SACRAMENTO METROPOLITAN
AIR QUALITY
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Little Hoover Commission
Public Hearing on Climate Change Adaptation in California
Thursday, October 24, 2013

Testimony provided by

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Commission today on climate change adaptation. Building communities resilient to the certain impacts of climate change is critical to maintaining the wellbeing of California's people, economy, and environment. Local governments are essential to the success of this effort; it is commendable that the Commission recognizes the voice of local and regional organizations in their consideration of state-wide adaptation efforts.

I will be testifying in my capacity as Executive Director/Air Pollution Control Officer of the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (Air District). The Air District's mission is to protect public health and the environment through achieving clean air goals. As one of the five largest air quality districts in California, we have been a key agency for 50 years in working to reduce criteria pollutant emissions and meeting state and federal targets for reductions in these pollutants. Since the identification of greenhouse gases (GHG) as air pollutants causing anthropogenic climate change, the Air District has been expanding its involvement in the regulation of GHG pollutants as mandated through the federal EPA and the state Air Resources Board, and in collaborative efforts to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District plays a key role in collaborative regional efforts to identify and coordinate climate-related mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Theme of the Comments from Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District

While the state is a necessary and critical source of guidance, leadership, and assistance to local governments, it is vital for local stakeholders to have a leading role in implementing climate change adaptation efforts within their communities. State guidance and leadership can include resources such as funding, technical expertise and research, targeted trainings, model policies and plans, incentives, and other forms of assistance. Local communities need a voice at the state level when decisions impact them, and need to be included throughout the planning and implementation processes.

Regional networks do not need legislated governance and authority, but formal recognition and support can further their work. Networks such as Resilient Sacramento can contribute significantly to adaptation efforts by facilitating communication and collaboration across local jurisdictions and sectors within a region, as well as vertically between state and local agencies. By doing so, regional networks can help the state in sharing critical information, educating stakeholders, building tailored response efforts, avoiding duplication, and leveraging resources.

Early Adaptation Initiatives in the Sacramento Region

The challenges that face the Sacramento region cross jurisdictional and sector boundaries. At the same time, many Sacramento communities, regional agencies, and organizations have already begun responding to and planning for the impacts of climate change and considering risks to infrastructure, assets, natural resources, and human wellbeing. To build collaboration and avoid duplication between these efforts, and inspired by the regional networks forming around San Diego, the Bay Area, and Los Angeles, a group of Sacramento organizations decided to form a local organization for this region.

In the fall of 2012, Resilient Sacramento was informally convened by the UC Davis Institute for Energy, Environment, and the Economy, Greenwise Joint Ventures, the Local Government Commission, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments, and the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District. The organization has since been working toward a more formal regional collaborative structure. Working with the Alliance of Regional Collaborations for Climate Adaptation (ARCCA), Resilient Sacramento will help to develop adaptation solutions and strategies within the six-county Sacramento region[1], while facilitating communication and collaboration between state and local stakeholders.

Resilient Sacramento will not serve as a formal governance organization. The organization is being developed as a membership-based collaborative network focused on building cross-regional dialogue, coordinating efforts, and sharing knowledge and resources. The organization's vision is to enable and support local agencies in their work on implementing adaptation actions in their sector of responsibility.

In the early stages of organization, the convening partners worked to identify stakeholders and their key priorities and needs for adaptation. We conducted interviews with regional agencies who had logical adaptation or GHG mitigation roles, and began initial work on a research proposal for a needs-analysis with UC Davis.

Our first wider membership meeting was held on September 12, 2013, to highlight regional impacts and discuss stakeholders' priorities going forward. Attendees included local elected officials, researchers from Sacramento State University and UC Davis, and representatives from county and state public health agencies, air quality districts, the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency, Sacramento Municipal Utility District, PG&E,

[1] The six-county Sacramento region follows the Sacramento Council of Government footprint and includes El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba counties.

business and agriculture, and environmental justice groups. An important part of the meeting was also to identify additional stakeholders that should be part of our regional effort.

The Sacramento Region's Goals and Significance

The goal of Resilient Sacramento is to enable local stakeholders to effectively develop and implement adaptation solutions for the six-county Sacramento region. To do this, Resilient Sacramento will:

- Exchange information and share knowledge and expertise between local stakeholders.
- Leverage resources so as to avoid duplicative efforts and ensure that the region maximizes opportunities for reducing risk and minimizes costs.
- Work together to fund research, identify gaps and needs, and advance innovative solutions.
- Seek and respond to funding opportunities that support regional needs for information or program funding.
- Provide a strong voice for local stakeholders in state-level adaptation efforts and an integrated point-of-contact to liaise with state agencies; ensure that local stakeholders are aware of the key state adaptation strategies and research and how these impact local efforts.

Resilient Sacramento, along with other ARRCA regions, can serve as a model for other California communities as they work to organize and develop their adaptation efforts. The network can also serve as a link to national and international adaptation efforts such as Resilient Communities for America and ICLEI's Resilient Congress.

Through participation in national efforts regional networks can play two key roles. First, regional organizations can learn from national collaborative efforts to the benefit of their local region, and second they can share with national organizations key information and experiences from local successes. They can also work with other state and ARRCA members to highlight achievements in California, and leverage resources back to local programs.

California has been a leading state (or a sub-national stakeholder) in international work to build consensus and capacity for addressing climate change. Governments from across the world constantly seek to learn more from California's programs to address climate change, while our expertise also helps to draw additional talent and resources to the state. Our regional adaptation-focused organizations can further California's progress, reaching through national efforts to international structures and experience. I have personally participated in two Conferences of the Parties (Copenhagen and Durban) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and can testify to the leadership role taken by California in those meetings and the worldwide respect for California based on our innovative actions toward dealing with climate change.

What we need for an effective state, local, and regional partnership

Structure:

While formalized authority may be helpful in streamlining collaborative efforts at a regional level, additional governance structures may create a barrier to participation for local jurisdictions and communities. The Sacramento region already has a number of effective linking agencies that facilitate connectivity. These include numerous direct meeting avenues for elected officials, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) in the transportation funding arena, the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and organizations like the Sacramento Regional Technology Alliance for the business community, and Valley Vision for convening around specific topics like broadband access. Resilient Sacramento would play a similar role in connecting partners in the wide range of adaptation-related subject areas.

Regional and local efforts are a key part of any adaptation effort moving forward. With the diversity of California in terms of geography, demography, and economies, regional networks can play an important role in ensuring that adaptation strategies are tailored at the local level. In addition, the regional network can coordinate activities among local agencies on initiatives that span the region.

Additionally, the state should keep in mind that while ARCCA provides for collaboration between agencies and organizations in the four large metropolitan areas, there is no corresponding structure available for communities outside of LA, SD, Bay Area, and Sacramento.

Funding:

It is important that the state provide assistance to local communities in the form of funding and tools for implementing adaption measures, especially pilot and model programs that can be duplicated and shared with other local communities. The state must also recognize the unique needs of environmental justice communities in each region.

Funding regional networks could provide many benefits for the state. For example, the state could communicate on adaptation issues through Resilient Sacramento instead of individually to dozens of local and regional agencies and organizations across a range of media. Resilient Sacramento could help communicate key state research findings, guidance documents, strategies, and regulations to local and regional stakeholders. A regional network can also help local agencies understand how state policies and regulations can benefit their jurisdictions, and develop adaptation strategies that are targeted for local jurisdictions.

Guidance and Incentives:

There are a number of important considerations with regard to providing guidance to regions.

- It is critical that state agencies and offices embed adaptation into all planning and guidance documents. Future vulnerability from climate impacts should be

considered in all activities and programs, and adaptation co-benefits should be maximized whenever possible.

- The state should focus directives on incentive-based outcomes wherever possible.
- The state should require that planning documents be based on projections of future environmental conditions and the latest climate science, instead of historical records.

With regard to incentives, there are a number of factors that can impact their effectiveness. The state should:

- Incentivize outcome-based actions.
- Incentivize mitigation policies that also have adaptation benefits.
- Recognize existing policies that have adaptation co-benefits.
- Recognize and support early efforts in adaptation.
- Recognize the effectiveness of cross-media communication and coordination.
- Provide incentives for local agencies to actively participate in regional adaptation efforts. (such as implementing Local Fire Safe Council plans, coastal conservation plans, etc.)

Incentives do not necessarily have to be financial: in some cases it is just as effective to provide key players a seat in initial planning meetings.

Recommendations for the state on working with local and regional stakeholders

The state has thus far been very effective in commissioning high-quality research on the impacts of climate change and publishing this information in reports. However, with almost every agency publishing reports on adapting to climate change[2], the resulting deluge of information can be overwhelming, especially for local stakeholders that may be new to climate change issues and facing limitations on their time and capacity. The state should ensure that their highly useful research does not go to waste – the ultimate objective of report writing is not publication but its post-publication utility. Thus far, the state has not always effectively communicated key findings of their reports to local agencies to ensure that they are well informed about potential impacts to their sector/region. For example, local health agencies we spoke to within the Sacramento region were not aware of all the public health impacts of climate change, though the findings had been taken from major state publications (the 2009 Adaptation Strategy, the Third Assessment on Climate Change, Climate Action for Public Health). Regional

[2] To give some idea of the many reports focused on vulnerability, climate change impacts, and adaptation, the California Natural Resources Agency is preparing *Safeguarding California,* OEHHA has published the *Indicators of Climate Change in California, 2013,* while the California Energy Commission and the Climate Action Team published the Third Assessment on Climate Change (which focuses on climate change impacts and adaptation actions).

organizations like Resilient Sacramento can be helpful in reviewing and quantifying reports in ways that can be effectively communicated at the local level.

The state should also be responsive to the needs of cities and counties that do not belong to a regional adaptation network. The state should reach out to these communities to ensure that rural and environmental justice communities are not left out of decision-making and funding allocations.

Institutional and governing barriers of effective regional responses

Regions and local communities need a voice at the state level when decisions impact them. Stakeholders are much more likely to be active in implementation when they have been included throughout the planning and decision making processes. Engaging communities, constituencies, and elected officials may be difficult, since they may not be convinced that adaptation is the best way to utilize current resources.

State efforts on adaptation are not always communicated well to local agencies, and local agencies are often not aware of reports and resources and the relevance of such reports. Like any publisher, the state needs to actively engage its target audience – local policymakers and stakeholders – to ensure their reports are read by the right divisions and incorporated into local planning processes. This additional marketing effort by the state is especially necessary as, due to funding cuts and staff turnover, local agencies lack the human and resource capacity to undertake new efforts and programs, or update existing planning documents.

Future barriers

Our current level of GHG emissions already locks the world into a certain level of climate change, including temperature increases, extreme weather, and sea level rise. There exist multiple no-regret actions that communities can take now. Future response efforts will only be costlier, if communities fail to respond and prepare adequately in the present time frame. Additionally, future funding may be more constrained, as the impacts of climate change take their toll and communities require disaster recovery funding as well as adaptation planning. As extreme weather events grow more severe, funding tradeoffs will have to be made between post-disaster response and adaptive planning.

Addressing barriers and effective governing response

Policymakers at all levels of government should prioritize grants and funding toward projects that have fully integrated adaptation into their planning. If possible, adaptation should be included in evaluation criteria in grants and funding solicitations. Even in the absence of climate change, adaptation strategies can bring about many co-benefits – such as in public health, agricultural productivity, and water conservation – and these should be quantified and articulated to stakeholders who may be constrained in undertaking climate-related activities in their jurisdictions.

The state can provide coordinated training, workshops, toolkits, and model policies and solutions for local agencies, tailored by sector and region, to save time and resources

and avoid duplication. State agencies should also improve communications with each other to ensure that there is no internal duplication, streamline efforts, and share resources.

Additionally, the Commission would welcome any thoughts you might have as a specialist who has monitored various adaptation efforts being undertaken nationally and globally on emerging governance, risk assessment and legal approaches in other states and nations, as well as what maladaptive pitfalls to avoid in California:

As noted before, state and local representatives have been well received at the national and international levels and are seen as effective and innovative advocates for both climate mitigation and adaptation. It is important that as California works at the state, regional, and local levels, we connect regularly with our counterparts in other states, at the national government, and internationally. This interaction can be in sector-specific channels (air or water), at the agency level such as working with EPA on the national vehicle emission standards, or with national/international organizations like Climate Reserve or ICLEI. In all these meetings and collaborations, we should strive for the best outcome for California and our local communities.

I appreciate this opportunity to testify to the Commission, and look forward to an opportunity for oral testimony.

Sincerely,

Larry Greene

Executive Director/Air Pollution Control Officer.