



CITY OF LONG BEACH

R-31

DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND PLANNING

333 West Ocean Boulevard • Long Beach, CA 90802 • (562) 570-7713 FAX (562) 570-6068

November 20, 2007

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the Director of Planning and Building on behalf of the City of Long Beach to join the California Climate Action Registry. (Citywide)

DISCUSSION

Greenhouse gas emissions, specifically carbon dioxide, have many negative effects on not only the environment but also public health and quality of life. Greenhouse gases contribute to air pollution and global warming and by understanding these current impacts, the City will have the opportunity to take an important step forward in diminishing its effects on climate change and contributing to a better quality of life for Long Beach residents.

The California Climate Action Registry (Registry) is a non-profit, public-private partnership that provides a mechanism for organizations to record and report their greenhouse gas emissions. Established in 2000 by Senate Bill 1771, the Registry provides a reporting protocol as well as an online reporting tool through which organizations can calculate their emissions and have their emissions independently certified. The resulting annual emissions reports are made available to the public in order to inform the community of our emission status as well as provide the City with a baseline from which to improve.

Participation in the Registry will help the City recognize its goal of becoming a sustainable city. The first step in decreasing greenhouse gas emissions is quantifying current emissions, and having an easily accessible and practical greenhouse gas reporting mechanism will make this possible. It will also help the city compare future emissions as well as evaluate the success of future greenhouse gas reduction programs. Furthermore, participation in the Registry will place the City at the forefront of climate change leadership.

The Registry also provides invaluable technical expertise and an already established and State-recognized reporting mechanism that will simplify the City's work in determining its emissions levels. The City will also benefit from the recognition that participation with the Registry will bring. After the City's data is certified, the City will be recognized as a Climate Action Leader™.

Moreover, Registry membership will provide the City with the opportunity to influence future greenhouse gas regulations as well as place the City in a prime position to react to those changes. For example, in 2009 the State will begin regulating greenhouse gas emissions in automobiles. By already having a Registry emissions report, the City will be in the optimal position to meet those regulations. Also, the State of California has indicated that Registry members may be eligible to receive special consideration for early voluntary greenhouse gas reductions in future regulatory action.

Although participation in the Registry is voluntary, there are requirements once the City is a member. The Registry requires that the City report carbon dioxide emissions from all of its facilities and sites. After the fourth year of participation, the City must also report all major greenhouse gases, which include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, sulfur hexafluoride, hydrofluorocarbons, and perfluorocarbons. Collecting this data will require coordination from all applicable departments in accumulating the appropriate information including facilities lists, fleet inventory, and utility bills.

A local example of a Registry member is Long Beach's Aquarium of the Pacific. The Aquarium joined the Registry in June 2007. As of October 31, 2007, the Aquarium has submitted its 2006 certified data to the Registry. When the Registry approves the data and the public report is issued, the Aquarium will use the information they collected to create an emissions reduction program for their organization. The Aquarium of the Pacific can help provide a model for the City as well as helpful insight and expertise.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

Mayor Foster set a goal to join the California Climate Action Registry by the end of 2007. However, there is no deadline for registration.

FISCAL IMPACT

There will be an ongoing annual membership fee as well as annual certification costs in the event the City decides to embark on certification. Long Beach can join the Registry and defer certification similar to the approach of other cities. Annual membership is on a sliding scale according to the type of organization and its annual budget. Because the City has a budget over \$2 Billion, the annual membership fee would be \$4,000. Also, the Registry requires that a Registry-approved independent third party certify annual data, so should the City choose to certify, there will be costs associated with a certification contract.

For the first year, existing Planning and Building staff will conduct the data collection and recording. Additional resources will be required for certification because the Registry requires that it be performed by an independent third-party.

The cost of a contract with a Registry-approved certifier would depend on the complexity of the data and the selected certifier. While exact costs are currently undetermined, the first year certification costs for the cities that have certified (Palo Alto, San Francisco, Sacramento, and Santa Barbara) have ranged from \$7,000 to \$22,000. However, these cities have indicated that their second and third year certification bids are approximately half of the first year's cost. In year five, all six greenhouse gases must be reported, therefore additional time and/or resources may be needed depending on the City's operations and the complexity of the reporting requirements.

The Department of Planning and Building will absorb the membership fee. As the Department moves forward with registration and data collection, staff will identify the funding source for certification fees.

As part of the Cool Planet Project, a partnership between the California Climate Action Registry and Southern California Edison, some of the certification costs can be offset. If, in the first year of participation, the City reduces its usage by one million kilowatt hours, then Edison will pay the City's first year membership fees as well as 50% of the certification costs. Additionally, if the City reduces its usage by three million kilowatt hours in year one, Edison will pay the City's first year membership fees as well as 100% of certification costs.

Based on other cities' experience, participation years two and three can be expected to be easier and less expensive because the internal collection and reporting method has been created. The Registry estimates that certification costs can decrease by 30-60% in years two and three.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve Recommendation

Respectfully Submitted,



SUZANNE FRICK
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND BUILDING

SF: AV

APPROVED:



PATRICK H. WEST
CITY MANAGER