



ACSI

MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABILITY AND INNOVATION

Chair Jackie Yerby | Vice Chair Mary Peveto

November 9, 2015

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 quality, and the Climate Action Plan. Below please find ACSI's 2015 recommendations to the Board of Commissioners on those policy areas.

AIR QUALITY

ACSI members would like to thank the Board for your strong commitment to addressing air quality concerns in our community. The County lent a critical voice to Oregon State legislative efforts to adopt comprehensive clean diesel standards. Even though the effort for a statewide solution was not successful, we believe that the County has helped lay the groundwork for legislative action in 2017. In the interim, we encourage the County to take whatever actions you can to protect the public health from diesel particulate matter. Specifically, we recommend:

- Adoption of 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.
- Creation of a comprehensive "Cost of Diesel" report by the Multnomah County Health Department. This request, reaffirmed by ACSI in alignment with our previous recommendation, would serve to inform decision makers of the potential health risks to our residents related to diesel emissions, and the benefits of diesel reduction initiatives. In particular, we believe the report should include a focus on the environmental justice issues related to diesel emissions, such as the disproportionate impacts such emissions have on school children riding older diesel buses.

Wood smoke from home heating is also a major source of air toxics in Multnomah County. Concentrations of air pollution from wood smoke threaten to push Multnomah County out of compliance with the Federal Clean Air Act. In addition, an analysis from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality found that air toxics from wood smoke disproportionately impact Latino families. We recommend that Multnomah County follow the lead of Washington County and enact specific policies to curtail wood burning. Specifically, we recommend:

- Adoption of a burn ban policy on days when air circulation is insufficient to disperse pollutants. This policy should include exemptions for residents who have no alternative to wood fire heat.
- Exploring opportunities to incentivize the replacement of wood stoves with less polluting home heating systems.
- Educating the public on the health impacts of wood smoke.

Advisory Committee Members

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

ENERGY

Over the past year the Board has taken bold action to support a low carbon future for Multnomah County. The Board adopted the updated 2015 Climate Action Plan, established a Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (CPACE) pilot program, and codified the County practice of divestment from companies that hold fossil fuel reserves. We are heartened by this evidence of our County's commitment to protecting the climate.

ACSI also appreciates the Board's support and approval of the CPACE program. CPACE is a critical step toward implementing the Climate Action Plan. With the pilot initially limited to Portland's Urban Renewal Areas, it will be important to prioritize establishing a private lender participation model, which will enable wider financial sector participation and financing access across the County. We are excited to continue our support of the design and development of the CPACE program through our energy sub-committee.

- ACSI recommends that the Multnomah County Office of Sustainability and the Portland Development Commission (PDC) prioritize and accelerate the implementation of the private lender participation model.

In addition to adopting the updated Climate Action Plan, the Board has also prioritized strong climate policy at the State level. ACSI applauds the County's support for the Clean Fuel Standard, which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation fuels, the state's largest source of emissions, by 10% over the next 10 years. We encourage the Government Relations team to continue to support smart carbon reduction strategies at the State level.

A related issue that ACSI believes requires immediate attention is improving Oregon's state building codes. Oregon currently lags behind Federal building code standards. Although the state Building Code Division (BCD) has the discretion to update codes, we are concerned that they will not take action in 2015 without the county's support, leaving Oregon even further behind the rest of the country.

- We ask that the County encourage the Oregon BCD to exercise their authority to update building codes to ensure that new construction meets Federal building standards. Such action will directly support existing State and County carbon reduction goals.

ACSI also applauds the County's commitment to affordable housing and housing the homeless. The unprecedented level of funding and coordination that the County has brought to this issue is a testament to the Board's vision and forethought. We ask that the County consider incorporating green building standards into these housing developments. Prioritizing energy efficiency and indoor air quality can lead to cost savings and increased income for people who live in those buildings due to lower utility bills, and fewer work days lost to illness from indoor asthma triggers. Affordable, healthy, and efficient housing is a key component of building a climate resilient community. We specifically request that the County:

- Establish a green building policy for all County financed housing projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to advise the County on these important issues. We hope that County leadership will continue to look to ACSI as a resource, and we look forward to advising the County on additional policy areas as needed.

Sincerely,

Your 2015 ACSI Members