consider directing the Multnomah County Health Department to commence work immediately, in order to provide substantive support to the outreach and education efforts underway to inform County citizens and decision makers. Multnomah County Health should produce a comprehensive "Cost of Diesel" report to inform decision makers of the potential benefits of diesel reduction initiatives--and the health risks to our citizens.
- Adopt a "Clean Diesel Contracting" policy to reduce diesel emissions from all large County projects. In addition, we ask that the County actively encourage other municipalities and local governments with projects within county borders to adopt clean diesel contracting policies.

Advisory Committee

Members

Loulie Brown
Sabin CDC

David Brook
Car-sharing &
Energy Consultant

Leslie Carlson
Carlson
Communications

Enriqueta
Gonzales
Center for Diversity
and the Environment

Rebecca O'Neil
OR Dept. of Energy

Mary Peveto
Neighbors for
Clean Air

Roberta Robles

Gladys Ruiz
Audubon Society of
Portland

Kimberly Stafford
Tonkon Torp LLP

Douglas Tsoi

Jackie Yerby
Cambria Health
Solutions

Individuals do not
necessarily represent
their business or their
employer while
serving in their
capacity as a member
of ACSI

ENERGY

Multnomah County has also shown leadership in the energy sector, notably in development of the County-City Climate Action Plan. The County has undertaken significant efforts to reduce its own energy use, offer creative energy solutions to its constituents, and request of its electricity suppliers that they systematically reduce the carbon content in power delivered to the County.

Property Assessed Clean Energy for commercial buildings (abbreviated as C-PACE) is a creative energy financing program that typically allows businesses to finance qualifying energy efficiency and clean energy improvements on their properties through a special assessment on the property tax bill, which is repaid over a period of years. This program is similar to Clean Energy Works, but that program operates exclusively in the residential sector and finances energy efficiency retrofits through a customer's power bill. Multnomah County is uniquely positioned to offer the program to county business constituents. ACSI recommends that the Board of Commissioners:

- Make a decision in 2015 about whether a C-PACE program could benefit the County and its residents. If the program is deemed effective, the County should bring together the Assessor's office with the Office of Sustainability to build and run the program.

ACSI also strongly supports the County's current practice of fossil fuel divestment. We agree with Portfolio 21's analysis,¹ which describes oil, gas, and coal industries as having "unacceptable risks" that can be substituted if not outperformed by industries with more sustainable business models. ACSI recommends that the Board of Commissioners:

- Adopt an ordinance that affirms the County's commitment to fossil fuel divestment.
- Conduct a broader sustainability review of current investments for equity and economic justice and report results to the Commission in 2015.

OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY BUDGET AND INDEPENDENCE

The Office of Sustainability is currently housed within the Board of County Commissioners and serves the Chair of the County Commission. The Office has experienced some challenges through leadership changes in recent months, but we feel its place serving the Chair is the correct place for it to reside.

- ACSI recommends that the Office remain within executive services, as independent staff directly accountable to the Commission.

GOVERNANCE

The Committee developed and adopted a charter, in accordance with the Committee's originating ordinance. The purpose of this document is to give members, staff, and the Board guidance on the Committee's scope and processes. The charter is appended to this letter for your information.

¹ Portfolio 21. *Managing Investment Portfolios without Fossil Fuel Stocks*, October 2013. http://portfolio21.com/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2013/01/ManagingInvestmentPortfolios_FINAL.pdf (last visited October 13, 2014).

ACSI's founding ordinance specifies that ACSI members may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. In the experience of the committee, this limitation has resulted in the early loss of important institutional knowledge and of dedicated members. We believe that allowing members to serve a third consecutive term would still allow room for growth and new members to contribute fresh ideas.

- ACSI recommends that the Board agree to amend the ordinance and allow ACSI members to serve three consecutive terms.

The members sincerely appreciate the County's effort to recruit citizens to consider the County's role in sustainability. We look forward to working with the County on the measures discussed above. We also welcome input and the opportunity to weigh in on additional subject matter as needed.

Sincerely,

Your 2014 ACSI Members