



# TOWN OF FAIRFAX

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December 10, 2020

The Honorable Judge Andrew Sweet  
Judge of the Marin County Superior Court  
P.O. Box 4988  
San Rafael, CA 94913-4988

Lucy Dilworth, Foreperson  
Marin County Civil Grand Jury  
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room #275  
San Rafael, CA 94903

**RE: Response to 2019-2020 Marin County Grand Jury Report – *Climate Change: How Will Marin Adapt?***

Dear Judge Sweet and Foreperson Dilworth:

Enclosed please find the Town of Fairfax response to the Marin Civil Grand Jury Report entitled *Climate Change: How Will Marin Adapt?* The Fairfax Town Council considered and approved the enclosed response at a duly noticed public meeting on December 2, 2020,

If you have questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Michele Gardner  
Town Clerk

Encl.

## RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

REPORT TITLE:        **Climate Change: How Will Marin Adapt?**  
REPORT DATE:         **September 11, 2020**  
RESPONSE BY:         **Fairfax Town Council**  
RESPONSE DATE:       **December 2, 2020**

### FINDINGS:

- We agree with the findings numbered: **F1-F5, F-7**
- We disagree wholly or partially with the finding numbered:

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Recommendations numbered **R1 and R6** have already been implemented.
- Recommendations numbered **R4** has been partially implemented.

Dated: 12/10/20

Signed:   
Garrett Toy, Town Manager

Number of pages attached: 4

## ATTACHMENT

### RESPONSE OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFAX TO GRAND JURY REPORT CLIMATE CHANGE: HOW WILL MARIN ADAPT?

#### FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

***F1. Climate change mitigation efforts by Marin governments have been notably effective in meeting their goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.***

Response: Agree.

The Town has worked with the County of Marin, other cities, towns, and many other partners to develop an integrated approach toward climate change planning, adaptation and mitigation. In Fairfax, we were able to achieve our 2020 greenhouse gas emission goal by the end of 2016. However, we recognize that the vast bulk of this accomplishment came as a result of the State of California Renewable Portfolio Standard on the electricity grid, the introduction of Marin Clean Energy, and particularly its Deep Green offering, coupled with its adoption by such county-wide entities as MMWD. The Town of Fairfax has by far the highest % of MCE Deep Green Opt-ups of all of the 36 MCE Member Jurisdictions - 8.6%."

While our emissions have come down by more than our target goal, we recognize that we must significantly increase our efforts if we hope to achieve even a similar level of achievement in the future. The IPCC recommends that the Town achieve a reduction that is twice as large in the next ten years. Marin cannot mitigate climate disaster alone, but Marin has and should continue to have a major influence as an example to other communities, which gives us the opportunity and the responsibility to act swiftly and aggressively.

***F2. Adaptation planning is essential to protect local public utility and transportation infrastructure as well as private property interests, and to enable Marin's citizens to maintain their current standards of living.***

Response: Agree.

We agree that adaptation planning is essential. However, we also believe that mitigation, in the short term, is as important as adaptation. The climate is changing, and, if we do not stop its advance, we will never have the resources to keep up with it in our adaptation efforts. Small prevention is always worth a pound of cure, but prevention must be collective, while adaptation can be more individual. We must be exceedingly careful not to divert resources to adaptation and thereby starve mitigation efforts. The best course will be to focus heavily on responses that can build both adaptation and mitigation.

***F3. With the BayWAVE and C-SMART initial vulnerability assessments completed, the county is now well-positioned to focus on adaptation planning and policies related to sea level rise.***

Response: Agree.

***F4. The existing adaptation efforts across the county pay insufficient attention to the other potential effects of climate change, including impacts on public health, ecosystems, and social equity.***

Response: Agree.

While we agree, it should be noted that recent actions have produced significant progress on these concerns. The Grand Jury cites “the working group of Marin’s county and municipal planners that helped develop the countywide, multi-jurisdictional local hazard mitigation plan recently adopted by the county’s board of supervisors and all the cities and towns” (p. 18). This Working Group has been expanded to encompass the mandates of California Government Code Section 65302(g)(4), which now require that cities and counties update their General Plan Safety Elements to address climate adaptation and resiliency strategies across the full breadth of hazard and safety issues, not just sea level rise.

The Working Group has synthesized this General Plan Safety Element work with the substantive hazard adaptation requirements of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) Update, which is required to maintain FEMA funding eligibility. The membership of the working group has been expanded to include the Planning Directors of each jurisdiction to strengthen the integration of adaptation planning with broader community development processes.

Also, through the enactment and participation in the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA), Fairfax and most of the County (except Tiburon and Belvedere) have made a tremendous investment in climate adaptation for prevention of wildfires. Approximately \$20M in revenue annually will be expended for 10 years to conduct the work of the new JPA. MWPA is the only nearly countywide wildfire adaptation approach in the State.

Furthermore, the Town of Fairfax is uniquely positioned to disseminate any future countywide communications on the other potential effects of climate change via Town boards and commissions associated with public health, ecosystems, and social equity including, but not limited to, Age-Friendly Fairfax, the Fairfax Open Space Committee, and the Racial Equity and Social Justice Committee. These advisory bodies may also review and report on on-the-ground climate impacts, which can be shared with the Town Council and other countywide deliberative/advisory bodies.

In addition, we understand that the County of Marin and other Marin communities responses to the Grand Jury report will describe the countywide and/or local efforts to address the potential effects of climate change, including impacts on public health, ecosystems, and social equity.

***F5. There are insufficient staff and financial resources devoted to climate change adaptation efforts across county government as well as in the cities, towns, and other agencies, and many of the existing efforts are highly dependent on grant funding.***

Response: Agree.

Please note that we also recommend that mitigation efforts receive the same, if not more, staff and financial resources as adaptation activities.

***F7. Cross-jurisdictional collaboration and coordination will be required for successful adaptation efforts, but Marin lacks any overarching organizational or governance structure to facilitate this.***

**Response:** Agree.

We agree there is no single entity directing the collaborative and cross-jurisdictional climate adaptation efforts. There are, however, many ongoing efforts that approach climate change issues in a coordinated, cross-jurisdictional manner, including, but not limited to, BayWAVE, Drawdown: Marin (currently led by the County with a new County-nonprofit in development), Marin County Council of Mayors and Councilmembers (MCCMC) Climate Action Committee, and the Marin Climate & Energy Partnership (MCEP).

The Town will participate in and cooperate with any county-wide organization to facilitate cross-jurisdictional collaboration and coordination efforts for both adaptation and mitigation efforts.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES**

***R1. The board of supervisors, in collaboration with the municipalities and other agencies affected by climate change, should convene a multi-jurisdictional task force (referred to in this report as the Marin Climate Adaptation Task Force) charged with developing a single, comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional adaptation strategy for all of Marin.***

Response: The County of Marin reports it has already implemented this recommendation.

Specifically, the County identifies its existing efforts, including BayWAVE; Drawdown: Marin; the General Plan Safety Element in coordination with the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) Update; and the General Plan Environmental Justice Element all point to the collaborative, consistent, coordinated approach to adaptation planning for all of Marin called for in the Grand Jury's report.

The Town will participate in any multi-jurisdictional task force created by the County of Marin to address climate change, beyond what we currently participate in.

***R4. Each member of the Marin Climate & Energy Partnership, should declare its support for broadening the partnership's mission and increasing its funding as necessary to enable it to support overall climate change planning efforts, including both mitigation and adaptation in cities, towns, and other member agencies throughout the county.***

Response: This recommendation has already been partially implemented (partially agree).

We agree that we need increased funding for MCEP. We disagree with changing the focus to adaptation. The Grand Jury recommends the creation of a multi-jurisdictional Adaptation Task Force. We must invest in adaptation, yes, but let the Adaptation Task Force do this work, and keep MCEP focused on mitigation. We do think there are mitigation strategies that also improve adaptation, and MCEP should prioritize such strategies.

***R6. Recommendation: Each city and town, if it does not have a full-time sustainability coordinator (or similar position), should appoint a committee or commission charged with monitoring and reporting on its climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.***

Response: This recommendation has already been implemented.

The Town has an active Climate Action Committee (CAC). The Town will also explore opportunities to collaborate with other Ross Valley communities in the sharing of a full-time sustainability coordinator position.