

Agenda Date: June 18, 2015
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Estimated Time: 15 Min.
Continued Item: No

Board Agenda Item

TO: Air Pollution Control District Board

FROM: Dave Van Mullem, Air Pollution Control Officer

CONTACT: Molly Pearson, Planning & Grants Supervisor (961-8838)

SUBJECT: UCSB Bren School Project: *Investigating the Feasibility of Greenhouse Gas Mitigation in Santa Barbara County*

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive a presentation from Lily Brown, a recent graduate of the Bren School of Environmental Science and Management graduate program at the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB), on a UCSB Bren School project, titled *Investigating the Feasibility of Greenhouse Gas Mitigation in Santa Barbara County*.

BACKGROUND:

Three Masters student candidates at the UCSB Bren School of Environmental Science & Management conducted a group project to investigate the feasibility of greenhouse gas mitigation in Santa Barbara County. The project was initiated in March 2014 and completed in April 2015.

District staff helped with the initial group project proposal, and acted in the role of a “project client” throughout the life of the project. District staff provided data and contacts, participated in regular meetings, reviewed project documents and provided feedback. The District also hosted a summer internship for one of the Bren students; the student helped with tasks related to GHG emissions assessment and mitigation, and also assembled data and conducted analysis for the group project. Additional information about the project is available at the project website at <http://www2.bren.ucsb.edu/~sbcoffsets/>.

DISCUSSION:

In California, a number of policies require governments, businesses, and agencies to mitigate GHG emissions. Two state-level initiatives are the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32) and the 2010 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guideline Amendments. AB 32 requires California to reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, while CEQA requires mitigation of significant GHG emissions associated with projects carried out or approved by state or local agencies.

Over the next several years, Santa Barbara County's annual GHG emissions are projected to increase. Although GHG mitigation requirements can be met by purchasing carbon offset credits from a national or international exchange, county residents and decision-makers alike would prefer to reduce GHG emissions through local mitigation projects. Local projects can generate important local co-benefits, including economic growth and reduced air pollution.

The objective of this project was to determine which mitigation strategies would be the most cost-effective and easily implemented in Santa Barbara County given the county's unique characteristics. The study recommends that the following measures could be prioritized in order to achieve GHG reductions in Santa Barbara County: lighting retrofits, heating, ventilation, and cooling (HVAC) retrofits, solar photovoltaics (PV), electric vehicles (EVs), commuter benefits programs, and alternative work schedules.