



Contra Costa County Climate Leaders Program

A project of Generation Green - a 501(c)3 Non profit organization

**Find Links to Other Local Government Policy Opportunities at
www.cccclimateleaders.org**

Public Health and Climate Change

WHAT? Our environment directly impacts our health, and with the increasing change in climate, this relationship becomes all the more important. Public health decline risks posed by climate change gives opportunity for co-benefit, health-based climate change strategy that will create healthier communities and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, all while saving money.

WHY? Climate change will effect yours, your community's, and the health of millions, including cases of:

- Air pollution and exposure to allergens in infancy is thought to sensitize individuals to asthma, respiratory, heart and lung disease, and various types of cancer
- Changes in temperature and precipitation will make disease carrying mosquitos, ticks, fleas, and rodents better able to survive, where we will see an increase in cases of malaria, Lyme disease, hantavirus, etc.
- The continued release of contaminants into the atmosphere will create more water and food-borne diseases, including cholera, salmonella, and cryptosporidiosis.

Extreme weather due to climate change will also threaten millions:

- Heat waves will yield heat stress and heat strokes, which can be deadly
- Hurricanes and tsunamis will bring flood destruction, which leads to contaminated food and water, mold and mildew, and lack of shelter, resulting in asthma and respiratory disease, injury, and illness.
- Severe drought will cause a scarcity of food and water, leading to malnutrition, starvation, and mental illness.

The built environment and choices of residents can improve health in a community:

- Walking paths and bike accessible trails will encourage more residents to walk/ride to their destinations if they are available to them. This will improve the cardiovascular health of the community as well as reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

WHO? To see a change in the health of a community, both residents and cities will need to make some changes. Everyone can help. Populations already effected and at most risk for death and disease are vulnerable- the elderly and young children.

(Mike: Talk here about environmental justice/environmental racism, where those living in poorer communities are at risk because of unhealthy living conditions and lack of clean water and air?)

WHERE? Cities in our area have included public health in their Climate Action Plans in order to see an improvement.

- The City of Berkeley has included health elements in their Climate Action plan. See more information here: http://www.cityofberkeley.info/uploadedFiles/Planning_and_Development/Level_3_-_Energy_and_Sustainable_Development/Berkeley%20Climate%20Action%20Plan.pdf
- The City of San Francisco has also included public health a concern in their Climate Action plan. <http://www.sfenvironment.org/downloads/library/climateactionplan.pdf>
- Oakland has made public health a priority in developing their Climate Action Plan http://www.ellabakercenter.org/index.php?p=gcjc_ocac_policies

HOW? Integrating the consideration of health into climate change policy and decisions, such as with land use, housing, and air quality, can help this issue's resolution. Learn more about how residents and city planning departments can educate themselves and help improve this issue:

- CDC offers national environmental public health tracking tool: <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/tracking/>

- A useful tool to aid in the visualization of drought, flooding, air pollution, extreme heat and infectious disease: <http://www.nrdc.org/health/climate/>
- Using solar energy to power municipality buildings, and reduce cooling bills by painting buildings white and choosing lighter colored roofing materials to reflect sunlight.
<http://www.cccclimateleaders.org/text/paint.html>
- 75 percent of total electricity consumption in the U.S. could be displaced by more widespread use of the best electricity-saving technologies in residential and commercial buildings. You can help the issue of public health in your home by improving heating and cooling systems, improving insulation, replacing old fluorescent lightbulbs with LED bulbs, purchasing energy saving appliances, etc.

Thank you to our sponsors!

