

**ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (EQ) POLICY COMMITTEE
HIGHLIGHTS**

Thursday, April 15, 2021

Zoom

[Policy Committee Slides](#)

ATTENDANCE

Members: Chris Rogers (Chair); David Pollock (Vice Chair); Paul Akinjo; Jan Arbuckle; Emily Beach; Daniel Brotman; Illece Buckley–Weber; Kim Carr; Jen Cavanaugh; Anna Chouteau; Margaret Clark; Robert Collacott; Denise Diaz; Pat Eklund; Eric Friedman; Debra Garnes; Miguel Guardado; Marvin Heinz; Jean Josey; Derrek Kaff; Ariel Kelley; Mina Layba; Jesse Loren; Diana Mahmud; Julio Martinez; Marjorie Mohler; Kitty Moore; Cynthia Moran; Melissa Morgan; Devin Murphy; Eric Nelson; Richard O'Brien; Andy Pease; Randall Putz; Gabriel Quinto; Lisa Ann Rapp; Jeff Rosaler; Julie Ryan; Kristine Scott; Andy Sobel; Niroop Srivatsa; Mireya Turner; Gillian van Muyden; Teresa Vargas; Arwen Wacht; Kevin Wilk; Bryce Wilson; Frank Yokoyama

League Partners: Rod Brewer; Justin Skarb

Staff: Derek Dolfie, Legislative Representative; Caroline Cirrincione, Legislative Analyst

I. Welcome and Introductions

President Cheryl Viegas Walker, Mayor, El Centro, welcomed everyone to the April policy committee meeting and thanked members for their service to all California cities. She explained that policy committees are vitally important and directly connected to Cal Cities' core mission of advocating for the common interests of cities.

Mayor Viegas Walker emphasized this past year has been challenging for city officials, navigating a global pandemic while managing budget shortfalls that have forced cuts to local services. However, she explained that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. The supply of vaccine doses is growing, eligibility is expanding, and assistance for cities in the recently enacted American Rescue Plan is on the way.

With the legislative session in full swing, Mayor Viegas Walker stressed the role city leaders play in advancing Cal Cities advocacy efforts. She urged policy committee members to contact their lawmakers, so their voices are heard loud and clear. She closed by thanking everyone in attendance for their work as a policy committee member.

Mayor Viegas Walker then introduced Carolyn Coleman, Cal Cities Executive Director. Ms. Coleman welcomed committee members and thanked them for their work. She applauded the efforts of city leaders in pushing their members of Congress to pass the American Rescue Plan. Ms. Coleman explained that Cal Cities is working diligently to protect cities' interests not only in the State Legislature but also as a partner in implementing the American Rescue Plan. She explained that in the coming weeks, Cal Cities will be distributing resources so cities have the tools they need to utilize this funding in their communities. She thanked committee members again for serving on the committee and wished them a great meeting.

Chair Chris Rogers, Mayor, Santa Rosa, and Vice Chair David Pollock, Councilmember, Moorpark, welcomed committee members and provided an introduction.

II. Public Comment

Chair Chris Rogers asked if there was any public comment. Michael Bisch, Director, Yolo Food Bank, highlighted the importance of SB 1383's food recovery program as a tool to eliminate food insecurity in the state of California.

III. General Briefing

In accordance with the customary practice of convening all policy committee members for a general briefing prior to the start of policy committee meetings, the Cal Cities advocacy team compiled a [General Briefing Update Document](#), which includes the latest on legislative and budgetary matters affecting cities.

IV. Legislative Update

Legislative Representative Derek Dolfie briefed the committee on key bills of importance to cities and what to expect in this year's legislative session. These measures covered issues such as solid waste, disaster and emergency preparedness, community energy resiliency, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. A list of the Cal Cities EQ interest bills can be found [here](#) and a complete list of all the Cal Cities EQ bills can be found [here](#).

V. Legislative Agenda

Mr. Dolfie briefed the committee on action items for consideration. The first and only action item for the committee's consideration was [SB 412 \(Ochoa Bogh\)](#), which would expand the definition of an emergency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to include efforts to prevent, mitigate, and minimize disasters. After Mr. Dolfie's overview of the measure, a robust discussion ensued. Members raised concerns about the adverse environmental impacts this measure may have and emphasized the importance of local governments being the overseers of these types of projects. Ultimately, a motion was made to support SB 412 (Ochoa Bogh) and direct Cal Cities staff to seek clarification to ensure cities will have a check on these CEQA exempt projects in their jurisdiction. This motion passed with 37-2.

VI. Funding Climate Measures In Your Community Discussion

Chair Rodgers started the funding climate measures in your community discussion. The purpose of this agenda item was to provide an open forum and discussion opportunity for committee members to share ideas and strategies on how cities can fund local climate and environmental measures, especially those issues related to the EQ policy committee. Committee members highlighted a single-use plastics tax, incentives for drought-tolerant plants, and moving away from natural gas in new construction. Additionally, members requested Cal Cities continue to advocate for new state funding for environmental measures.

VII. The Role of CCAs in Power Shutoff Events

Chair Rodgers introduced Neal Reardon, Director of Regulatory Affairs for Sonoma Clean Power, to present on how local governments can improve grid reliability and resilience through Community Choice Aggregation (CCA). Mr. Reardon explained how community choice works, how utility-initiated power shutoffs have impacted CCAs, and Sonoma Clean Power's resiliency strategies to keep the lights on. The Committee also asked Mr. Reardon several questions.

VIII. Next Meeting: Thursday, June 3, 2021, 1:30 – 4:30pm.