

County approves Climate Action Plan

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Yolo County has adopted a Climate Action Plan -- but an amendment had to be included for it to be passed.

The Board of Supervisors voted 3-1 Tuesday in support of the Climate Action Plan. Supervisor Jim Provenza proposed an amendment that would have Yolo County work with other counties regarding Assembly Bill 32, which requires greenhouse emissions to be reduced in California to 1990 levels by 2020.

Provenza said a larger forum should look at the difference between rural and urban counties regarding AB 32 compliance. In addition, he wanted to look at the issue regarding unincorporated areas having to make the same level of reductions as urban areas.

Besides the AB 32 amendment, he also added to the resolution that "Yolo County's strong commitment to the reduction of greenhouse gasses must be balanced with its strong commitment to agriculture and the role of agriculture in reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

Supervisor Don Saylor said AB 32 was a separate motion, but approved of the rest of the motion.

Provenza said he wouldn't be able to vote for the plan without the AB 32 amendment. He voted to approve the plan with his proposed amendments, as did Board Chairman Matt Rexroad and Supervisor Duane Chamberlain. Saylor voted against it.

Supervisor Mike McGowan was not present at the meeting as he was in Sacramento for California State Association of Counties meeting regarding the state budget. He is the first vice president of the association.

The board was initially going to vote on the Climate Action Plan during its regular Feb. 1 board meeting, but following a complaint from Brooks resident Vicki Murphy and errors in the plan, the board postponed it until March 1. It was then postponed until Tuesday.

One of the errors that was corrected was the amount of nitrogen used for alfalfa, when in fact alfalfa takes nitrogen from the air. The growth of permanent crops in the county was also included.

While Chamberlain voted for the plan, he expressed concerns with it.

"I really appreciate that you guys have straightened out a lot of the problems here," he said. "I still have some major problems with the Climate Action Plan."

One of those issues was regarding the science behind the plan and how much carbon dioxide is getting into the air. Chamberlain said plants use carbon dioxide to grow and help clear the air.

"I'm not against this," he said. "The basics are good, but the science is terrible."

The 2030 General Plan contains more than 350 policies that deal with climate change, including a requirement to develop a climate action plan. The plan helps implement some of those policies, including increased energy conservation standards in new construction.

A climate plan approval is also necessary for Specific Plans, such as the one in Dunnigan, to move forward.

While the Climate Action Plan has passed, it is flexible enough to be amended if needed, said David Morrison, assistant director of Planning and Public Works.