

# Our Political Committee's 2022 Actions

**The fight continues to protect our local landscape by changing our political landscape**



Sierraclub.org

*By Alex Mintzer, Santa Lucia Chapter Political Committee Chair*

The Santa Lucia Chapter's Political Committee currently has nine members. This spring, we worked together with Sierra Club California and adjacent Sierra Club Chapters to screen and endorse pro-environment candidates on the June Primary Ballot for US Congress, State Assembly, and SLO County offices. Endorsed candidates could publicize our support on their webpages and in their campaign literature. Criteria for endorsement included campaign credibility (strategy, name recognition, campaign funding, and other assets needed for victory) and candidate record and positions on a diverse platform of environmental, equity, and good-government issues.

Candidates were evaluated through a process involving written local issue questionnaires, followed by interviews usually conducted via Zoom. Our interview panelists initiated

recommendations for endorsements, which were considered by our Political Committee, Executive Committee, and state or national Sierra Club volunteer leaders. For legislative and congressional endorsement actions with new multi-county district boundaries, we collaborated with our counterparts in the Ventana (Monterey and Santa Cruz counties) and Santa Barbara-Ventura Chapters. In addition, Santa Lucia Chapter activists participated in Sierra Club California's endorsement screening process (and a few candidate interviews) for California Secretary of State, CA Superintendent of Instruction, and Governor. Two of our endorsed local candidates (Jimmy Paulding for 4<sup>th</sup> District Supervisor and Elaina Cano for County Clerk-Recorder) won their elections outright in June.

In August and September, we completed our screening process for local candidates on the November 2022 general election ballot for municipal offices (San Luis Obispo Mayor and City Council), and local boards (e.g. schools and community service districts). All nine of our locally endorsed candidates won their elections on November 8<sup>th</sup>, including 2<sup>nd</sup> District Supervisor Bruce Gibson.

We want to thank all our Santa Lucia activists who got involved with local campaigns! While we deserve some celebration for the recent hard-fought victories we earned, there is still a long road ahead in the fight for climate justice. Looking ahead to 2023 & 2024, we want to focus on building political power to support more local public officials to take the bold, urgent action needed to address the climate crisis and protect our biosphere.

In that spirit, we would love for you to join us! Sierra Club is a grass-roots organization, and **we can't advocate in your community without your help. We depend upon volunteer members stepping forward from our diverse local communities** to bring their local issue and candidate expertise to our screening panels that try to identify and promote local green candidates. This year, we didn't have the opportunity or volunteer capacity to screen candidates for municipal or district offices anywhere in North County or in Morro Bay, Cambria, Cayucos, Arroyo Grande, Pismo Beach, or Grover Beach... I know there had to be some good candidates we missed.

**With your participation, we can put your community on our endorsement radar in 2024!**

You don't have to join our Political Committee to participate in this candidate screening process. Your short-term involvement over a few weeks in March or August 2024 may be limited to editing and reviewing our questionnaires to address your most important local issues, participating in any local candidate interviews, and helping to recommend good candidates for Sierra Club endorsement.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact me at [amintzer1955@gmail.com](mailto:amintzer1955@gmail.com). You'll learn about the work we hope to do in SLO County in 2024-- and about how you can synergize our efforts to build political power from the ground up. Together we can build a green, equitable future for our human communities and natural environment on the Central Coast!