

# Upping Our Game Voting Guide

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## Why We Need to Up Our Game

By Barry Brian

When Sustainable Rossmoor (SR) members are asked “Why did you become a Sustainable Rossmoor member?”, the most repeated answer is “So that my grandchildren will have a world to inherit.”

The assumption has been that if we got Rossmoor to act sustainably and communities across the nation and across the world did likewise then we could collectively change the pace of global warming.

Unfortunately, we are running out of time. As the recent wildfires highlight, the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is increasing, not decreasing. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Global Outlook Report on climate change estimates that we have between eight and ten years before there is irreparable damage to the environment. Many of us believe that the actual time left is less.

We at Rossmoor can do a lot to influence global climate change. We have more of the most precious resource, discretionary time, than our younger counterparts in the working world or in school. Many Rossmoorians also have the second most valuable resource in the world, discretionary capital.

We created the Upping Our Game committee to enable Sustainable Rossmoor to have as big an influence as possible in combating global climate change. The Upping Our Game committee brainstormed over two meetings to develop a list of campaigns we could work on and/or organizations we could affiliate with to have that greater impact. The following pages describe the top nine campaigns that we identified during that brainstorming and the subsequent presentation at Sustainable Rossmoor’s November 5 membership meeting.

After you have read about the possible campaigns that we can create, [Click on https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SR2020Campaigns](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SR2020Campaigns) to complete a brief questionnaire where you identify your level of interest in working on up to three

campaigns that you believe will have the greatest impact on combating the climate crisis.

We will present the compilation of your votes at the December 3 Sustainable Rossmoor membership meeting.

As Margaret Mead once said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” Working on an Upping Our Game Campaign, whether it is for 1 or 40 hours a week, is a new and stronger way for you to walk the talk of Sustainability, to be part of a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens who can change the world, and to help assure that our grandchildren will have a world to inherit.

## Carbon Fee and Dividend

By Carol Weed

Carbon Fee and Dividend (CF&D) is a climate intervention which taxes polluters in proportion to the amount of carbon dioxide they produce and returns the money to the citizens. This actually includes all greenhouse gases (GHGs) such as methane, nitrous oxide, etc. -- thus the term carbon-dioxide-equivalent. Companies become incentivized to convert to less polluting practices/products.

Numerous detailed studies have determined this approach to be the most effective, simplest, and most equitable way to reduce carbon production -- thereby decreasing the rise of GHGs in the atmosphere. This plan requires national governmental action; 40 other countries have already instituted a carbon tax.

The campaign began in earnest in the US about 2 decades ago. It currently is led by the grassroots organization, Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL). It proposes a \$15/ton tax initially which would increase by \$10 annually. This is estimated to create 2.1 million new jobs and reduce US GHG emissions by at least 40% in the first 12 years, and 90% by 2050. A carbon tax bears no relationship to a “Cap and Trade” plan; it can operate in parallel with Cap and Trade if such is already functioning.

The plan has the growing nonpartisan support of international economists, businessmen, the World Bank, and many politicians. Even a few oil companies (e.g. Exxon) find it more agreeable than the current patchwork of regulations in different states, because it's predictable and they can plan accordingly. The main opponents are Big Oil, Climate Deniers, and some labor unions.

The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act was introduced in each house of Congress at the end of 2018; it incorporates the CCL plan. It resulted from the work of bipartisan Congressional and Senate Climate Solutions Caucuses. Hundreds of US cities and counties have voted support for this plan, as has the State of CA.

Those who want to join this SR campaign can participate by writing, phoning, listening, speaking, meeting, or teaching. We can augment the efforts of CCL which include “increasing political will” among our electeds as well as the populace with multiple strategies including training ourselves and others to communicate effectively (i.e. lobby) in meetings, in the media, etc., -- always as nonpartisans -- building bridges, not protesting. <https://citizensclimatelobby.org>

## Vote Climate

By Paula Erikson

Time is short. Small human actions can help, but real progress requires Policy change, which requires political will. If we are going to save the planet for our grandchildren, then we need to take, and inspire others to take, collective action.

Our primary is in March this year, and the national election in November. As part of our message, SR can ask voters to set aside their personal party preference for one time, to look at all the candidates' in light of a single issue, and that is climate, the most urgent problem of our time.

Our message can be that if you care about climate change, about the environment, about making sure that your grandchildren even have a future on this planet, then vote for the environment, and VOTE CLIMATE. Which candidate represents that for you? Who has the best program, the best ideas, the best chance of winning? Who is going to make the future happen for your grandchildren?

I'd like to kick off the year with a guest speaker event before the primary, (but don't know who yet, need help!) We can follow that up after the primary with plans to reach out to residents with our message through the upcoming campaign year, not representing any single candidate, not any single party, but a single issue. To VOTE CLIMATE.

# Green New Deal

By Barry Brian

The Green new Deal (GND) is a set of policies that aim to make systemic sustainable change. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) and Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) introduced in Congress a [14-page nonbinding resolution<sup>1</sup>](#) calling for the federal government to create a Green New Deal. The resolution has over 100 co-sponsors in Congress, including several Democratic presidential candidates. There are also several countries that have their own Green New Deals.

The resolution calls for a “10-year national mobilization” whose primary goals would be:

"Guaranteeing a job with a family-sustaining wage, adequate family and medical leave, paid vacations, and retirement security to all people of the United States."

"Providing all people of the United States with – (i) high-quality health care; (ii) affordable, safe, and adequate housing; (iii) economic security; and (iv) access to clean water, clean air, healthy and affordable food, and nature."

"Providing resources, training, and high-quality education, including higher education, to all people of the United States."

"Meeting 100 percent of the power demand in the United States through clean, renewable, and zero-emission energy sources."

"Repairing and upgrading the infrastructure in the United States, including . . . by eliminating pollution and greenhouse gas emissions as much as technologically feasible."

"Building or upgrading to energy-efficient, distributed, and ‘smart’ power grids, and working to ensure affordable access to electricity."

"Upgrading all existing buildings in the United States and building new buildings to achieve maximal energy efficiency, water efficiency, safety, affordability, comfort, and durability, including through electrification."

"Overhauling transportation systems in the United States to eliminate pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector as much as is technologically feasible, including through investment in – (i) zero-emission vehicle infrastructure and manufacturing; (ii) clean, affordable, and accessible public transportation; and (iii) high-speed rail."

"Spurring massive growth in clean manufacturing in the United States and removing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from manufacturing and industry as much as is technologically feasible."

"Working collaboratively with farmers and ranchers in the United States to eliminate pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from the agricultural sector as much as is technologically feasible."

This Rossmoor campaign would support candidates and legislation that support the GND. Campaign actions would consist of phoning/texting/emailing/writing/tweeting voters to contact their representatives to support Green New Deal initiatives as they come up for a vote.

1. <https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/gnd/resolution>

# Plant-based Diet

By Dulcie Andres

Meals made with meat and dairy are major drivers of climate change. Working together we can make it known that Plant Based Eating can save the planet: Let's get the approx. 10,000 people in Rossmoor on board.

“Whether human beings survive this century, whether other life forms can live alongside us: more than anything, this depends on the way we eat. **We can cut our consumption of everything else to almost zero and still we will drive living systems to collapse *unless we change our diets.***”

Animal farming takes 83% of the world's agricultural land, but delivers only 18% of our calories. A plant-based diet cuts the use of land by 76% and halves the greenhouse gases and other pollution that are caused by food production.”\*  
(George Monbiot: The Guardian)\*\*

## It's time to step forward

Rossmoor shall be known as an action-ready community whose citizens have made a **1-year pledge to eat Meat and Dairy-Free, 3 times a week.**

## In Support of That Goal:

- Hold semi-annual Plant-Based Potlucks in Fireside Room
- At the Event Center offer a major presentation by a highly-respected science-based physician renown in his/her field (or maybe a panel discussion).
- Offer structured plant-based meal-plans to guide small working-group sized seminars, as well as offering food demos and web site recipes and information.
- Show educational videos regularly in Peacock Hall.
- Hand out lapel pins (“I Took The Pledge” or ”3/7”) and stickers to promote our cause.
- Affiliate with like-minded organizations at the regional, and national level
- Support candidates who support going plant-based 3 times a week

\*\*\*\*\*more facts\*\*\*\*\*

\*To satisfy the increasing demand for meat, vast swaths of valuable forests are cleared for grazing, meaning those trees are no longer pulling carbon dioxide out of the air and storing it in the soil. Thirty percent of the entire land surface is used for rearing farm animals.

\*The Amazon (often referred to as the planet's lungs because it supplies 20% of the oxygen in the earth's atmosphere) is losing one and one half soccer fields every minute.  
(Source: Greta Thunberg)

\*\* <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jun/08/save-planet-meat-dairy-livestock-food-free-range-steak>

## Planting Trees

By Jim Ware

There are two ways to reduce the excessive levels of greenhouse gasses that are driving up the earth's temperature. The first, which gets most of our attention but is proceeding far too slowly, is to reduce the amount of carbon we are putting into the air: stop burning fossil fuels.

But we can also work on removing the greenhouse gasses that are already in the atmosphere.

The planet currently supports about 3 trillion trees holding approximately 400 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub>. Scientists have recently suggested that planting additional trees may be our best weapon for reducing atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>. They believe that planting 1.2 trillion new trees around the planet would sequester an additional 160 billion tons of carbon dioxide. That is the equivalent of about a decade's worth of global emissions at current rates.

A company named BioCarbon Engineering, in conjunction with a nonprofit called the Trillion Tree Campaign (<https://www.trilliontreecampaign.org/>) envisions a flying army of 10,000 drones, each of which can plant up to 100,000 tree seedlings a day. That means that in theory we could plant a billion trees a day (do the math).

This Rossmoor campaign would support the Trillion Tree campaign and similar efforts like the Plant for the Planet project, educate Rossmoorians about the value of trees, raise funds to support these efforts, work with MOD to ensure that Rossmoor plantings are done right, enable local volunteers to participate in tree-planting projects, and work to end the deforestation of the Amazon that is producing exactly the opposite of what the world needs.

## Transportation

by Paul Moderacki

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), transportation contributes 14% of all greenhouse gas emissions globally. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the world's vehicles burn fossil fuels for road, rail, air and marine transportation.

While there might be many areas of our transportation infrastructure beyond an individual's control, our daily habits contribute to the overall total. Whenever we go out the door and hop in a private car we add to the total.

America's love affair with the automobile is legendary. Auto makers have created the lure of the "open road" to bring us into their showrooms. Can you point out the "open road" when you look around Rossmoor, Walnut Creek and the East Bay or is the thought of driving on Highway 24 and I-680 more. We're choking on the fumes of our convenience.

A Rossmoor campaign would promote:

- Carpooling with friends and neighbors to Bridge games, events and meetings
- Walking whenever, and where ever, possible
- Using Rossmoor's buses to get around the Valley
- Using Rossmoor's buses to go to the Rossmoor Shopping Center and downtown Walnut Creek
- Using BART to go to San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley and the airports
- Avoiding single destination trips, in favor of making multiple stops when you're out and about

And developing other ways of getting involved and active:

- Lobbying the GRF Board to expand Rossmoor's bus services, especially for evening events
- Lobbying Walnut Creek and Contra Costa County to expand public transportation
- Writing and calling State elected officials to expand public transportation systems



# Better Buildings Initiative

By Lauralee Barbaria

We need better buildings!

The buildings where we live work and play waste energy, money and are responsible for almost 40% of the carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions that are affecting our climate, quality of life and safety.

We need significant increases in energy efficiency renovations in existing buildings combined with policy changes for the design of the next generation of buildings, in order to meet emission reduction targets set by the Paris Agreement.

The good news is that there are immediate and long-term opportunities to construct and renovate buildings of all types to be energy efficient, high performance, renewable-ready and in some cases independent of fossil fuels (zero energy buildings).

In the absence of major federal action, California, Contra Costa County and communities like Rossmore are developing their own building policies and action plans to save energy and reduce the carbon footprint of the “Built Environment”. As part of this better building campaign, there are a variety of measures we can support to ensure better buildings that are cost efficient and climate friendly:

- Educate GRF and support efforts to renovate existing buildings and design new buildings to take advantage of cost savings and achieve their sustainability goals.
- Advance building codes and policies to encourage energy efficient buildings and renewable energy use.
- Leverage advances in HVAC systems, insulation, high-performance windows and bio based buildings materials to replace petroleum-based products.
- Support energy-efficient mortgages, financing tools, and more.

The building sector can play a huge role in achieving (CO<sub>2</sub>) targets. Our buildings can become energy and resource savers not wasters.

# Agriculture

by Paul Moderacki

Agriculture is the second biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions globally. Agriculture accounts for 24% of greenhouse gases through crop and livestock cultivation and deforestation.

Conventional agricultural practices require intensive and extensive mechanized equipment to sow, cultivate and reap crops. Such practices have also resulted in acres upon acres of the same crop (mono-cultures) being planted year after year, taking the same nutrients out of the soil and leading to a pervasive use of herbicides and pesticides to control weeds and pests.

Thousands of hectares of land in the Amazon, Indonesia and other areas of the globe have been deforested to provide additional arable soil. Deforestation is a double-edged sword because it destroys trees, which sequester greenhouse gases, e.g. carbon dioxide, and the fires used to clear forests release additional carbon into the atmosphere.

Livestock cultivation requires more land for grazing and/or cultivation of crops to feed livestock than to feed people. In addition, ruminants, e.g. cattle, produce methane as part of their normal digestive processes. This process is called enteric fermentation, and it represents almost one third of the emissions from the Agriculture economic sector.

Livestock manure management practices also contribute to methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) emissions. Different manure treatment and storage methods affect how much of these greenhouse gases are produced. Manure management accounts for about 14 percent of the total greenhouse gas emissions from the Agriculture economic sector in the United States.

A Rossmoor campaign would support plant-based dietary practices, educate Rossmoor residents, and the greater area, about conventional agricultural practices, develop campaigns to promote agricultural diversity in favor of mono-culture farming practices and support other agricultural reforms.

# Renewable Energy

by Paul Moderacki

Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, mankind has adversely affected the world's climate. The Industrial Revolution, which ushered in so many technological improvements and improved the living conditions of millions, has been powered by coal and oil.

The concentrated British Thermal Units (BTUs) contained in coal and oil made the internal combustion engine the wonder, and workhorse, of two centuries of progress. Releasing those BTUs has, however, uncovered the Achilles Heel of these fossil fuels...burning these fuels releases the carbon dioxide and other gasses into the atmosphere.

At first the benefits appeared so great that little attention was given to the inherent danger of burning unlimited quantities of fossil fuels. Rising global temperatures have upset once reliable climatic conditions and dramatically changed this naive perspective.

The world now has only a limited number of years to move away from fossil fuels and embrace renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, geo-thermal and, even, nuclear, if nuclear's intrinsic dangers can be overcome.

A Rossmoor Renewable Energy Campaign would:

- Encourage everyone to opt-up to [MCE's Deep Green plan](https://www.mcecleanenergy.org/opt-up/)<sup>2</sup> (https://www.mcecleanenergy.org/opt-up/)
- promote transitioning to solar throughout the Valley
- encourage residents to buy electric vehicles
- expand the number of electric vehicle charging stations
- promote adoption of Green Building standards for all new construction
- promote bio-fuel production at landfills
- promote transitioning buses to bio-fuel hybrids
- study and promote the use of geo-thermal technologies to cool and heat public and private buildings
- promote construction of co-generation plants to produce electricity from trash
- develop lobbying campaigns for the State Legislature and Governor to provide funds for renewable energy initiatives

1. <https://www.mcecleanenergy.org/opt-up/>