



Climate Change is a Local Issue

Climate change is a reality. Residents of Marin don't need to look far to see or feel its effects -- from rising tides regularly overtopping the Mill Valley/Sausalito Bike path, flooding freeway on ramps in southern Marin, or combined with rain events forcing the closure of Highway 37 in northern Marin.

More frequent, intense and disastrous wildfires are engulfing wild lands and suburban communities in fires up and down the state. And these fires are posing a real public health threat beyond the immediate burn area as their smoke inundates communities far away. In the case of the Paradise/Butte County fire, for a period of roughly two weeks, the 7 million strong Bay Area experienced unprecedented air pollution impacting not only the most vulnerable (those with asthma, heart disease) but everyone else as well.

As your representative on the Board of Supervisors, as a member of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the Transportation Authority of Marin, The Marin Transit District to name a few, I'm involved daily in discussions, budgeting for programs, policy decisions, planning directly or indirectly related to climate change.

In late March I attended two conferences about local climate change. Each focused on how communities are adapting and responding to

the more overt impacts of climate change affecting our lives and communities today, as well as planning for the increased impacts over the next several decades and beyond, which at this point given the greenhouse gas emissions currently in atmosphere (let alone future emissions) are irreversible.

The first conference was on wildfire, specifically around California's vulnerability — which while always high, has been amplified exponentially with climate change. Weather patterns warmer overall year-round; longer, hotter, more frequent heat waves; increased frequency of the hot, dry and windy conditions (think Santa Ana winds in the south/Diablo winds in the north) provide a key ingredient for major, and most destructive fire events.

The good news coming out of the Wildfire conference is that huge advances are being made in our ability to detect, prevent, contain and respond to fires. Proactive, ongoing vegetation management on public lands adjacent to urban areas will be key. The same for defensible space, home hardening, and emergency preparedness at the individual property and community level. The take away: Our fire risk won't go away but we can enhance our ability to prevent catastrophic fire with more focus, investment and collaboration on the part of all levels of government, industry (including utilities) and community.

The second conference was focused on sea level rise here in Marin. Specifically, what residents should expect to see/experience here in the near and long term with regards to the impact of sea level rise on private and public property, transportation, public infrastructure, etc. Current forecasts predict 6-10 feet of sea level rise by the end of the century.

The conference provided an overview of an array of projects being piloted here in Marin to protect, buffer, mitigate the impacts of near-

term sea-level rise to buy time while we develop and find ways to finance the longer-term solutions needed for adaptations.

The take away: Sea level rise is a local, community wide issue. It will impact all residents whether they live near the bay or the coast—with some inconvenience in the near term, and with severe consequences for entire communities in the mid and long term.

Bottom line: Climate change is here, impacting us now, and with more severity in the future. And the message to public officials, community and industry leaders, residents, workforce, the entire public and private sector is the following -- *Meeting the challenge climate changes poses to our communities will require that we act at all levels of community, and that we participate, partner and collaborate in ways we have not before.*

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