



## MINUTES

### Finance Administration and Police Subcommittee Meeting

Meeting Date: June 27, 2019 4:00 p.m.

Meeting Location: City Hall

124 N. Cloverdale Blvd., Cloverdale, CA

#### Subcommittee Members

Mayor Melanie Bagby, Chair  
Councilmember Wolter

City Manager, David Kelley  
Acting Police Chief, Robert Stewart  
Finance Manager, Susie Holmes

1. **Call to Order:** present: Vice Mayor Wolter, Mayor Bagby, City Manager Kelley, Assistant City Manager/CDC Thompson, Sergeant Parker, Shannon Peterson
2. **Communications:**
  - a) Email from Ann Elston regarding illegal campfires at the Russian River. Ms. Ellston notified the City that she had seen unattended fires at the river. The area is not in the City's jurisdiction, but Fire Services was contacted about the situation.
  - b) A letter from Jorge Rebagliati expressed urgency for the City to participate in the Sonoma County State of Emergency regarding climate change, to prioritize Climate Change (Deep) Adaptation (attached) and take action at the local level. A letter from Cloverdale Indivisible urged the City to pass a Climate Emergency Resolution in response to climate change matters. Mayor Bagby stated that she had responded to the letters.
3. **Public Comment:** None
4. **Minutes Approved:** May 23, 2019 meeting minutes
5. **Current Items for Discussion**
  - a) Presentation on PARS (Susie Holmes and David Kelley). Fred Hurst and Kevin O'Rourke made a presentation for the PARS 115 Trust Program, that is designed to enhance pension stability and retiree medical benefits. The program could benefit the City and offset rising costs. The trust administrator is PARS, the trustee is US Bank, and the administrator is HighMark Capital Management. The City can decide how much it wants to invest in the trust. So far, 196 cities are participating, including Healdsburg and Rohnert Park. The County of Sonoma is their largest client. Discussion ensued about the City's future unfunded liability, which participation in the plan could help to reduce potential increases in the ad valorem tax rate. Mayor Bagby and Vice Mayor Wolter expressed concern about the sustainability of investments and compatibility with City policies and want the City attorney to weigh in before committing to participate. The presenters commented that there are many investment options available, and that they have a fiduciary responsibility to their clients; however, investments are not insured by the FDIC. The speakers stated that they will provide examples of different investment strategies to the City Manager to use in analyzing what would work best for the City, as well as copies of staff report from other jurisdictions.
  - b) Discuss traffic concerns at Asti Road/First Street and Citrus Fair Drive/Asti Road. In response to a letter from Angela Cordova that originally went to the Public Works Subcommittee, Sergeant Parker indicated

that the speed trailer has been put at the intersection of Asti Road and Citrus Fair Drive, northbound on Asti Road. Officers will also be monitoring the area. The need for traffic calming at First Street and Asti Road was also discussed, although it may be delayed until the local infrastructure improvements and bike improvements at the bridge are put in place. A suggestion was made to post a sign that read "slower speeds ahead" on First Street between the bridge and Asti Road. Mr. Kelley stated that this can be looked at in the Capital Improvement Plan. In the meantime, the speed trailer will be rotated to the First/Asti intersection. Vice Mayor Wolter indicated that he will call Ms. Cordova.

- c) Discuss Investment Account to fund final Cloverdale RDA Bond Program City Manager Kelley indicated that a balloon payment will be due in 2038 and around \$950,000 will need to be invested in Exchange Bank to assure that the funds will be available when the payment is due. City Council will need to approve a resolution to establish a tax-exempt account.

#### **6. Standing Items / Items Continued**

- a) Draft Homelessness Strategic Plan – Updates on Supervisor Gore’s Effort to establish Regional Community Advisory Group. Mayor Bagby stated she had met with stakeholders in the north county group. Mr. Thompson will be taking a list of participants to City Council, comprised of organizations and concerned citizens. Sergeant Parker asked that the Russian River Watershed Council be included. Ms. Hollbohm reviewed her information about the homeless people she is aware of and discussed how the issue is being addressed in other areas of the country.
- b) Update on Measure P and Cannabis Permits - City Manager Kelley indicated that from October 2018 until the end of June, \$80,011.00 has been collected in excise tax and late payments and has been deposited in the General Fund. The City Council needs to identify how it wants to spend the money. Vice Mayor Wolter commented that the police department needs a mule so they can patrol the railroad track area.

- 7. **Information Only Memos:** City Manager Kelley mentioned that the City pool was closed by Environmental Health because of a problem with a drain that is a safety issue.

#### **8. Future Agenda Items (subject to change):**

Request by Vice Mayor Wolter to revisit Ordinance 1008.100 (tags non-operating vehicles parked on the street) Further discussion ensued about AB515 in the senate which wants to prohibit towing, and which would preclude the ordinance. Vice Mayor Wolter stated he had found some jurisdictions that require the vehicles to be moved more than ½ mile from the former parking spot.

#### **9. Pending Items:**

- a) None

#### **10. Good of the Order:**

- 11. **Adjournment:** Adjourn to the next meeting on Thursday July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 4:00 pm. or alternate date as requested at Cloverdale City Hall, 124 N. Cloverdale Blvd., Cloverdale CA 95425

**Subject:** SAVING SONOMA COUNTY

Dear Sonoma County Supervisors and City Councils:

This is an update of the e-mail below, sent on April 22nd, where I made the case for the extreme need for Sonoma County to enter a Climate Change State of Emergency in accordance with the exponentially-growing and now irreversible Climate Change, and emphasized the immediate priority of Climate Change (Deep) Adaptation.

The day after that e-mail was sent to all of you, **Supervisor James Gore** seemed to resonate with at least part of our proposed strategy when he addressed Emergency Officials at the FEMA's Santa Rosa PrepTalks event on Tuesday, April 23rd. As reported by The Press Democrat (PDF attached), he said:

**““WAKE UP,” said the top line of Gore’s slide, followed by “WAKE UP OTHERS” and “STAY WOKE.””**

**"Preparing to react to the next flood, wildfire or earthquake — and sharing plans with residents — are the vital steps local government officials must take in disaster-prone areas like Northern California. Otherwise, “you will find yourselves in a world of hurt later”."**

If you immediately implement, at the necessary scale, the strategy he proposed in his presentation, Sonoma County will be closer to becoming a Climate Change - Ready County, as we have been proposing since 2016. If you add all the actions necessary to reduce the occurrence and consequences of floods, wildfires and earthquakes (tornados, extreme droughts, etc.) through Climate Change Adaptation and Climate Change Mitigation, then we will be as close as we can be to becoming a Climate Change-Ready Sonoma County. Also, openly explaining to our people that all the changes and preparations have to be made because of CLIMATE CHANGE, instead of calling it the New Normal or not mentioning it at all, is extremely important to give the public purpose and focus by knowing what "war"we are fighting (It is not Bad Luck, Poor Forest Management, a Fluke, a Short Natural Cycle, etc.. IT IS CLIMATE CHANGE (If you have any doubts about it, invite me to inform you)).

Climate (Change) Emergency Resolutions, electric buses, more solar panels, powering public buildings with Evergreen electricity, etc., are positive gestures but will not protect us from immediate and future disasters. **Only comprehensive, at scale, and immediate actions, in ALL the Climate Change fronts can give us the best chances to remain as viable communities.**

Emphasizing the growing fire vulnerability California is in, a few days of a triple-digit heat wave, with low humidity and higher winds, in early June, ignited 236 new fires,

including the 2,200-acre Sand fire in Yolo County, that could only be contained when winds died down (see attached PDF).

With the certainty that Sonoma County will experience wildfires from now until the rains come back and with a high probability that those fires, if not avoided or stopped early, will greatly increase the destruction of lives, environment and infrastructure, engaging into a State of Emergency with the full cooperation and participation of our communities, is the most sensible action you can take.

Creating strategic fire buffer zones for open fields, cities, towns and buildings; augmenting the deployment of water reservoirs for fire-fighting (ponds, stationary tanks, mobile water tankers, etc.); creating safer energy transmission systems; hiring unemployed and homeless residents to contribute to the large amount of work that will take to get ready; creating volunteer corps for the same purpose; organizing, supporting and funding neighborhoods not just to prepare to evacuate but to protect each other and their homes and businesses from being destroyed by fires; are suggested actions that we deem extremely urgent to give Sonoma County the best chance of being a livable place in the future.

And these efforts to transform into a Climate Change-Ready Sonoma County, will have economic benefits, as we have pointed out in previous e-mails. In the article below you will read what the CEO of one of the largest reinsurance companies in the world thinks of the future of communities, whether they adapt to "climate risks" or not.

**"Eric Smith, president and chief executive officer for the Americas at Swiss Re, one of the world's largest reinsurance companies, told the Times that cities that are quick to adapt to climate risks "are going to attract the jobs and the factories of the future."**

**And those that aren't?**

**"There's going to be communities that I think will be left way, way behind," Smith said."**

<https://weather.com/news/news/2019-06-21-climate-change-seawalls-cost>

Best regards,

Jorge Rebagliati

Climate Change Emergency Declaration Campaign

707-578-6049

**"We are the ones we've been waiting for"**

**DECLARATION: "Climate Crisis Is Already A Major Disaster"**

**From:** Jorge Rebagliati <[jorgerober@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jorgerober@sbcglobal.net)>

**Sent:** Monday, April 22, 2019, 4:58:24 PM PDT

**Subject:** TRUTH TO BE RECKONED WITH ON EARTH DAY: CLIMATE CHANGE IS GLOBAL. ONGOING CLIMATE CHANGE DISASTERS ARE LOCAL

To Sonoma County Supervisors and City Councils:

**TRUTH TO BE RECKONED WITH ON EARTH DAY: CLIMATE CHANGE IS GLOBAL. ONGOING CLIMATE CHANGE DISASTERS ARE LOCAL.**

Climate Change Action is still mostly being focused on Climate Change as the global problem that it is, but mostly missing the reality that, for all practical purposes, Climate Change is **a critical local problem**, to be addressed locally. In the present state of the Climate, that misunderstanding can be the deciding factor between the existence or disappearance of a community and between life and death.

Sonoma County must take this reality extremely seriously and urgently evaluate what the County and its Cities are locally facing and what is the most urgent response necessary, because the margin of error is getting smaller everyday.

There is no doubt that you understand that the New Normal (as popularized by Governor Jerry Brown) means Climate Change. You also understand that this New Normal translates into frequent and increasingly bigger disasters, and that it has been the major culprit for devastating disasters like the Tubbs and Nuns Fire Storms in 2017 and the extreme Russian River flooding in February 2019. 2017 was the worst fire year in California history, and then 2018 became the worst fire year in California history.

All that understanding should help you guide your urgent response to the **GREATEST THREAT SONOMA COUNTY HAS EVER FACED**. A threat so significant that jeopardizes the very existence of our communities. What you (and us) decide to do and not to do about Climate Change in the coming months, may seal the destiny of Sonoma County.

The signs of our communities being in danger of crumbling by the effects of Climate Change are showing in many ways:

- 1) Sonoma County residents are already being killed by the environmental disasters potentiated by Climate Change.
- 2) Sonoma County residents are being made sick, and even killed, by side effects of the disasters, such as toxic smoke from local and non-local fires, mold infestations from flooding, and emotional trauma.
- 3) Thousands of homes and other structures have been destroyed or seriously damaged by the disasters.
- 4) Many homeowners that lost their homes in the disasters were underinsured or uninsured. The estimated average insurance gap (deficit) for Sonoma County homeowners who lost their homes to the October 2017 Fire Storms was \$317,000.
- 5) Replacement of lost homes has been slow, and new homes are mostly being built with similar vulnerable materials as before they were destroyed and in the same high-risk areas.
- 6) Disaster insurance has become scarcer and more expensive. For instance, Farmers Insurance had not been insuring properties in Fountain Grove since 5 years before the Tubbs Fire and now it is not selling insurance in high-risk areas of Southern California. In a near future, it is foreseen that insurers will stop offering disaster insurance anywhere in the country because they can not afford it anymore.
- 7) State and Federal assistance after the disasters have been insufficient and often too slow.
- 8) PG&E has declared bankruptcy, what rules it out as a major source of recovery funds.
- 9) Insufficient skilled workforce for the rebuilding and repair work generated by the disasters.
- 10) Loss of local revenue for our governments.
- 11) Hopelessness and uncertainty about the future spreading among our people.
- 12) Heightened fear of losing everything, including our own lives.
- 13) Significant migration out of Sonoma County of victims of disasters.
- 14) Other signs you may be aware of.

Reducing anthropogenic Greenhouse Gases (GHG) emissions now, has a very different effect on the Climate than when, about 40 years ago, the nations of the Earth were asked by scientists to start cutting down GHG emissions globally by about 3% every year. At that time, the [Climate Change Self-Reinforcing Amplifying Feedbacks](#) (Climate Change Slow Feedbacks), such as [the warming of the oceans](#), the slowing down of the interoceanic conveyor belt, and the melting of the ice masses and permafrost, were not very activate, and the anthropogenic GHG emissions "forcing" was the main factor that was driving the Global Warming of the atmosphere.

Forty years later, the self-reinforcing amplifying feedbacks "forcing" have become more influential than the anthropogenic forcing, setting up changes in the atmospheric system that will not get reversed for an unknown period of time, of at least thousands of years.

The warming of the oceans (at all depths) is the most dramatic example of a "Climate Change Slow Feedback". The oceans have been storing heat from the atmosphere, during the last 150 years, [at an average rate of the energy generated by the explosion of 1.5 Hiroshima-size atomic bombs per second](#), acting as a buffer (also by trapping CO2) to the heat in the atmosphere caused by human activities. Those oceans have almost reached saturation after absorbing more than 93% of the heat trapped by humanity's GHG emissions. **If that heat had not been absorbed by the oceans, the atmosphere today would be 97 degrees Fahrenheit (36 degrees Celsius) hotter.** Because of this near-saturation, new GHG emissions are staying mostly in the atmosphere, and heat, CO2 and methane are being released from the oceans into the atmosphere.

The natural human resistance to make big changes, induces many of us to want to believe the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) 2018 Report that opined that humanity has several more years to "safely" pollute the atmosphere with more GHG, but ***the truth is that there is no "carbon budget" left*** and, that, therefore, each ton of GHG we add to the atmosphere aggravates Climate Change. **Other "very inconvenient truths" hard to accept by many are: 1) the factors creating Climate Change (And, therefore, Climate Change itself) are growing exponentially (Not linearly), 2) the changes to the Climate already occurred are mostly irreversible and 3) the Earth is very close to a runaway Climate Change, where anthropogenic GHG emissions are not longer the main forcing changing the Climate.**

With these facts in mind, it becomes clear that reducing GHG emissions and even transforming to a GHG-negative County, are not sufficient to protect life, environment and property in Sonoma County from Climate Change. These actions would not even have any influence on Climate Change unless all economies simultaneously turn GHG-negative in a few years. Currently, Adaptation to Climate Change and likely "Deep Adaptation", as labeled by Professor Jem Bendell, PhD, a sustainability academic at the University of Cumbria (U K) in his research paper ["Deep Adaptation: A Map for Navigating Climate Tragedy"](#) is the kind of action that will give Sonoma County its best chances.

Transforming to a GHG Emissions-negative local economy is still a worthy endeavor in the short run, but with limited resources, Climate Change (Deep) Adaptation is of the highest priority. There is no possible response to Climate Change of any kind when a community suffers so much damage that becomes dysfunctional, like recently happened with [Beira, Mozambique, a city of 500,000 residents destroyed by Cyclone Idai](#).

Professor Jem Bendell offers a conceptual framework of 3 principles for an effective Adaptation (or Deep Adaptation): RESILIENCE, RELINQUISHMENT and RESTORATION. **Resilience:** "the capacity to adapt to changing circumstances so as to survive with valued norms and behaviors". **Relinquishment:** " people and communities letting go of certain assets, behaviors and beliefs where retaining them could make matters worse". **Restoration:** "people and communities rediscovering attitudes and approaches to life and organization that our carbon-fueled civilization eroded".

Those principles are very helpful when deciding on the extraordinary changes to Sonoma County organization and infrastructure that should be implemented at war time-speed in order to face Climate Change. Examples of those necessary transformations are: **identifying our zones of highest risk to fires, floods, tornados [earthquakes, tsunamis](#), etc.;** prepare those areas to minimize risk by relocation of inhabitants and activities, construction of protective infrastructure, terrain management, suitable building codes, etc.; massive proactive transformations to prevent disasters (including deep transformations to electrical power generation and transmission, and vegetation clearing in critical areas); develop a highly effective disaster response system; set up and fund a safety net system to allow victims of the disasters to return to their normal lives much faster; adapt the health care system to effectively respond to the health challenges imposed by the Climate Change disasters (such as developing effective detoxification capabilities and severe burn treatments); create a Climate Change Hazard Mitigation Corps (many will volunteer); increase the number of Volunteer Firefighters in accordance with the risks by the new Climate conditions; Develop and implement emergency strategies to protect our sources of food and water; create a deliberative civic organization for consulting and decision-making share with government for planning and implementation of changes; **issue County and City governments legally-binding Climate Change Emergency Declarations;** apply for State assistance to help with the Adaptation and Mitigation changes; develop strategies and have equipment available to protect populations from toxic wildfire smoke and extreme heat; join the growing coalition of cities and counties to cooperate with each other to fully address Climate Change and to urge the California State Government to Declare a Climate Change State of Emergency for the whole State.

Governor Gavin Newsom is not taking appropriate measures commensurate to the disastrous state of Climate Change in California. In March 22nd, Governor Newsom [declared a controversial statewide fire emergency](#) which suspends environmental rules, focuses on clearing large trees in areas away from where most Californians live and far from areas with high risks of wind-driven fires, explicitly excluding communities that are not in forests, even though **the majority of the at-risk communities are in grasslands, chaparral, and oak woodlands. Bringing our concerns even closer to home, the Governor has excluded Sonoma and Napa from the list of "fuel-reduction projects"**.

Newsom also has set aside \$24 million "to teach residents in six fire-prone counties about fire prevention and to raise awareness"; \$12 million "for local and regional response teams" and \$13 million "for a public awareness campaign" (Awareness of what? Climate Change?).

This seems to be another example of political posturing to show that the Governor is doing "something" about Climate Change and its consequences. Newsom's response is very disappointing, dangerously ill-focused and too small to face a PROBLEM (Climate Change) that, with just its wildfire aspect, has killed since 2017 more than 150 Californians, destroyed tens of thousands of buildings and in 2017 alone had a cost to the California economy of at least \$180 billion.

If you, our local governments do not take full responsibility for doing everything possible to save life, environment and property from Climate Change, nobody else will, and the situation will boil down to waiting for the next strike from Climate Change and hoping not to be wiped out.

Sonoma County is still capable of strongly acting on the Climate Change Crisis and increasing its chances of not being on the list of communities that are already experiencing various degrees of "societal collapse". A growing list that includes [Paradise \(California\)](#), [Beira \(Mozambique\)](#), [Puerto Rico](#), the [Florida Panhandle](#), and [Island Nations](#) .

The wave of Climate Emergency Resolutions by some cities and counties in California indicates a growing awareness of the Climate mess California is in, but you must understand that those Resolutions must be very quickly transformed into binding Climate Change Emergency Declarations if they are going to have any real consequence on Climate Change and its disastrous effects.

I hope this e-mail and the previous e-mails I have been sending you since 2016, convince you that only war time-commitment and action on Climate Change can succeed.

The response to Climate Change that most humans have had so far, is partially explained by Professor Jem Bendell in the paragraph below:

"When discussing **negative outlooks on climate change and its implications for human society**, the response is often to seek insight through placing this information in context. That context is often assumed to be found in balancing it with other information. **As the information on our climate predicament is so negative, the balance is often found in highlighting more positive information about progress on the sustainability agenda.** This process of seeking to "balance out" is a habit of the informed and reasoning mind. **Yet that does not make it a logical means of deliberation if positive information being shared does not relate to the situation being described by the negative information.** For instance, discussing progress in the health and safety policies of the White Star Line with the captain of the Titanic as it sank into the icy waters of the North Atlantic would not be a sensible use of time."

Please recognize that the Climate conditions are not those of the 1980s anymore. Much of the Climate Change already occurred is irreversible, humans can still make it worse with a few more years of GHG Emissions, and Climate Change Adaptation is essential. Sonoma County and the rest of California will experience more major disasters in 2019 and beyond, but denial and too little action will make those disasters worse. Please take our plea very seriously. **We count on you. You can count on us.**

NOTE: the State of Hawaii is about [to pass a law](#) to invest heavily in Climate Change Adaptation

Best regards,

Jorge Rebagliati

Climate Change Emergency Declaration Campaign

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**"We are the ones we've been waiting for"**

**DECLARATION: "Climate Crisis Is Already A Major Disaster"**

## Action urged at FEMA forum

### DISASTER PREP

Emergency managers turning to neighborhood readiness for future

By

**WILL SCHMITT**

THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

Sonoma County Supervisor James Gore paused his pacing and let the words on the screen above him in the Luther Burbank Center for the Arts bring home his message about

emergency preparedness and disaster response. at the PrepTalks symposium, which focused not only on how local

“WAKE UP,” said the top line of Gore’s slide, followed by “WAKE UP OTHERS” and “STAY WOKE.”

Preparing to react to the next flood, wildfire or earthquake — and sharing plans with residents — are the vital steps local government officials must take in disaster-prone areas like Northern California, Gore told dozens of emergency officials Tuesday at the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Santa Rosa PrepTalks event.

Otherwise, “you will find yourselves in a world of hurt later,” Gore said.

He was among the first county officials in the aftermath of the 2017 fires to admit that the county’s emergency warning system had failed to alert many of those in the inferno’s path. Authorities should have done better to prepare themselves and the public for a countywide disaster, he said.

On Tuesday, Gore was one of several presenters

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governments could prepare to withstand and respond to natural disasters but on the importance of neighbors talking to each other to ensure a higher chance of survival — particularly in a flood-, fireand quake-prone state. Previous editions of the FEMA-sponsored lectures have focused on response to the aftermath of a nuclear detonation, keeping students safe from active shooters and preparing for a major disease pandemic.

“They’re like TED Talks for emergency managers,” said Chris

hot weather.

Anecdotes like that are prized by journalists who cover natural disasters, public safety and emergency preparedness, said KPCC science reporter Jacob Margolis, who with executive producer Arwen Nicks and producer Misha Euceph created a podcast called “The Big One: A Survival Guide” that examines how more than 10 million people would be affected if a big earthquake shook Southern California.

Their show has been downloaded

“I think it’s a good setting for a recent, largescale disaster where we’ve learned a lot of lessons,” Fenton said. “There are things that we can do better, and there are things that are occurring right now with the recovery that are, quite frankly, going very well.”

Afternoon talks included a presentation from an Orange County fire official on instilling a mission into a public service agency; a professor who specializes in presenting and communicating emergency information; and the

Godley, Sonoma County's own emergency manager, adding that he hoped to take home new techniques for engaging with local residents.

"In Sonoma County, this is really where we're at: to build a culture of preparedness," he said.

Tuesday's morning session included a presentation on how San Francisco officials are turning to block parties as tools to plan for emergencies at the most local of levels and a discussion of how a Southern California radio station's series on what would happen if Los Angeles were slammed by a catastrophic temblor.

Daniel Homsey, director of San Francisco's Neighborhood Empowerment Network, recalled how his aunt died during a heat wave after none of her neighbors checked on her. That loss fuels his work putting together dozens of block parties each year to increase social cohesion and disaster readiness. He said he credits his father's strong bond with his neighbors for saving his life during a more recent blast of

more than 1 million times and has generated responses from listeners who felt inspired to plan for such a disaster after hearing a broadcast.

Margolis encouraged emergency managers to be comfortable sharing their own perspectives with the public and with journalists, as their personal histories can supplement nuts-and-bolts information and make for more effective communications.

"The best stories really come from those personal relationships," he said.

Tuesday's event was only the second time a Prep-Talks symposium had been held outside of Washington, D.C., said Bob Fenton, FEMA's Oakland-based regional administrator. Santa Rosa made for an obvious backdrop following the October 2017 wildfires that destroyed more than 5,300 homes in Sonoma County and killed 24 people.

president of an engineering firm on how building codes and standards can foster disaster resiliency.

The goal for emergency management officials, Fenton said, was to educate people on the risks of their environment and to emphasize to residents that they should work closely with each other to increase their chances of surviving a major disaster.

"To think in these big events — and we've seen them a lot in California recently — that first responders will know everyone on the block and know each individual's need is a tall order and probably is not going to happen," he said. "By having the community take ownership of that and helping with that, together with first responders we can solve the problem and help save more lives."

## Can we cope in a fiery future?

State wildfire recovery hearing full of proposals **with** missing answers

By

**GUY KOVNER**

THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

**With** at least eight wildfires raging amid the return of triple-digit heat Monday, Californians braced for another fire season after two tragic years: 146 lives lost in 16,000 blazes as part of **a** trend experts expect to continue as the climate warms.

Already, about 1,350 infernos this year have scorched more than 12,000 acres, **with** 236 new wildfires in the past week, including the 2,200-acre Sand fire in the Yolo County hills.

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**a** month away, the 13-member Senate Select Committee heard testimony on policy recommendations proffered Friday by the five-member Commission on Catastrophic Wildfire Cost and Recovery that was charged **with** reviewing Gov. Gavin Newsom's 52-page April report, "Wildfires and Climate Change: California's Energy **Future**."

No decisions were made, and the major topics — including liability and victim compensation — also had been considered at the Senate panel's first public hearing **a** month ago.

For the second time in two hearings, nobody suggested how much money should be set aside for fire victims and none of the senators asked that question.

Carla Peterman, the governor's appointee and chairwoman of the commission, summarized the state's hazardous conditions, including fires sparked by power lines and home insurance premiums rising, and told senators "the status quo is not sustainable."

"**We** need to prepare for **a** range of scenarios," she

In Sacramento, state lawmakers and policy experts Monday continued talking about the now-familiar responses: easing the liability for power companies, creating **a** fund to compensate wildfire victims, making homes more resilient against fire, and clearing brush to make the state's landscape less flammable.

**With** the bill-passing deadline

need to do now," she said.

Peterman said the motivation for better safety performance would come "from understanding the likelihood and prevalence of these fires" and **a** "better understanding of the risk."

PG& E, which declared bankruptcy in January, was found responsible last month for the 153,336-acre Camp fire that ignited in November and destroyed nearly 15,000 homes, virtually obliterating to the town of Paradise.

If the liability standard were not changed, the commission recommended creation of **a** wildfire victims fund that would include contributions from utility shareholders and ratepayers and would "treat wildfire victims fairly."

If utility contributions were based on the size of their territory, PG& E "would bear **a** greater share of the cost," Peterman said.

Michael Wara, **a** lawyer, Stanford University scholar and Senate appointee to the commission, said the

said, noting that the last two brutal years could be a one in 20-year or a one in 200-year experience.

The wildfire cost and recovery commission's top recommendation — replacing California's strict liability standard for electric utilities **with a** "fault-based negligence standard" — was said to be good for ratepayers by reducing their liability and good for utilities by lowering the cost of capital and reducing the risk for bankruptcy.

Former Gov. Jerry Brown proposed a similar measure last year, when lawmakers ignored what was scorned as a bailout for the state's largest utility PG&E, and Sen. Bill Dodd, D-Napa, the committee chairman, dismissed the idea last month.

Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson, D-Santa Barbara, questioned Monday why easing the standard — which holds utilities responsible for wildfires caused by their equipment regardless of negligence — would make power companies take their responsibility more seriously.

Utilities "haven't been willing to do what they

fund would create "a moat between wildfire costs and ratepayers" and would provide faster payment to victims.

Ricardo Lara, state insurance commissioner, said the fund should help support wildfire mitigation measures, which generally means steps like thinning forests, clearing brush and prescribed burns. "Whatever we decide, let's make sure it has a robust mitigation component," he said.

Wara, a Marin County resident, said the vegetation in part of Marin, once 20 tons per acre, is now 120 tons. "That's a time bomb," he said.

Sen. Bob Hertzberg, D-Van Nuys, posed a question that essentially went unanswered.

"The question is, do these recommendations put us on a path to achieve deliverables," he said.

Dodd chaired a 10-member committee that held a similar series of public hearings last year culminating in approval of a wildfire response bill by the Senate and Assembly late at night on Aug. 31, the final day of the legislative session.



CITY OF CLOVERDALE  
RECEIVED

JUN 24 2019

June 20, 2019

Mayor Melanie Bagby and Members of the Cloverdale City Council  
City of Cloverdale  
124 N. Cloverdale Blvd.  
Cloverdale CA 95425

Dear Mayor Bagby and Members of the Cloverdale City Council,

Cities and local governments have historically been the spark for progress, from minimum wage to civil rights. The 184 members of Cloverdale Indivisible urge the City of Cloverdale to join Petaluma, the first city in Sonoma County to pass a Climate Emergency Resolution, and other county cities that are exploring such a Resolution.

Climate Emergency Resolutions are an international movement, the brainchild of **The Climate Mobilization** (<https://www.theclimatemobilization.org/>), an organization that has worked for the past five years to spark an emergency response to climate change. The goal of these resolutions is to frame climate as the urgent and existential crisis it is and to spur action at all levels of government and society on a scale, scope, and speed not seen since World War Two.

In addition to passing resolutions, City Councils can also:

- **Educate** on the climate emergency using existing or low cost communication channels, while building support for a broader climate emergency mobilization at the state, national and international levels
- **Mitigation - reduce emissions and drawdown** previous emissions
- **Build community resilience** against some global warming impacts.

**430 Sonoma Drive  
Cloverdale, CA  
95425**