



San Mateo, Santa Clara & San Benito Counties

January 29, 2021

To the City of Saratoga

Via email to: Mayor Yan Zhao, yzhao@saratoga.ca.us, Vice Mayor Tina Walia, twalia@saratoga.ca.us, Mary-Lynne Bernald, mlbernal@saratoga.ca.us, Kookie Fitzsimmons, kookie@saratoga.ca.us, Rishi Kumar, rkumar@saratoga.ca.us

cc: City Manager James Lindsay, jlindsay@saratoga.ca.us
Environmental Programs Administrator Mainini Cabute, mcabute@saratoga.ca.us

Re: Climate action a top City priority this year

Early this year as the City Council sets priorities, please consider making urgent climate action a top priority for your city.

Science is mounting that our efforts to reduce fossil fuel consumption have not happened fast enough to meet global targets¹ and as a result Northern California is increasingly threatened by economy-crushing disasters: wildfires, drought, heat waves, flooding and sea level rise. Saratoga has not been immune from these disasters and without your decisive leadership, your City's residents and businesses will be increasingly at risk, both economically and physically.

To turn the tide and keep Saratoga habitable, we need to act now and all of our actions must be bold. These are specific actions we ask that you take in 2021:

- Accelerate implementation of the newly adopted Climate Action Plan to reflect evolving science and the rapid acceleration of climate change.
- Adopt a policy to retire natural gas appliances and completely phase out the use of fossil fuels in existing buildings by 2030.
- Adopt a program or policy to make EV charging accessible to all residents of multi-family dwellings by 2025.

Please ensure that all climate actions have appropriate budgetary support. The challenging economy and COVID recovery will strain city budgets. However, it is fiscally responsible to spend money now to mitigate and adapt to climate change since delaying is likely to only increase the funds needed later to deal with climate emergencies. Cities also need to plan now to react quickly should federal funds become available to support greenhouse gas reduction in buildings and transportation.

¹ S. C. Sherwood, et al., "An Assessment of Earth's Climate Sensitivity Using Multiple Lines of Evidence." *Reviews of Geophysics* (July 2020) <https://agupubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1029/2019RG000678>.

If Saratoga chooses to make climate action a top priority this year, it will not be alone. Forty-four cities or counties in California have declared a climate emergency². Eight cities in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties have updated or adopted a Climate Action Plan in the last 3 years and another 8 are in progress. Since 2019 over 40 cities throughout California, including yours, voted to phase out the use of fossil fuels in new buildings. Now some of the same cities that pioneered Reach Codes in new construction are developing sound policies to phase out the use of fossil fuels in existing buildings and transportation. Community Choice Energy providers in our area have stepped up to support these policies with generous financial incentives making electric vehicles and high efficiency electric appliances like heat pump water heaters affordable for all. See <https://www.peninsulacleanenergy.com/residential-programs/> , <https://www.svcleanenergy.org/water-heating/>, and <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/environmental-services/climate-smart-san-jos/electrify-san-jos>.

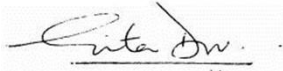
Finally, in 2020 the Loma Prieta Chapter launched a Climate Action Leadership Team whose members include policy makers from leading climate cities in Silicon Valley and the Peninsula. Please consider us a resource and don't hesitate to contact our staff climate specialist Dash Leeds dashiell.leeds@sierraclub.org to arrange a meeting with the team.

We stand ready to assist you in identifying and enacting high-impact climate action this year.

Respectfully submitted,



Gladwyn d'Souza, Co-Chair, Conservation Committee, Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club



Gita Dev, Co-Chair, Sustainable Land Use Committee, Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club



Kristel Wickham, Climate Action Leadership Team, Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club



Lauren Weston, Executive Director, Acterra

Cc James Eggers, Executive Director, Loma Prieta Chapter, Sierra Club

² <https://climateemergencydeclaration.org/climate-emergency-declarations-cover-15-million-citizens/>