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November 26, 2012

Susan Frost
Principal Planner
Community Development Department
1052 South Livermore Avenue
Livermore, CA 94550

Subject: Draft Climate Action Plan

Dear Ms. Frost:

Bay Area Air Quality Management District (District) staff reviewed the City of Livermore's (City's) Draft Climate Action Plan (Plan). We understand that the City's intentions in developing the Plan are to reduce citywide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and to streamline CEQA review of new land use projects.

The District applauds the City's initiative in addressing GHG emissions and supports its efforts in developing the Plan. The District has the following specific comments on the Plan.

GHG Reduction Measures

In order to meet California's GHG reduction goals for AB 32 and, more importantly, for Executive Order S-3-05 (an 80% reduction below 1990 levels by 2050), California will need to achieve significant emission reductions, from new development as well as from the built community. Local climate action plans can play a vital role in achieving these reductions. However, local plans that emphasize voluntary measures and reliance on new development to achieve the bulk of emission reductions will not be enough to achieve these aggressive targets. While the Plan does include some mandatory measures, most of these address only new development. We have identified feasible measures that have proven effective at reducing GHG emissions that have not been included in the Plan. We strongly encourage the City to consider adding additional mandatory measures, as this would increase the likelihood that the City's GHG reduction target would be met. The District recommends that the Plan include additional mandatory measures such as:

- parking strategies such as pricing and unbundling parking costs from rents;
- mandatory transportation demand management programs for employers of 50+ employees, including strategies such as telecommuting, commuter benefit policies, rideshare matching, etc.;
- a time-of-sale (RECO/CECO) energy efficiency requirement that exceeds Title 24 for existing development;
- cool community strategies such as reflective roofing and pavement.

The largest GHG emission reduction measure included in the Plan is the increase in the waste diversion rate from 63% (in 2008) to 75%. However, the Plan does not justify how this increase will occur. We recommend that the Plan specify the policies and programs that will be implemented to achieve the 75% waste diversion rate.

GHG Community Inventory and Forecast

There are several methodological differences between how this Plan was developed and other climate action plans the District has reviewed. District staff has discussed these issues with City staff, and has the following technical comments on the Plan.

The City conducted a community-wide inventory of GHG emissions for a 2005 base year, and yet is using 2008 as the base year for the City's 2020 GHG reduction target. District staff has two main concerns with this approach. First, instead of updating this inventory for 2008, the City used growth factors to predict GHG emissions between 2005 and 2008. We believe that the most defensible approach is to use actual data on community energy, fuel and water use and waste production to establish the base year GHG inventory. This is the standard methodology utilized by ICLEI, as it ensures a level of accuracy and consistency between how the base year and forecast year emissions are quantified. Second, only those emission reductions from policies enacted after 2008 should be counted against the emission reduction target. Emission reductions occurring between 2005 and 2008 would then be incorporated into the 2008 inventory rather than counted as reductions against the 2020 target. District staff recommends that the City either perform an inventory for 2008 using actual data and use 2008 as the base year for both the Plan and the emission reduction target, or continue using the 2005 inventory for the Plan and base the emission reduction target on a 2005 base year.

The Plan's GHG forecast of transportation emissions for 2020 assumes changes in land use assumptions, including housing patterns (a reduction in single family units in favor of increased multi-family housing) from what is reflected in the Alameda County transportation model. District staff recommends that a justification for these changes be included in the Plan.

We commend the City for its efforts to address the critical issue of climate change through local action. By addressing the issues in this letter, the Plan will better reflect the District's own guidance on the development of climate action plans. In so doing, District staff believes that the Plan would be more likely to achieve its GHG reduction target and the City would be in a better position to use the Plan as a tierable document under CEQA.

District staff is available to assist City staff in addressing these comments. If you have any questions, please contact Abby Young, Principal Environmental Planner, (415) 749-4754.

Sincerely,


Jean Roggenkamp
Deputy Air Pollution Control Officer

cc: BAAQMD Secretary Nate Miley
BAAQMD Director Tom Bates
BAAQMD Director Scott Haggerty
BAAQMD Director Jennifer Hosterman