

BOULDER COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

In May 2005, Boulder County Commissioners identified three priority initiatives that each commissioner would oversee to improve county operations and effectiveness. They are:

- Improving public service excellence.
- Increasing interoffice communication and effectiveness.
- Ensuring environmental sustainability.

These initiatives have led to the formation of several task forces and committees to ensure progress in these priority areas.

The Sustainability Task Force has established a process by which guiding principles and goals, cost-benefit analyses, and detailed action plans are being developed for key environmental impacts such as energy use, waste generation, and transportation. The guiding principles are set forth for energy use and waste generation in the attached resolutions. These resolutions call for the development of detailed action plans, the analysis of existing practices and opportunities to achieve the goals identified, and an assessment of the plans' environmental, operational, community, and budgetary impacts.

A Resolution Adopting a Sustainable Energy Path for Boulder County

WHEREAS, Article 30-11-107 of the Colorado Revised Statutes enables the Board of County Commissioners to make orders concerning the property of the county; and

WHEREAS, Article 30-28-115 of the Colorado Revised Statutes enables the Board of County Commissioners to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the county; and

WHEREAS, 30-28-201 of the Colorado Revised Statutes enables the Board of County Commissioners to adopt ordinances and building codes.

WHEREAS, Boulder County is committed to protecting and enhancing environmental quality in the county now and for future generations; and

WHEREAS, the Boulder County Commissioners are focusing on environmental sustainability as one of three major Commissioner goals; and

WHEREAS, the County plans to fully evaluate greenhouse gas emissions through an inventory of county operations and countywide emissions; and

WHEREAS, in February of 2005, the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement was adopted in December 1997 in Japan, setting binding targets for developed countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on average 5.2 percent below 1990 levels, although the United States has not ratified this protocol; and

WHEREAS, nationwide, 160 local governments have already passed resolutions pledging to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from their government operations and throughout their communities; and

WHEREAS, in November 2004, more than 70% of Boulder County voters approved the passage of Amendment 37 requiring that the state's largest public utilities supply 10% of their power from renewable resources by 2010 and raise energy costs by up to 1% to accomplish this goal; and

WHEREAS, there is increasing scientific evidence that carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere are currently impacting the Earth's climate and will continue to have profound and potentially devastating effects, increasing the risk of extreme weather events, increased flood severity, increased risk and intensity of catastrophic wildfire, increased risk of forest die-offs due to insect invasions, changing rainfall and crop productivity patterns, increased risk of drought, loss of alpine meadows, and migration of infectious diseases; and

WHEREAS, local government actions taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through increased energy efficiency, reduced vehicle miles traveled, and waste reduction can provide multiple local benefits by decreasing air pollution, creating jobs, extending landfill life, and reducing energy expenditures for the county, its businesses and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners desires Boulder County to take a leadership role in increasing energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from county operations.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOULDER COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS (BOCC) AS FOLLOWS:

BOCC hereby declares its intent that the county shall identify and implement actions (action plan) that will reduce Boulder County's contribution to total global greenhouse gas emissions, in direct support of the Commissioner's goals for environmental sustainability.

BOCC hereby directs county staff to develop the action plan, referenced above, with the initial goal of being in alignment with the U.S. Kyoto Protocol target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 7% below the estimated 1990 level of greenhouse gas emissions generated in Boulder County and by Boulder County operations. The plan will be designed to achieve cost-effectiveness in each county program. The plan will seek to achieve the ultimate goal of making County operations "climate neutral" by significantly reducing energy use and emissions of global warming gases within the county's operations and investing in energy reductions externally to offset the remaining greenhouse gas emissions to achieve a net zero impact on the Earth's climate. The action plan will be completed by December 2006. The plan will, within budget constraints, seek to effectively, efficiently and quickly address the issues identified.

A. BOCC hereby directs county staff to consider, for inclusion in the action plan, energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction measures targeting county facilities. The BOCC directs staff to consider the costs and costs savings associated with these actions; their impact on energy use and greenhouse gas emissions; their educational value to the community; their operational feasibility; and the appropriate phasing of such actions. Actions to be considered include but are not limited to:

1. Inventorying global warming emissions in county operations.
2. Increasing the use of clean, alternative energy by, for example, investing in "green tags," advocating for the development of renewable energy resources, installing solar photovoltaic panels on county buildings, using biofuels such as ethanol and biodiesel in county fleets, and using biomass for heating and cooling county buildings.
3. Making energy efficiency a priority through policies and retrofitting county facilities with energy efficient improvements and urging employees to conserve energy and save money.
4. Purchasing equipment and appliances that meet or exceed Energy Star standards.
5. Practicing and promoting sustainable building practices using the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program or similar. New county buildings should be

designed, constructed, and operated to meet or exceed - the equivalent of LEED NC Gold level or higher, with a special attention to the energy and atmosphere impacts of county buildings. Existing county buildings should be audited to meet or exceed the equivalent of LEED EB Certified level, with special attention to the energy and atmosphere impacts of county buildings.

6. Increasing the average fuel efficiency of county fleet vehicles; converting to hybrid and plug-in hybrid vehicles; reducing the number of vehicles; launching an employee education program including anti-idling messages; and using bio-diesel and other biofuels where possible.
7. Developing an employee transportation program designed to minimize the number of single occupant vehicle trips taken by county employees, both to access work and during their work day; and reviewing county programs to look for opportunities to reduce public vehicle travel used to access county services and programs.
8. Increasing recycling rates in county operations.
9. Implementing other energy efficiency or greenhouse gas reduction measures that might be identified through the planning process.
10. Including in the action plan a requirement for an annual report to the BOCC which evaluates these sustainability efforts, progress in reduction of green house emissions, and other efforts as identified in the plan.

B. BOCC hereby declares its intent to consider energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions reductions through education, regulatory measures, and public policy initiatives. The county will consider the impact of these measures on residents, businesses, and communities and will conduct inclusive public processes incorporating affected parties. Measures to be considered include but are not limited to:

1. Land-use policies that reduce sprawl; preserve open space; create compact, walkable urban communities; and promote tree preservation and planting to increase shading and absorb carbon dioxide.
2. Transportation programs that promote bicycle trails, encourage trip reduction, and encourage the use of public transportation and car pooling.
3. Transportation programs that provide information, incentives, and infrastructure to assist members of the public, county employees, and the business community in making the transition to low-emission vehicles, including high-efficiency hybrid electric vehicles, plug-in hybrid electric vehicles, and vehicles which use biodiesel or other biofuels.

4. Building codes that enhance energy efficiency in new and existing buildings and promote sustainable building practices using the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED program or similar.
 5. Programs to provide information, incentives, and infrastructure to assist homeowners and businesses with the transition to renewable energy sources, such as solar photovoltaics, solar hot water, solar space heating, wind-generated electricity, and geothermal heating and cooling.
 6. Incorporating these principles into updates of the Boulder County Comprehensive Plan.
 7. Seeking public and private partnerships to leverage limited public resources to accomplish our sustainable energy goals.
- C. BOCC hereby directs members of the Sustainability Task Force to draft an action plan as outlined in this document, recommend actions for consideration in the upcoming budget cycle, and identify additional activities that merit consideration.