



SAN FRANCISCO
COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Annual Report

2022



SAN FRANCISCO
ENVIRONMENT
DEPARTMENT

Prepared by San Francisco Environment Department
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OUR MISSION

The mission of the San Francisco Commission on the Environment is to improve, enhance, and preserve the environment while promoting San Francisco's long-term environmental sustainability as laid out in Section 4.118 of the City Charter.

The Commission sets policy for the San Francisco Environment Department and advises the Mayor, Board of Supervisors, and other City departments on environmental matters. Appointed by the Mayor, the seven-member Commission helps develop policies and programs on a wide range of environmental topics including: climate action, zero waste, toxics reduction, environmental justice, clean air, transportation, energy efficiency, green building, habitat restoration, biodiversity, urban forestry, and greenhouse gas reductions.



(From L to R) Sarah Ching-Ting Wan, Eddie Ahn (President), Mike Sullivan, Elmy Bermejo, Heather Stephenson (Vice President), Johanna Wald. (Note, missing from photograph- Austin Hunter.)



LETTER FROM THE COMMISSION PRESIDENT

Since its establishment in 1996, the Commission on the Environment has played an important role in advancing San Francisco's environmental mission. During its inaugural year, the Commission's top priority was to oversee adoption of the first Sustainability Plan for the City and County of San Francisco. Approved by the Board of Supervisors in 1997, this laid a strong foundation for our subsequent work to build a more sustainable and resilient City. As the passing decades brought the full scale of the climate crisis into focus, one thing remains clear: our mission – and our work – are as essential and urgent as ever.

Last year, Mayor Breed released the City's 2021 Climate Action Plan (CAP), a roadmap to strengthen San Francisco's climate infrastructure and achieve net zero emissions by 2040. This plan identifies strategies and actions in six key areas: energy supply, building operations, transportation and land use, housing, responsible production and consumption, and healthy ecosystems. While the CAP provides a vital roadmap, it is up to us to put its actions into practice.

In February, the Commission requested \$73 million from the City's General Fund to finance the Climate Action Plan. But the Commission did not act alone. Hundreds of climate stakeholders stepped up to advocate for the resources to put our plan into practice. This team effort paid off in June, when the Department was allocated \$2.6 million. This was the Department's largest General Fund allocation in 20 years and more than doubled the amount awarded to the Department during the previous budget cycle. Even though further investment is needed, this represents a major step forward in funding the Climate Action Plan and demonstrates a recognition among our elected leadership that robust resources are required to meet our climate goals.

While CAP implementation was a top focus this year, it was hardly the only one. After two years of remote work imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission returned to in-person meetings in March. The Commission also worked to codify strong ethics guidelines at the Environment Department, with a focus on implementing the recommendations of the Controller's Public Integrity Review Preliminary Assessment. The Commission has also guided the recruitment process for the next Environment Department Director. That process is well underway, and I look forward to welcoming a permanent Director to the Department in 2023.

An existential challenge demands a proportionate response. If San Francisco is to remain a vibrant, prosperous community – and for us to match our ideals of a just and equitable City with action – we cannot shirk from the change this moment demands of us. This is the goal of our Climate Action Plan. As Commission President, I affirm our commitment to this critical project, and I look forward to deepening our progress in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Eddie Ahn, President, San Francisco Commission on the Environment



SAN FRANCISCO'S

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2021



2022 COMMISSION MILESTONES

A CALL FOR CLIMATE FUNDING – AND AN ANSWER

When the Mayor released the City’s Climate Action Plan (CAP) in December 2021, it represented San Francisco’s most significant step to date to confront the climate crisis. It was truly a milestone for the Mayor, the Commission, and our nonprofit and business partners. When the Environment Department’s draft budget was shared with the Commission during public meetings in early 2022, the Commission made clear its desire to ensure adequate funding for the CAP.

After receiving numerous calls and public comment regarding the need for additional funding, the Commission approved a resolution and motion to draft letters to the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors regarding the lack of long-term, sustainable funding sources for the Climate Action Plan. On June 28, the Department was allocated \$2.6 million to implement the Climate Action Plan. The largest General Fund allocation the Department has received in 20 years, this moment marked a major achievement for the Commission, which had long lobbied for greater City investment in climate work. It also confirmed a recognition among the City’s elected leaders of the need to implement the CAP over the long-term.

On December 6, the Commission also heard a presentation on the UC Berkeley Center for Law, Energy & the Environment (CLEE)’s long-term funding study for the Climate Action Plan. Funded through a Board of Supervisors’ allocation, the report identifies funding recommendations to accelerate CAP implementation and achieve net-zero emissions goals by 2040. The report estimates a full implementation cost of \$21.9 billion.

While the Environment Department leads implementation and development of the Climate Action Plan, it does not do this work alone. The Commission and the Department rely on numerous diverse and talented partners to develop, implement, and co-lead on a variety of climate-centered initiatives. The Commission wishes to thank the Climate Emergency Coalition and all residents and stakeholders who spoke out during public comment at Commission meetings or wrote letters advocating for greater climate resources. The Commission also wishes to thank CLEE for its exhaustive, authoritative report.

2022 COMMISSION MILESTONES *CONTINUED*

THE SEARCH FOR A NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

After eight years as Environment Department Director, Debbie Raphael announced her retirement, effective April 9. The Commission thanks Director Raphael for her service and wishes her the very best.

During the Commission's special meeting on May 10, the Commission formally welcomed Acting Director Tyrone Jue to the Department and discussed the need to recruit a permanent Director to lead the Department into a new era. Two weeks later, the Commission heard a presentation from the Department of Human Services on the Director recruitment process and voted to constitute a Search Committee to oversee the process.

After reviewing a response to an RFP released by the Department of Human Resources during its inaugural meeting on August 22, the Search Committee approved a motion to retain an executive recruitment firm and begin the recruitment process as promptly as possible. At its subsequent meeting on November 21, the Committee reviewed and offered feedback on the process, timeline, job description, and brochure text and approved a motion to post the application and begin the formal recruitment process.



2022 COMMISSION MILESTONES *CONTINUED*

PROGRESS IN KEY POLICY AREAS

While the Commission heard presentations and provided comment on a range of issues, implementing the Climate Action Plan remained a key focus. On February 14, the Commission’s Policy Subcommittee offered feedback on the Environment Department’s proposal for implementing the CAP, with an emphasis on tracking and reporting core metrics. The Commission also heard a presentation on CAP implementation and building decarbonization policy at its July 26 meeting. The Department reported that 40% of CAP implementation steps were on track, while 8% had been delayed, and 52% had not started, with the greatest progress occurring in the energy, responsible production and consumption, and transportation and land use sectors.

In addition, the Commission continued to monitor progress on the City’s zero waste goals. At its December 6 meeting, the Commission heard a presentation from the Reusable SF Coalition on a potential reusable foodware on-site policy for San Francisco, similar to the ordinance recently introduced in Berkeley. The presentation highlighted the environmental and financial incentives of a reusable policy. Commissioners had a robust discussion of the prospects of a reusable foodware on-site policy for San Francisco and emphasized the importance of collaboration with small businesses. Commissioners also discussed a potential resolution in support of a reusable foodware policy as a goal for the coming year.



2022 COMMISSION MILESTONES *CONTINUED*

A FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT PROCESSES AND OVERSIGHT

The Commission convened a special meeting on May 10 to discuss the Controller's Public Integrity Review Preliminary Assessment and hear an update on the Environment Department's progress implementing key recommendations. Commissioners had an important and thorough discussion on the report's findings and communicated additional action steps to promote a strong ethical tone at the Environment Department and codify ethics rules.

At its July 27 meeting, the Commission received additional updates on the implementation of recommendations and approved a resolution directing the Department to comply with existing gift regulations and promote transparency around relationships with non-City organizations. In September and December, the Commission further approved resolutions requiring Commission approval of large contracts and grants managed by the Environment Department as well as agreements with Recology, Inc.

RACIAL EQUITY WORK

The Environment Department has long been committed to racial equity work. On September 27, the Commission heard an update on the Department's Racial Equity Action Plan, including new funding for racial equity initiatives in the fiscal year 2022-23 budget, its work to incorporate racial equity in the Department's Strategic Plan, and expanded use of the Department's racial equity tools. The Department also shared findings from the 2021 All-Staff Survey and the 2021 Racial Equity Action Plan Progress Report. Commissioners had a meaningful discussion on opportunities for training and reporting on new positions and promotions within the Department. The Commission will continue to play a role in building a culture of equity and inclusion as the Office of Racial Equity provides guidance for all City Departments.

2022 COMMISSION MILESTONES *CONTINUED*

BRANDING UPDATE

The Commission heard a presentation on the Department’s branding update during its September 27 meeting, with a focus on adapting the Department’s current visual guidelines to be more contemporary, relevant, and engaging while maintaining brand identity, recognition, and trust. To reinforce its government identity, the Department will be referred to as “San Francisco Environment Department” going forward. Commissioners had a robust discussion of the refresh’s significance and its potential impact on the Commission.



COMMISSION DEMOGRAPHICS

As part of our Racial Equity Action Plan, the Commissioners fulfilled an obligation to complete a demographic data consensus. A 2008 City Charter Amendment, passed by the voters, authorized the Department on the Status of Women to analyze and report the diversity of appointments for City boards and commissions every two years. Through voluntary participation of the survey, the Commission on the Environment continues to support the City in its diversity goals.

The Commission on the Environment has seven seats total, seven of which are filled. There are four female and three male Commissioners, including two who identify as LGBTQIA+. In addition, the Commission includes two Asian, one Latinx, and four white members.

COMMISSION TERMS

Johanna Wald 5th Term:	March 26, 2019 – March 10, 2023
Heather Stephenson 3rd Term:	May 6, 2019 – April 20, 2023
Sarah Ting Wan 3rd Term:	May 11, 2021 – May 11, 2025
Elmy Bermejo 3rd Term:	October 14, 2020 – October 14, 2025
Eddie Ahn 2nd Term:	March 26, 2019 – March 25, 2023
Mike Sullivan 2nd Term:	August 1, 2019 – July 23, 2023
Austin Hunter 1st Term:	May 27, 2021 – March 25, 2023



POLICY COMMITTEE

The Commission on the Environment’s Policy Subcommittee meets monthly to oversee long-term planning and policy development for the Environment Department, including the assessment of environmental conditions and review of the City’s long-term environmental sustainability plans.

In 2022, the Policy Committee heard presentations on Climate Action Plan implementation (February 14); the Surplus Building Products Reduction and Redistribution Study, the Electric Vehicles (EV) Communities Grant, and the EV Charging Plaza Resolution (March 14); Antibiotic Use in Food Animals Ordinance implementation (April 11); edible food recovery and the Kitchen Zero SF program (June 13); the proposed Reduced Risk Pesticide List and the Climate Equity Hub (August 8); the Draft 2021 Annual Buy Green Report and the BayREN Refrigerant Replacement program (September 12); Construction and Demolition Debris Recovery Ordinance implementation and the Fix Lead SF program (October 3); and greenhouse gas inventory, All-Electric New Construction Ordinance implementation, and the EnergyAccess SF program (November 14).

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

The Commission on the Environment’s Operations Subcommittee meets quarterly. The Committee oversees public education and community outreach on environmental issues.

In 2022, the Operations Committee heard presentations on the Department’s proposed budget for fiscal year 2022-23 and 2023-24 and the Safer Cleaning and Disinfection campaign (January 10); the Zero Waste Career Pathways pilot program, the Essential Worker Ride Home program, and the Healthy Homes program (April 20); the Toxics Reduction Grant pilot program and Rethink Disposables (July 20); and the Go Mission outreach program and equity in multifamily Zero Waste programs (October 19).

SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Search Committee oversees the recruitment process for the Environment Department’s Director and meets on an ad-hoc basis. The Search Committee heard presentations on the proposed search process and timeline (August 22); and the draft candidate profile and recruitment brochure (November 21).

More information about commissions hearings and presentations can be found at [SFEnvironment.org](https://www.sfenvironment.org).



COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE AWARDS

San Francisco's Commission on the Environment strives to recognize individuals and organizations that help the Commission and the Environment Department fulfill their joint mission to conduct public education and outreach on environmental issues and support long-term sustainability in the City. Each year, the Commission on the Environment recognizes individuals and organizations that embody the City's pursuit of long-term sustainability and environmental public education. In 2022, Environmental Service Awards were awarded to:

MARCH 22

The San Francisco Public Library, for its strong environmental focus and innovative programs.

JULY 26

Chris Geiger, for his retirement and for his pioneering development and leadership of San Francisco's Integrated Pest Management program.

SEPTEMBER 27

Jen Jackson, for her transformative contribution to the State of California's work to reduce toxics in our everyday lives and improve the health of our ecosystems.

DECEMBER 6

Shawn Rosenmoss, for her retirement for her longtime efforts to deepen engagement between the City and County of San Francisco and the nonprofit and community sectors.



COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

Approved the Environment Department's Fiscal Year 2021-22 and 2022-23 Budget on February 7

Approved the Commission on the Environment 2021 Annual Report on February 7

Approved Mayor Breed's Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Plaza Ordinance (Resolution File No. 2022-03-COE) on March 22

Approved a motion to constitute the Search Committee to oversee the Environment Department Director recruitment effort on July 26

Approved a resolution directing the Environment Department to comply with gift regulations and to ensure transparency of relationships with non-City organizations (Resolution File 2022-05-COE) on July 26

Approved the 2022 Reduced Risk Pesticide List for City Properties (Resolution File 2022-06-COE) on September 27

Approved the 2021 Annual Buy Green Report on September 27

Approved a resolution requiring Commission approval of Environment Department contracts and grants (Resolution File 2022-08-COE) on September 27

Approved amendments to a resolution requiring Commission approval of Environment Department contracts and grants (Resolution File 2022-08-COE) on December 6

ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT GIFT SUMMARY

The following gifts to the Environment Department were reviewed by the Commission and reported to the Board of Supervisors in July 2022:

- From Gensler, two used chairs for the Department's new office space (\$510).
- From BioBag Americas, Inc., 12 boxes of compostable plastic bags (\$155).



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